



**SPORT AT
SCS.
WHAT SETS
US APART?**

THE OVERVIEW FROM ONE OF THE LEADING SPORTS SCHOOLS IN THE UAE

Safa Community School offers exceptional sport provision for its **gifted and talented students**, ensuring they have access to world-class opportunities both locally and internationally. The school provides a robust and comprehensive approach to developing young athletes, integrating top-tier coaching, competition, and personalised training to help them reach their full potential.

International and Local Competitions

Safa's commitment to providing **high-level competitive experiences** for its athletes is demonstrated through participation in some of the most prestigious international and local sports events. The school's students regularly compete in renowned tournaments such as the British Schools in the Middle East (BSME) Tournaments, **World School Games (WSG)** Dubai, and other international events across various sports. Safa has achieved exceptional success in these competitions, including in recent years at the WSG Dubai, where Safa's athletes were crowned **champions in the U13 Boys and U15 Girls categories** of the WSG Football competition. The school's athletes have also excelled at the **WSG Swimming** event held at the London Aquatic Centre, winning in both the U13 and U15 age groups. Furthermore, Safa's basketball team was victorious at the **WSG Basketball** competition in Valencia, and students who participated in the **WSG Football** to Barcelona had the opportunity to compete at one of the world's most iconic football venues. These wins underscore Safa's consistent excellence in a wide array of sports. In January 2025, Safa Community School achieved great

International Sporting success, being crowned **World Schools Games (WSG) champions** at both the Primary U11 & Secondary U15 age groups, whilst achieving runners up slot in the U13 category. This Competition saw athletes from across the globe compete across Football, Athletics & Swimming in a bid to become WSG Champions.

Bespoke Training for Performance Squads

For students in **Safa's 'Performance' Squads**, the school offers specialised and intensive training both on the playing fields and in its bespoke Fitness Suite, ensuring that these athletes are equipped with the physical conditioning they need to perform at elite levels. The **Strength and Conditioning (S&C)** aspect of the training program plays a critical role in developing students' strength, agility, and overall athleticism. The bespoke Fitness Suite is fully equipped with **state-of-the-art training resources** such as the VALD Performance equipment, that focuses on the specific needs of young athletes, helping them maximise their performance potential.

In the lead-up to major events and competitions, athletes are given **additional training sessions** outside of the regular curriculum. These extra sessions allow athletes to refine their techniques and improve on areas of development, ensuring they are well-prepared for significant competitions.



Provision for Gifted and Talented Students at Safa Community School

Early Morning Training Sessions Safa Community School recognises the importance of maximising training time, and in line with this philosophy, the school delivers early morning training sessions for its athletes across 14 different sports. These sessions, running from 6:40 am to 7:25 am, take place before the start of the school day and make the most of the cooler weather, particularly during the hotter months in Dubai. These early morning sessions are incredibly popular, with around 300 students attending each morning to train for their respective squads. The early morning sessions are an excellent opportunity for students to focus on their sport in a dedicated, disciplined environment before the academic day begins. Whether it's training for football, rugby, swimming, or athletics, students in the Performance Squads are given the chance to hone their skills and develop their physical fitness in a structured, focused environment, setting the tone for the rest of the day.

U11 Rugby Squad Success Safa's U11 Rugby Squad has been particularly successful, winning multiple DASSA leagues as well as claiming titles at the DC 7s, DC 10s, and Safa Cup Champions during the current academic year. This success highlights Safa's ability to foster talent across a wide variety of sports, with a specific emphasis on building strong, competitive teams. The continued success of the Rugby squad serves as a testament to the school's commitment to developing well-rounded athletes who excel in both individual and team sports.



Scholarships for Top Athletes In addition to its comprehensive sports provision, Safa Community School also offers scholarships to gifted athletes competing at the top level of their respective sports. These scholarships provide financial assistance and support across a range of areas to ensure that athletes have the resources they need to thrive. The provision within these scholarships includes Strength and Conditioning sessions, nutrition support, and mentorship to assist with balancing academic commitments and sporting demands. Moreover, the school grants days off for athletes competing in national and international tournaments, ensuring they can represent their country without academic pressures. Currently, several swimmers are on this scholarship system, competing for their national teams and often travelling around the world for international competitions.



Conclusion Safa Community School's sport provision for gifted and talented students is comprehensive, structured, and dedicated to excellence. Through participation in prestigious international and local competitions, bespoke training programs, early morning sessions, scholarships, and a focus on holistic development through Strength and Conditioning, Safa ensures that its athletes are prepared to perform at the highest levels. The success of the school's athletes across various sports, including WSG Dubai, WSG Swimming, WSG Football, the U11 Rugby Squad, and the swimmers on scholarship, exemplifies the school's commitment to nurturing and developing top-tier talent.

