



## Sun Protection Policy

July 2025

Review July 2027

### 1. THE LAW

Parents/guardians are a child's main carers and have prime responsibility for their child's health. The employers, generally the LA or the school governing body has legal responsibilities under common law and under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

### 2. KEY ACTION POINTS

- Protection – providing an environment that enables pupils and staff to stay safe in the sun.
- Education – learning about sun safety to increase knowledge and influence behaviour.
- Collaboration – working with parents, governors and the wider community to reinforce awareness about sun safety and promote a healthy school.
- Ensuring levels of sun exposure are considered in the activity documented risk assessment.

### 3. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### 3.1 Why is sun protection important for children and young people?

Skin cancer is one of the most common cancers in the UK and the number of cases is rising at an alarming rate. The good news is that most of these cases could be prevented. Most skin cancers are caused by UV radiation from the sun. If we protect ourselves from the sun, we reduce the risk. This is particularly important for children and young people whose skin is delicate and easily damaged.

Sunburn in childhood can double the risk of skin cancer in later life. The damage cannot be seen immediately because skin cancer can take years to develop. But children exposed to the sun now are storing up problems for the future.

#### 3.2 What is the SunSmart campaign?

SunSmart is the national skin cancer prevention campaign run by Cancer Research UK. The SunSmart schools' initiative encourages schools to develop and adopt sun protection policies.

The five key SunSmart skin cancer prevention messages are:

**S**tay in the shade 11-3

**M**ake sure you never burn.

**A**lways cover up – wear a t-shirt, hat and wraparound sunglasses.

**R**emember children burn more easily.

**T**hen use factor 15+ sunscreen with 5 stars on the back.

### 3.3 Why have a SunSmart sun protection policy?

We get around 80% of our sun exposure by the age of 21 and some of this exposure occurs at school. Schools have a responsibility to ensure that pupils are protected from the harmful effects of the sun as much as possible during the school day. Fair skinned people are more at risk from sun damage but sun protection is relevant to both fair and dark skinned children and adults.

Developing a SunSmart sun protection policy is an important step towards encouraging good health in line with the National Healthy Schools Standards.

### 3.4 What is a SunSmart sun protection policy?

These are some elements common to all sun safety policies. These include:

- **Protection:** providing an environment that enables pupils and staff to stay safe in the sun. This would include maximising the use of available shade during outdoor activities, timetabling these sensibly and considering whether additional structures (temporary or permanent) are needed to provide shade. Protection will also include encouraging pupils to wear suitable clothing and hats during outdoor activities. It is for parents to decide what sunscreen is appropriate for their child and supply it if necessary. Where it is needed, sunscreen should be applied at home before school.

In some situations, particularly for more vulnerable pupils there may be a need for sunscreen to be reapplied during the school day. As far as possible the pupil should apply this themselves (under supervision if necessary). Where assistance is required (eg for very young pupils or those with a disability) then this should be applied following the same procedures that the school have in place for the administration of medication.

Physical contact with children can put teachers and support staff at risk of allegations of abuse but physical contact is not, itself, unlawful.

- **Education:** learning about sun safety to increase knowledge and influence behaviour
- **Collaboration:** working with parents, governors and the wider community to reinforce awareness about sun safety and promote a healthy school.

## 4. TREATING A PUPIL WITH SUNBURN

Would fall within the definition of first aid DFE Guidance on First Aid for Schools states: teachers and other staff in charge of pupils are expected to always use their best endeavours, particularly in emergencies, to secure the welfare of the pupils at the school in the same way that parents might be expected to act towards their children. In general, the consequences of taking no action are likely to be more serious than those of trying to assist in an emergency.

## 5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON WEBSITES

The Health & Safety Executive: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Childhood sunburns - [http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/pdf/sunsafety\\_v0908.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/pdf/sunsafety_v0908.pdf)