

Students get Sunsmart

Last Thursday (Jan 31st 2019) whilst most students were arriving back into classes for 2019, the Student Representative Council of East Loddon P-12 College was already looking at ways to improve the College. These student leaders had been elected merely 24 hours prior but yet were already exploring ways to reduce the likelihood of our students and staff being exposed to UV rays. Miss Byrne had organised Taylah from Sunsmart to visit the school and speak to both students and staff. Miss Byrne's father was extremely supportive of the event and inspired the idea. He is concerned that people are oblivious to the UV (Ultraviolet index) and how we can be exposed to damaging UV everyday.



Students and interested staff participated in a presentation learning about fun facts such as;

- That Australia and New Zealand have the highest rates of skin cancer in the world.
- That to apply sunscreen properly (all over your body) you need approx. 7 teaspoons.
- That UV rays can even reflect off the ground or surfaces.
- 3 or higher on the UV index is damaging to your skin.



The students learnt about online ways and the sunsmart app to research the current UV rating for your location and for the particular day. Staff were even able to look through a device to determine the damage we had received from UV over time. It was confronting to see the damage but a real reminder that we need to look after our skin.

Student leaders discussed the following actions they are considering to increase our sunsmart awareness and protection against the harmful UV rays.

- Continue to role model the sunsmart behaviours eg slip, slop, slap, slide and seek.
- Promote sun protection at the office and canteen eg UV posters and sunscreen available.
- Update our Sunsmart policy.
- Investigate extra hats available for students to wear at lunch times.
- Display UV index for the day across the school, appoint student UV monitors and have this information shared by staff at the morning home group.

Students received a UV wrist band, which magically turns purple when exposed to UV rays. It is amazing and again a timely reminder of the harmful UV rays. Taylah explained to us how many people associate increased UV rays with an increasing temperature. These two factors are not necessarily related. Looking into research of this area the UV rays is harmful on a daily basis from early August to late April and often from 9am to 4:30pm. Taylah stressed the evidence of that incidental time we spend in the sun without protection. For example, hanging the washing out.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for ways to improve our school in being Sunsmart and better prepared to reduce the likelihood of our school community being exposed to harmful UV rays please let Miss Byrne know or one of our SRC representatives.

Thanks for your time,

Sarah Byrne

East Loddon P-12 College