Inclusive Sport Provision: Celebrating Participation

At Safa Community School, inclusivity is at the heart of the school's sports provision, ensuring that every student, regardless of skill level or experience, has the opportunity to participate and thrive in sports. The school's commitment to inclusivity is evident in its extensive offering of sports squads, its broad range of participation options, and its celebratory culture that recognises all achievements, no matter how big or small. Over 200 Sports Squads and Extensive Participation. Safa Community School boasts an impressive over 200 sports squads that run throughout the academic year, catering to students across all age groups from U7 to U19. This extensive program ensures that there are ample opportunities for students to engage in sports, regardless of their ability. From beginner to advanced levels, all students have access to a broad range of sports, and every student who wishes to participate in a squad is given the chance to represent the school in their respective sports. The school runs squads across multiple age groups, and for many sports, Safa goes the extra mile by offering multiple squads at varying skill levels. For example, Basketball, Football, Netball, Rugby, and Rounders (to name a few) all feature A, B, C, D, and even E-level squads, ensuring that students of all abilities have an opportunity to compete and contribute. This multi-tiered approach to squad formation allows for widespread participation and gives students the chance to develop their skills at a pace that suits them, all while being part of a supportive and inclusive team environment.



Largest Squad Entries in the DASSA Leagues As a through-school, Safa is proud to have the largest number of squad entries into the DASSA leagues across the various sports. This achievement reflects the school's dedication to encouraging participation at all levels and in all age groups. The breadth of squad entries across different sports ensures that a wide range of students are involved in competitive sports, offering more chances for students to experience the thrill of competition while promoting physical fitness and teamwork. The school consistently enters multiple teams across all age groups, further strengthening its reputation for inclusivity and participation.

Celebrating All Athletes One of the cornerstones of Safa's approach to inclusive sport is its celebration of every athlete, regardless of the level at which they compete. At Safa, every student who participates in a sport, whether at an elite level or as a beginner, is celebrated for their efforts and dedication. This inclusive ethos is fostered throughout the school year, with special events such as the Termly Sports Celebrations Assemblies for Primary students and the Annual Sports Awards Evenings for both Primary and Secondary students. These events provide an opportunity for the entire school community to come together and recognise the hard work, determination, and teamwork that each student has demonstrated, creating a sense of belonging and achievement for all athletes.

Inclusive Sport Provision: Celebrating Participation

Heads of Sport for Core Sports To further ensure that every student is given the best opportunity to succeed, Safa has appointed Heads of Sport for its core sports – Swimming, Girls Football, Boys Football, Rugby, Basketball, and Netball. The sole responsibility of these Heads of Sport is to oversee the development and provision of sports opportunities for all students in their respective disciplines. These experts are dedicated to creating pathways for participation at every level, from introductory sessions for newcomers to competitive training for elite athletes. Their leadership helps maintain a focus on inclusivity, ensuring that students in each sport receive the support, encouragement, and training they need to grow and succeed. Each Head of Sport works closely with their team of coaches to ensure that no student is left behind, offering a range of training sessions, extracurricular opportunities, and competition levels. This holistic approach encourages widespread involvement and personal growth across all student athletes, regardless of their starting point.

Conclusion Safa Community School's inclusive sport provision is a testament to the school's commitment to providing opportunities for every student, no matter their ability or experience. With over 200 sports squads spanning multiple age groups, a large number of squad entries in the DASSA leagues, and a system that ensures every student has the chance to represent the school in their sport, Safa makes inclusion and participation a core value of its sports program. The school's celebration of all athletes through end-of-year assemblies and awards evenings further fosters a culture where effort and participation are valued. With dedicated Heads of Sport in core areas, Safa's inclusive approach continues to inspire and engage students, helping them develop a lifelong love for sport.



Breadth of Sporting Opportunities

Safa Community School offers an exceptional range of sporting opportunities designed to cater to a wide variety of interests, abilities, and athletic aspirations. The school firmly believes in exposing students to a diverse array of sports, enabling them to discover their passions, strengths, and talents across different disciplines. Whether students are drawn to traditional team sports like football, rugby, and basketball, or prefer individual pursuits such as swimming, athletics, and gymnastics, Safa provides numerous avenues for them to get involved and develop their athletic skills.

Wide Range of Sports on Offer Safa's sporting program includes both popular team sports and individual disciplines, ensuring that there is something for everyone. Students can participate in traditional team sports such as football, rugby, basketball, and netball, which promote teamwork, strategy, and physical fitness. For those who prefer individual sports, there are numerous options, including swimming, athletics, gymnastics, tennis, and badminton, which allow students to focus on personal growth and performance. The school ensures that students have the opportunity to experience sports beyond the traditional offerings. Sports such as rounders, cricket, and table tennis are also part of the school's inclusive program, further expanding the variety of athletic experiences available to students. This diversity in sports helps students find the right fit for their interests and talents, while simultaneously promoting the benefits of physical activity and well-rounded athletic development.

Competitions Across DASSA Leagues and Other Events Safa Community School aims to enter competitions for nearly every sport offered in the DASSA leagues, ensuring that students have access to competitive experiences at every level. Whether competing in football, basketball, rugby, swimming, or other team and individual sports, Safa works diligently to ensure its athletes participate in local, regional, and inter-school competitions. This commitment to entering DASSA competitions not only provides students with the opportunity to showcase their talents but also helps them develop the resilience and sportsmanship required to excel in competitive environments. The school's competitive spirit extends beyond the DASSA leagues, as Safa also offers several extracurricular activities (ECAs) that introduce students to unique sports and experiences. Activities such as skiing (with an exciting ski trip to Europe), Jiu-Jitsu, yoga, karate, gymnastics, and Quidditch are available to students. These sports, which currently don't have DASSA competition options, offer students the opportunity to explore new interests, discover hidden talents, and enjoy physical activity in a non-competitive setting.



