Sun Care Policy and Guidelines

Policy Code: SCS A/012/28/09/17— *Revised to comply with DHA Regulations (Updated December 2025)*

Reviewed: January 2026 | Next Review: January 2027

1. Introduction

Research confirms that excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) during childhood significantly increases the risk of skin cancer and other skin damage later in life. As pupils spend a substantial portion of the school day outdoors—often during peak UVR hours—schools have a duty of care to minimize harmful sun exposure and promote safe sun-related behaviours.

Skin damage, including sunburn, premature ageing, sunspots, and skin cancer, is cumulative and largely preventable. Severe sunburn in childhood is a known risk factor for long-term skin damage.

In addition, high temperatures increase the risk of dehydration and heat-related illness. Dehydration and heat stress can negatively affect children's wellbeing, concentration, and physical performance, presenting symptoms such as dizziness, headaches, fatigue, and nausea.

In line with Dubai Health Authority (DHA) guidance, SCS is committed to protecting pupils and staff from the harmful effects of sun exposure and heat throughout the year, including during winter months when UVR levels remain significant.

2. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote lifelong sun-safe behaviours and personal responsibility for skin cancer prevention
- Provide a safe school environment that supports healthy practices in a sunny climate
- Reduce the risk of sun-related illness, dehydration, and heat stress
- Ensure all pupils are protected from harmful sun exposure during school hours and activities
- Raise awareness of the importance of hydration and heat safety
- Support the rescheduling or modification of outdoor activities when required

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils
- All staff members
- Parents and carers
- Visitors and volunteers
- All school activities, including outdoor lessons, break times, sports events, trips, and school-organised outdoor functions

4. School Commitment and Responsibilities

SCS is committed to implementing effective sun care practices and will:

4.1 Communication and Awareness

- Inform parents of the Sun Care Policy upon enrolment
- Include the policy in the school prospectus and parent information materials
- Promote sun safety through newsletters, assemblies, meetings, and school communications

4.2 Environment and Facilities

- Maximise shade across school grounds through shelters, shaded play areas, and tree planting where possible
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- Ensure adequate shaded areas are available during outdoor events, sports days, and excursions
- Ensure access to clean, safe drinking water throughout the school day

4.3 Education

- Integrate sun safety and healthy lifestyle education into the curriculum, including PSHE
- Provide age-appropriate guidance on the risks of sun exposure, dehydration, and heat stress

4.4 Staff Responsibilities

- Staff will act as positive role models by practising safe sun behaviours
- Staff will encourage the use of hats, sunscreen, shade, and hydration
- Staff may assist pupils with sunscreen application when necessary, in line with school procedures and parental consent

4.5 Sun Protection Measures

- Implement and enforce a **"No Hat, No Outdoor Play"** policy
- Encourage the use of:
  - Wide-brimmed or legionnaire-style hats that protect the face, neck, and ears
  - SPF 30+ (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
- Encourage pupils without adequate sun protection to remain in shaded or covered areas during outdoor periods
- Regularly review the school dress code to ensure it is suitable for the climate

4.6 Sunscreen Provision

- SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen will be:
  - Included in school sports kits where applicable
  - Listed among required school items
- Parents are encouraged to provide clearly labelled sunscreen for their child

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5. Hydration and Heat Safety

- Pupils must have access to drinking water throughout the day
- Water bottles must be brought to school daily and refilled as needed
- Staff will encourage regular water breaks, particularly during hot weather and physical activity
- Outdoor activities may be modified, shortened, or rescheduled during periods of extreme heat, in accordance with health and safety guidance

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6. Expectations of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Provide an appropriate sun hat as per the school uniform policy
- Ensure their child applies SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen at least 20 minutes before school
- Provide a supply of sunscreen in their child's school bag for reapplication
- Ensure their child brings a clean, labelled water bottle to school daily
- Encourage positive sun-safe behaviours at home
- Familiarise themselves with and support the school's Sun Care Policy

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7. Expectations of Pupils

Pupils are encouraged and expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own health and safety

- Follow the Sun Care Policy by wearing appropriate hats and clothing
- Apply sunscreen before outdoor activities, and when prompted
- Use shaded areas whenever possible
- Drink water regularly throughout the day
- Act as positive role models for peers
- Participate in sun safety education programs
- Contribute feedback and ideas towards improving sun care practices

8. Monitoring and Review

To ensure effective implementation, the school will:

- Brief all staff annually on the Sun Care Policy
- Include sun safety as a standing agenda item in relevant meetings
- Communicate policy updates through newsletters and assemblies
- Inform all new pupils and families of the policy
- Regularly assess shade availability and effectiveness
- Conduct observational monitoring to assess compliance with the policy

9. Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if required by:

- DHA updates
- Health and safety guidance
- Environmental or operational changes

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