



NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Guidance Regarding the Use of Sunscreen in Schools

Introduction

The Nebraska State Board of Education believes that education and health are intertwined. Health risk behaviors formed in childhood can lead to serious health problems, and protection from the sun is a preventable risk schools should address.

Purpose

This guidance is to promote the health of children, clarify the use of sunscreen in schools, reduce barriers of children having adequate UV protection at school, and to highlight the main points schools need to consider in managing the subject of sunscreen for children within the school day or during school-sponsored events.

History

Exposure of UV radiation from the sun can lead to skin cancer. The use of sunscreen at a young age is an important component of skin cancer prevention. Simple measures such as the use of "broad spectrum" sunscreens that offer protection from both UVA and UVB rays, and provide a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or greater, can reduce skin cancer. Sunscreen should be applied only to exposed areas of the skin 20-30 minutes before going outdoors to be absorbed into the skin. Sunscreen should be re-applied every two hours or more often if the child is perspiring or involved in water play.

The Food and Drug Administration classifies sunscreen as an over-the-counter medication that is available to all persons to use without any written directive from a medical provider. Therefore, schools should not require parents of students to provide a form from a medical provider to possess and apply sunscreen.

Recommendations

Children should be allowed to possess and use Food and Drug Administration regulated over-the-counter sunscreen to limit ultraviolet light-induced skin damage at school and at school-sponsored events without being required to: (a) have a physician's note or prescription; or (b) store the sunscreen product in a specific location.

If a child needs assistance, then competent staff pursuant to Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 59, should assist. In addition, schools should recognize any parent or guardian has the right to refuse to have a child apply or have school personnel apply sunscreen by providing written notification to the school.

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