Breadth of Sporting Opportunities

External Partnerships to Enhance Sporting Opportunities This year, Safa has expanded its sporting offerings even further by collaborating with external companies to introduce students to a range of different sports during the curriculum. Notable partnerships include the Tommy Fleetwood Academy for golf, the Desert Vipers for cricket, and GetSetGo for quidditch. These partnerships bring professional coaches and expert instruction into the school, offering students access to specialised training and exposure to sports they may not have previously considered. Additionally, Safa benefits from its key partnerships with renowned local clubs such as Empire Football Club, Dubai Basketball Club, and Hamilton Aquatics, which support both the curriculum and extracurricular activities. These collaborations provide students with the opportunity to train with and be coached by experts in their respective fields, further enhancing the quality of Safa's sports program. Through these partnerships, Safa ensures that students are not only learning foundational skills but also gaining insights from industry professionals who help elevate their performance and understanding of the sports they love.

Dance and Performance Opportunities In addition to the wide variety of sports offered, Safa has a thriving Dance Squad for both Primary and Secondary age groups. These students perform regularly at showcase school events, providing them with a platform to demonstrate their skills and creativity. Safa's Dance Squad also competes in prestigious events such as the Desert Dance and BSME competitions, where students have the chance to represent the school and showcase their dance talents at a regional level. This inclusion of dance as a key part of Safa's sporting program highlights the school's commitment to offering a well-rounded range of activities that cater to a variety of interests.



Encouraging Participation in Multiple Sports Safa's inclusive approach encourages students to participate in multiple sports throughout the year, ensuring that they develop a broad athletic skill set and are exposed to a variety of physical activities. Students are actively encouraged to try different sports, which helps them enhance their physical fitness, develop new skills, and discover passions they might not have encountered otherwise. By offering seasonal sports, students can switch between different activities throughout the year, gaining new experiences and building well-rounded athletic capabilities. This philosophy of cross-participation also helps students develop discipline and time-management skills, as they balance training sessions, competitions, and academic commitments. The diverse options offered through the school's sports program ensure that students stay motivated and engaged, while also allowing them to explore a range of activities to suit their personal interests and strengths.

Conclusion Safa Community School's commitment to offering a broad and inclusive range of sporting opportunities is a key aspect of its holistic approach to student development. From traditional team sports like football, rugby, and basketball, to individual pursuits such as swimming and gymnastics, to unique extracurricular activities like skiing, Jiu-Jitsu, and quidditch, the school provides numerous opportunities for students to discover their athletic potential. By entering competitions in almost every DASSA sport, offering extracurricular activities that foster new interests, and supporting Dance Squads at the Primary and Secondary levels, Safa ensures that every student has the chance to participate in activities they love. The school's strategic external partnerships with Tommy Fleetwood Academy, Desert Vipers, GetSetGo, Empire Football Club, Dubai Basketball Club, and Hamilton Aquatics further enhance these opportunities, allowing students to learn from industry professionals and broaden their experiences. This diverse sporting program promotes physical fitness, encourages personal growth, and helps foster a lifelong love of sport and physical activity among students.

Graduating Slipstreams for Careers in Sport Opportunities

Safa Community School is committed to supporting students who aspire to pursue careers in sport and related disciplines. The school offers a comprehensive range of academic pathways and extracurricular opportunities that provide students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences needed to excel in the sports industry. In recent years, Safa has seen a number of its students secure prestigious sports scholarships at top universities, both in the UAE and internationally, with many going on to pursue careers in sport at various levels.

Sports Scholarships and University Pathways Safa has a strong track record of helping talented athletes secure sports scholarships, particularly in disciplines such as golf and football. A number of our students have earned scholarships to USA universities, where they have had the opportunity to continue their education while competing at a collegiate level. These scholarships not only allow students to pursue their academic interests but also provide them with a platform to develop their athletic abilities in a competitive environment. These scholarship opportunities underscore Safa's commitment to supporting student-athletes who want to take their talents to the next level, whether that's through continued study, training, or competition in prestigious sports programs. The success of our students in securing sports scholarships is a testament to the high level of training, coaching, and opportunities they receive at Safa, as well as their own dedication and hard work.

Academic Pathways for Sport In addition to extracurricular sports, Safa offers a robust academic pathway for students interested in pursuing careers in sport. At Key Stage 4, students can opt for GCSE and BTEC Level 2 in Sport, which provides them with a strong foundation in the principles of sport, fitness, and physical education. This pathway is designed to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to either continue their studies in sport or embark on a career in the industry. Our KS4 results have been graded KHDA 'Outstanding' for the past three years. Our most recent examination cohort achieved 94% 4-9, with 75% achieving 7-9. Students on our BTEC Sport pathway achieved exceptional results, with 100% of the cohort being awarded D*D*. Our current KS4 cohort consists of some phenomenal swimmers. Andrew Laghoutis holds the Cyprus record for the 50m Freestyle. Levin Oerer, Jacopo Volpe, Davide Galluzi, and Atharva Singh have all competed at their home country's National Swimming championships. Following their success at Key Stage 4, students can progress to A-Level PE and BTEC Level 3 in Sport, both of which offer a more in-depth exploration of sports science, management, and physical education. These qualifications are well-regarded and provide students with the academic background needed to pursue further education or a career in the sports sector, whether that be through university study or direct entry into the industry. At KS5, 100% of the A-level cohort achieved A*-C, all students achieved an A*-A for their practical performance and coursework. Students selecting our academic pathway are also exceptional athletes. Matthew McKenzie travelled to the USA on a Football scholarship. Francesco Galluzzi represented the UAE and competed in the Italian National Swimming Championships recently.



Graduating Slipstreams for Careers in Sport Opportunities

Career Development and Opportunities Safa takes pride in offering students not just the academic qualifications needed to pursue careers in sport, but also practical experience. Many of our students go on to seek careers in the sporting sector, whether as professional athletes, coaches, sports scientists, physiotherapists, or administrators. The school's sports department plays an active role in helping students prepare for these careers, offering guidance on career pathways, internships, and training opportunities. In fact, a number of former Safa students have even returned to work with the sports department after leaving Sixth Form. These alumni have contributed their expertise, sharing the knowledge and skills they gained during their time at Safa while continuing to develop their careers in the sports sector. This continuity of involvement highlights the lasting impact Safa has on its students, both during their time at the school and beyond, and it provides current students with valuable role models who have successfully transitioned from school to a career in sport. Additionally, a number of our BTEC and A-Level PE students are also given the opportunity to gain hands-on experience by assisting the sports department with organising and running major events. These students play a vital role in events such as Sports Days, Swim Galas, and even international competitions. For example, Safa recently hosted the U11 BSME Games, where 16 visiting schools battled it out over three days of intense competition. Our students not only supported the logistics and operation of the event but also gained valuable insight into event management and the behind-the-scenes work that makes such competitions run smoothly. Our BTEC Sports students also coach our Primary students in the vast Primary ECA programme. This involvement not only helps students gain practical experience but also builds leadership, teamwork, and organisational skills—attributes that are highly sought after in the sports industry. By assisting with these large-scale events, students can see firsthand how sports organisations function, and many of them express an interest in pursuing careers related to event coordination, sports management, and administration.



Conclusion Safa Community School offers an extensive range of academic and extracurricular opportunities that help students pursue careers in sport. Through our sports scholarships, academic pathways in GCSE, BTEC, and A-Level PE, as well as our strong connections to universities and professional sports organisations, Safa supports students in every step of their journey toward a career in the sports sector. With a proven track record of students securing sports scholarships and continuing their education in sport-related fields, Safa provides a strong foundation for those seeking to build a career in the sports industry. Furthermore, the school's focus on nurturing talent, creating lasting connections, and providing hands-on event management opportunities ensures that students are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities that await them in the world of sport.

Provision of Facilities to Meet the Needs of Students at Safa Community School

Safa Community School (SCS) has consistently invested in upgrading and expanding its world-class sports facilities, ensuring that students have access to state-of-the-art resources that cater to a wide range of sporting needs. The school's commitment to providing exceptional facilities helps foster a culture of excellence in sports and physical education, enabling students to train and compete at the highest levels. The owners have listened closely to the needs of the Sports Department, continuously investing in enhancing the facilities to support the school's vision of providing the best possible environment for its athletes. **Rugby-Certified Astro Turf Playing Fields** Safa is proud to offer two rugby-certified outdoor astro turf playing fields, one on ground level and one positioned above the school's swimming pool and running track. These high-quality astroturf fields are designed to meet international standards, ensuring that students have a safe and professional environment in which to train and compete in rugby and other field sports. The additional field, located above the pool and track, provides a unique setting for training, offering students plenty of space for both rugby and other sports activities. **Sports Halls and Multi-Purpose Facilities** Safa's two four-court badminton sports halls are another highlight of the school's impressive sporting infrastructure. Each sports hall features markings for multiple sports, including basketball, netball, volleyball, and badminton, making them versatile venues for a variety of indoor sports. These courts are used for training, competitions, and PE lessons, offering students the opportunity to develop their skills in different sports while benefiting from spacious and well-maintained facilities.



Fitness Suite for Strength and Conditioning Safa's fitness suite is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment to support the school's Strength and Conditioning (S&C) program. The fitness suite is specifically designed to help students improve their strength, endurance, and overall physical fitness, providing them with the tools they need to excel in their chosen sports. The facility is also used by the school's performance squads for specialised training, ensuring that students are given the best possible resources to enhance their athletic abilities. **Outdoor Multi-Use Courts** The school features four outdoor multi-use courts, which can be used for a variety of sports, including netball, tennis, and basketball. These courts are ideal for training and casual play, giving students the opportunity to participate in a wide range of sporting activities. Whether students are honing their basketball skills or engaging in friendly tennis matches, these versatile courts contribute to the diverse range of sporting opportunities available at Safa.

Facilities to Meet the Needs of Students at Safa Community School

Swimming Pools Safa is home to two outdoor 25-meter heated swimming pools, which are used for both competitive swimming and recreational activities. The pools are an essential part of the school's sports program, hosting everything from swimming lessons and training sessions to swim galas and competitions. The addition of heated water ensures that students can train comfortably throughout the year, regardless of the weather, making the swimming pools a key facility for Safa's athletes.

Running Track and Football Grid Areas One of Safa's standout features is its 60-meter running track, which is fully shaded to protect students from the sun during outdoor training sessions. The track is surrounded by football grid areas, also shaded by the school's Sky Astro Structure. This facility provides students with an excellent space to improve their running and agility, whether they are preparing for track competitions or football training. The complete shading of the track and grid areas ensures that students can engage in their training activities with comfort and safety, making it a year-round resource for athletes.



Recent Investments and Long-Term Commitment In addition to these impressive facilities, the school has made a significant recent investment with the addition of a 7 million dirham Sky Astro. This state-of-the-art structure demonstrates both innovation and a long-term commitment to offering the very best resources for Safa's sporting students. The owners have actively responded to feedback from the Sports Department, continuously investing to improve the sports facilities to ensure students have access to the best training environments available.

Conclusion Safa Community School's sports facilities are a cornerstone of its commitment to providing students with the very best resources to develop their athletic skills and compete at the highest level. The school's investment in its facilities—ranging from rugby-certified astroturf fields and multi-purpose sports halls to state-of-the-art fitness equipment and heated swimming pools—ensures that students have access to the best possible environments for training, competition, and recreation. The continual development and expansion of these facilities reflect the school's commitment to excellence in sports education, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to excel, regardless of their sporting interests or abilities. The recent addition of the Sky Astro field exemplifies the school's forward-thinking approach and long-term dedication to providing outstanding facilities for its athletes.

The Capacity of Teachers to Inspire a Love of Sport

At Safa Community School, the passion for sport and physical education is driven by a dedicated and highly qualified team of staff who work tirelessly to inspire and nurture a love of sport in all students. The school boasts a large department of 17 qualified PE teachers, along with 3 highly experienced sports coaches and 3 lifeguards, ensuring a wide range of expertise is available to support students at every level of ability and interest.

We even have a large number of teachers from outside of the PE & Sports Department who assist us with the running of our extra-curricular activities and squads. The senior leadership team have been strategic in recent years with their recruitment, not only sourcing exceptional teachers but also those who can offer and add value to the enrichment programme outside of the classroom.

Leadership Structure and Support

To effectively meet the diverse needs of students, the sports department operates with a well-established leadership structure. At the helm of the department are the Director of Sport and the Head of PE, both of whom are assisted by a 2nd in PE and an Assistant Director of Sport. This strong leadership team ensures that the vision for Safa's sports provision is executed seamlessly, with a focus on both academic and extracurricular excellence.

The department also boasts a dedicated team of **Heads of Sports** who specialise in specific disciplines, ensuring that growth and excellence in each sport are continually fostered. These Heads of Sports include specialists in Rugby, Boys Football, Girls Football, Basketball, Swimming (inclusive of Water Polo/Aquathlon), Netball, Golf, Rounders, and Gymnastics. Each Head of Sport plays a key role in developing training programs, organising competitions, and ensuring that students have the resources and support they need to excel in their chosen sport.

Inspiring a Passion for Sport

At Safa, the goal is not just to develop students' athletic skills but to instil a lifelong love of sport. The diverse expertise of the teaching team, coupled with their passion for physical education, creates an environment where students are encouraged to explore different sports, try new activities, and build confidence in their abilities. Whether a student is a budding athlete or just discovering their potential, they are supported every step of the way by teachers who genuinely care about their development and well-being.

The sports department's philosophy of personalised support ensures that every student's needs are met, whether they are participating in a team sport, engaging in individual activities, or exploring new forms of fitness. The Heads of Sports also work closely with students to monitor their progress, offer specialised coaching, and ensure that students are provided with the best opportunities to grow and succeed.

A number of our experienced Sports department also run and organise the local DASSA leagues for the schools of Dubai. In the last two years, SCS Sports department staff have organised Netball, Football, Aquathlon, Swimming & Basketball leagues for all the DASSA Schools.



The Capacity of Teachers to Inspire a Love of Sport

Fostering Excellence and Development The leadership team is not only focused on inspiring a love of sport but also on fostering excellence in athletic development. With specialised coaching in various sports, Safa has seen remarkable success across a wide range of competitions, from local tournaments to international events. The support from teachers and coaches is instrumental in helping students reach their highest potential, whether they are competing at a national level or just starting their sporting journey. Moreover, teachers go above and beyond in offering additional support outside of the regular curriculum, including early morning training sessions, extra coaching for performance squads, and opportunities for students to participate in international competitions. This hands-on, student-centred approach ensures that every child is given the tools and motivation to succeed, helping them to discover their passion for sport and develop the discipline and work ethic needed to excel.

Conclusion The sports department at Safa Community School is a powerhouse of dedication, expertise, and passion, with a team of qualified teachers, coaches, and support staff who are committed to inspiring students at all levels. The department's leadership structure ensures that the needs of every student are met, while the specialised Heads of Sports drive excellence and growth in individual sports. By offering a wide range of opportunities and personalised support, Safa creates an environment where students are not only taught the skills needed for success but also develop a genuine love for sport that will last a lifetime.



One Of Our Many superstars: Andrew

Please provide a case study of a child and their individual journey in Sport at your school. Please choose a journey that highlights the sporting strengths of your school, teachers and leadership, and the impact of your school on transforming the life chances of children. Please include photos/videos to bring their story to life. Part of their story should have taken place in the period 2023–2025. Please secure relevant permissions for publication.



Andrew joined Safa Community School in August 2020. A keen swimmer, Andrew's talent started to show through after Covid restrictions were lifted and events and competitions began again. Andrew has always been a true competitor, aiming for excellence at every meet. He pours his heart and soul in every race he swims, and demands nothing short of first place for himself, wanting to make his school and community proud every chance he gets in competitions.

Over the last 2 years, Andrew has received numerous awards and accolades, from Safa Community School, his swimming clubs and from his home country of Cyprus.

Safa Community School has been at the forefront of his journey since he first joined the school, supported by Mr. Chris Hubble, Head of Swimming, and Mr. Alex Berwick, SCS Swim Coach. Safa truly identifies and nourishes talent and values the needs of the athlete. With the guidance and support of the PE team, Andrew was awarded Sports Leader for his respective house 2 years in a row and was selected as House Captain in the Academic Year of 2023–2024. As part of the role of being Sports Leader, Andrew was encouraged to volunteer in the sports days of the primary year groups, assisting the PE Team with time keeping, organisation and logistics. As House Captain, he has assisted BTEC students in moderations as well as being chosen by SCS to captain the U15 World School Games Squad (for 2 years), with the team being crowned overall champions on both occasions. With Mr. Hubble and Mr. Berwick as his coaches, Andrew has won for Safa Community School, Swimmer of the Year (three years in a row), Aquathlete of the Year and last year in 2024, he won overall Sportsman of the Year. In the DASSA league for 2025, Andrew has set the record for the 50m freestyle swim, as well as breaking the World School Games Records in the 50m freestyle and 50m butterfly individual events, as well as the two relay events. In addition, he also won Swim MVP. He has also represented Safa in 2023 and 2024 in the World School Games Event Series for the London Swimming Championships. Swimming for Speedo Swim Squads in Dubai, Andrew has won on two occasions 3rd place overall swimmer of the year for 15–16 age group category in the 2023 and 2024 season.

In 2024, Andrew was officially selected for his country's National Team – Cyprus, with his first country representation competition taking place in Malta. In that competition, Andrew managed to break the National Swim Record for the 50m freestyle in short course for his age group and has broken his own record three times since. Selected once again for the National Team, Andrew travelled to Cyprus in April 2025 for the Junior Multination Championship Meet gaining PBs in both the 100m backstroke and 100m freestyle events. Andrew has also won for his country the prestigious Top 60 athletes of the year award across all age groups and sports. Looking into the future, Andrew's number one goal is to make the Cyprus Team for the LA 2028 Olympics and getting into his preferred choice of university in the USA; his Swim scholarship here at SCS has turned this dream into a living reality.



What makes our school stand apart in Sport, and why is it so important to the school – and you personally?

What Makes School Sport Stand out at SCS At Safa Community School, sport has always been more than just competition; it has been a vehicle for growth, resilience, and excellence. Our primary teams have always dominated in sports across the UAE, soon after the school opened in 2014. Still, as a proud through-school, our secondary school from 2016 faced the challenge of losing some of our best talent to more established schools that had been in operation for 30+ years. However, rather than accept this as the norm, we chose to redefine it. Our journey has been one of grit, determination, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. We've introduced unique features such as an elite scholarship, mentoring and coaching program, external partnerships, extensive overseas tours, and guest speakers. These initiatives, combined with our significant capital investment into state-of-the-art facilities, specialist staffing, and resources, have transformed our sporting culture into one of the most sought-after in the region. We have bucked the trend. We no longer lose talent but attract the best. SCS has become the honey pot for aspiring athletes, where students actively seek to train and compete at the highest level, backed by exceptional coaching and world-class facilities. Each performer is different and has a unique journey, and we embrace this by offering pathways for all. Whether an elite competitor striving for international success or a student discovering their passion for sport, our philosophy remains the same: everyone has a place, and every journey is valued. Our curriculum pathways of GCSE, BTEC, A-level and multiple coaching pathways ensure our students can combine practical and theoretical components for life after SCS. As a result, our athletes are impacting UAE national results, with some even on the path to becoming future Olympians who will represent the UAE in Los Angeles in 2028. We teach discipline, leadership, and resilience through sport, equipping our students with lifelong skills beyond the pitch or court.

Why is it so important to you and the school? My journey to becoming a Head of School began after 20 years as a PE teacher, a role that shaped my career and my entire philosophy on education and leadership. Throughout that time, I had the privilege of nurturing and witnessing incredibly talented students who went on to play at the highest levels of sport. But I also saw the other side, the gifted individuals who, for various reasons, slipped through the net due to a lack of mentoring, role models, exposure, or work ethic. I saw firsthand how this impacted their sporting potential, emotional well-being, sense of belonging within school, and ability to navigate social networks. For some, particularly in communities where sport is a legacy passed down from generation to generation, not fulfilling that potential could feel like a failure. Sport is more than just a game; it gives students the skills they need to succeed. As a sportsman, I was fortunate to travel, train, and compete worldwide, developing qualities such as resilience, communication, teamwork, and the ability to overcome setbacks, whether accepting defeat or recovering from serious injuries. These experiences didn't just shape me as an athlete; they shaped me as a leader. The values I bring to Safa Community School today, the messages I share in assemblies, the guidance I offer to students, and even the conversations I have with parents don't always come from my university lectures or NPQH studies, but from the lessons learned on the sports field. This is why school sports are so important to me. It is a platform that has the power to transform lives, teaching lessons that no classroom ever could. It creates bonds, instils discipline, and opens doors to opportunities that may never have existed otherwise. At SCS, sports aren't just an extracurricular activity; they are a fundamental part of who we are and the legacy we are building. Every student deserves a chance to fulfil their potential. I am committed to ensuring that no talent is lost, no ambition is left unsupported, and no child is denied the opportunities that sport can provide. **Mike Davies (Head of Secondary)**



What makes our school stand apart in Sport, and why is it so important to the school – and you personally?

At Safa Community School, what truly sets us apart in sports is our inclusive approach, which ensures that every student, regardless of skill level, has the opportunity to participate and excel. Whether our most talented athletes compete in sports tours abroad or our B, C, and D squads participate in local DASSA leagues and mini-sporting festivals, we offer a wide range of opportunities for all students. This approach fosters individual growth and creates a strong sense of community and teamwork among students of all abilities. Despite the school's significant growth in recent years, developing from one of the very new schools in Dubai to becoming one of the sporting powerhouses, we have remained steadfast in our core value of being a true community. Staff, students, parents, and stakeholders continuously cross paths, working together to create an environment where everyone is supported and encouraged to achieve their best. This collaborative spirit extends into our sporting culture, where everyone from coaches to families is involved, and this helps nurture the overall development of our athletes. Sport at Safa is about more than just physical activity; it builds resilience, discipline, and collaboration and offers the boys & Girls the chance to develop confidence and a healthy competitive spirit. This inclusive and community-centred approach is something I deeply value, as it ensures that every student feels empowered and connected. Watching students grow, whether competing on a national stage or participating in local events, reinforces how essential sport is to their overall development. It's a vital part of our school culture, helping shape not only athletic skills but valuable life skills as well. **Matt Journeaux – Director of Sport**



What the Parents Say

The PE department at Safa is truly exceptional—it is rare to find a team of educators who are not only highly skilled in their field but also genuinely passionate about what they do. The dedication and enthusiasm of the PE teachers have had a remarkable impact on all three of my children, consistently encouraging and supporting them in every aspect of their physical and personal development.

Whether it's providing opportunities to participate in local tournaments or representing the school overseas, the department goes above and beyond to help students thrive. What sets them apart even further is their unwavering availability and approachability—always willing to respond to messages, even beyond school hours. Beyond the field, the school pushes my children to grow as leaders, offering valuable experiences through roles such as Sports Leaders.

These positions have given my daughters the chance to step into teaching roles themselves, building confidence, responsibility, and a deeper appreciation for sport. Their love for school is deeply tied to the guidance, care, and inspiration they receive from the PE department.

Parents of Y5, Y9 & Y10 Children

As a mum of 2 sporty kids who also works in the sports industry, I get to collaborate and visit many schools, I can convincingly say Safa provides the best sports programmes, vast opportunities, superb facilities and quality coaching for the students. My daughter in year 6 has experienced winning multiple World School Games, participating in BSME, D1 DASSA Athletics, Cross Country & Aquathons. She was always into individual sports, especially gymnastics, however the fact that Safa provides different levels of team sports, Purple and Yellow Squads, meant she has had opportunities to play on the basketball, football and rippa rugby teams too, which she now absolutely loves and her confidence has improved as a result. My Son in year 9 has had the opportunity to travel to Barcelona and win the World School Games Football, compete in WSG Basketball, swimming and athletics. He thrived in his role as a Sports Leader, and he is excited to take on GCSE PE next year with the amazing PE team who build not only talent but confident, resilient and inspired young minds. The BSME Games Safa hosted (and I have worked with several) was by far the most meticulously planned and well organised, yet the sidelines are friendly, the music is pumping always good vibes at Safa. We are Proud to be Purple! **Mum of Y6 & Y9 Children & Owner of Ultimate Athletics Academy**

Our son and daughter have been at Safa Community School since FS2 and year 2 and are now in Year 10 and Year 12. They are both children who naturally enjoyed sports activities from a young age but thanks to Safa our children have developed a dedicated passion for sport, and it has become part of their daily routine which they look forward to. Joining Safa gave our children the opportunity to experience a wide variety of sports that they would never have tried or been encouraged to try before. The selection of sport that is offered at Safa is outstanding and has allowed our children to participate and compete in many sports including Basketball, Gymnastics, Rugby, Football, Volleyball, Water polo, Swimming, Athletics and Golf amongst others. Both children have participated in BSME, World School Games, DASSA leagues and have travelled to Spain to compete in Football and Basketball. These opportunities and having been able to experience them from a young age have led to them building on their passion for Sport and joining teams outside of school to play and compete in at a high level. The PE team consist of enthusiastic staff who drive their passion and commitment into growing sport at the school, they work tirelessly to give the students as many opportunities as possible and are fantastic role models. In a short space of time Safa has proven that they are just as good as many other schools in Dubai and that is down to the organisation and dedication of the PE team as well as the values and sportsmanship they enroll into the students. As parents we couldn't be happier that we chose to send our children to Safa and for all that they have done to support and develop all the young athletes at school.

Parents of Y10 & Y12 Students

What the Parents Say

Since joining Safa in 2018, both of our children have truly thrived in sports thanks to the school's outstanding support and opportunities. Our eldest daughter, who has a real passion for football, has grown tremendously throughout her time at the school. She's had the chance to compete in numerous games and tournaments across Dubai, as well as international trips to Bahrain and Singapore – all organised by the school.

Our younger daughter has also developed a genuine love for sport, largely due to the wide variety of activities available. From athletics, cross country, and netball to football, swimming, dance, and rounders – she's had the chance to be involved in so many different squads. The encouragement and quality of coaching at Safa have played a huge role in both of our daughters' sporting journeys, and we couldn't be more grateful.

(Parents of Sophia – Year 8, and Charlotte – Year 5)

Gracie joined Safa Community School in September 2023, in Year 7. We were really attracted by the ambition the School had to achieve Division 1 in the DASSA Swimming league. The school have proactively found talented swimmers to build a high-performing Swim Team that achieved Division 1 in the DASSA league in September 2023, gone on to win the World Schools Games in London 2024. The Leaders & PE teachers go above and beyond their day-to-day work in their coaching and development of talent. We often see the Swim Teachers at non-school Competitions, encouraging and supporting Gracie and Safa students. This extra commitment is a testament to their passion and desire to support the children's performance and development.

Gracie's broken 11 UAE records since she was 10 years old. Qualified for the English Summer Nationals in 2024 and Scottish Nationals 2025 winning 3 silvers & 1 bronze. Her goal is to qualify and complete at the English summer Nationals 2025.

We believe Gracie has achieved this through the holistic approach the school have taken. Safa are exceptional in understanding the demands / pressure Gracie has outside of school, especially as she clocks up to 15 hours of training per week. As a result they focus not only on performance but Gracie's wellbeing by providing regular wellness check-ins and a mentor to help support her swimming journey.

They have also given her opportunities outside swimming as a Student Sports Leader. This gives Gracie a chance to Lead & inspire students at Sports events where she excels. These are also good life skills that will help her in later life.

(Parents of Gracie – Year 8)

We have been Safa parents for over seven years now, and with two children of mixed sporting ability currently at the school, I must say we have been thoroughly impressed with the sporting provision at the school, for all ages and abilities.

Our thirteen-year-old absolutely loves sport and needs no encouragement at all to take up as many of the incredible opportunities available at the school as she is able. She plays in a number of the performance squads, and during timetabled PE classes both she and her younger brother are also introduced to an even wider range of sports. The PE department, although large, work really well as a team and are so supportive and understanding when it comes to co-ordinating activities with academics – helping her to achieve a good balance.

Our 10-year-old also enjoys sport, and even though he is not as strong a sportsperson as his older sister, he still participates in a range of sports, and is encouraged to do so by the incredible PE team, both in timetabled lessons and through extracurricular opportunities. He runs for the X-Country squad, and although not the strongest performer, he is always encouraged and made to feel like he makes a valuable contribution. He enjoys rugby and cricket, and even though he is still developing his skills and confidence, he joins squad training sessions and is treated on an equal footing with the more able players.

Timetabled PE sessions are fun and engaging for all, and whenever I attend sports days at school, I am always impressed not only by the children's performance and effort, but also by the energy of Safa's PE department who cheer every single child on with such enthusiasm, regardless of their ability.

I feel whilst it is definitely true that Safa is a great school for competitive sport, with so many opportunities available to all, its major sporting strength lies in the way its PE team presents sport to all children as something to be enjoyed at every level, encouraging children to take this belief with them throughout school and beyond, encouraging an active lifestyle and healthy habits.

Parents of Y5 & Y8 Students

What the Parents Say

All of the PE team at Safa are just amazing. It's easy to be complacent about the level of commitment and enthusiasm our daughters enjoy on a daily basis. We're very lucky. Their passion is obvious to us as parents, and we witness it on the sidelines at sports days, swimming showcases and fixtures every week. As parents, we couldn't wish for better role models for our daughters. Approachable, fun and passionate about their individual sports and PE as a whole, they truly are the best. It's not just the sheer number of hours the staff put in, although that's impressive enough; it's the positivity and care they give to every ECA, every game, every tournament, every gala and every PE lesson. We've been at Safa for 10 years, and many of the PE team have been with us for our whole journey through the school. I think that's quite unusual, and we've definitely benefited from the consistency. It's enabled the girls to form proper bonds with the team, and in the transition from Primary to Secondary, I think this is especially beneficial. **Parents of Y6 & Y8 Students**



As a parent of three children who have been at Safa for nine years, I couldn't be happier about finding a school where learning and sports can go hand in hand. Starting and ending each day with high-level sport activities, all while achieving the highest academic standards – this is what Safa has been providing us for nearly a decade. From the early years of Primary through to the final years of Secondary, we have been experiencing a diverse, well-structured and excellently organised sport program led by professional and dedicated teachers who coach the children with heart and passion. Always kind, smiling and encouraging. They go the extra mile by regularly organising additional sports activities, even on weekends, and by participating in international competitions both within the UAE and abroad. We are also grateful for Safa's collaboration with professional sports clubs in Dubai, which offers students extra opportunities to grow and achieve their highest potential in sports. All in all, Safa offers outstanding sports facilities, a supportive and inspiring environment that represents value. A TEAM, where kids are happy, are always being recognised and celebrated for their growth and are proud to belong to. **Parents of Y6, Y9 & Y12**