



MERE SCHOOL

Sun Safety and Protection Policy

Policy Reference:	Health, Safety & Welfare - Sun Protection Protocol
Approval Date / Bodies:	Autumn Term 2026 (Reviewed by JC)
Effective Date:	September 2026
Next Scheduled Review:	Autumn Term 2029

1. Statement of Intent & Regulatory Alignment

At Mere School, we are fully committed to ensuring the health, safety, and physical wellbeing of our entire school community. Skin cancer remains one of the most common cancers in the United Kingdom, with infection and diagnosis rates rising at an alarming rate. Crucially, the vast majority of skin cancers are preventable, as they are primarily caused by cumulative exposure to Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. Protecting our pupils is of paramount importance because young, delicate skin is highly susceptible to irreversible UV damage.

Sustaining sunburn during childhood can double an individual's lifetime risk of developing skin cancer. Since UV damage is cumulative and skin cancers can take decades to develop, the preventative protection measures we implement today safeguard our children's future health.

Cancer Research UK 'Sun Smart' Prevention Core Standards:

- Stay in the shade during peak UV hours (11:00 AM to 3:00 PM).
- Take active measures to ensure skin never burns.
- Always cover up when outdoors—wear a t-shirt, protective wide-brimmed hat, and wraparound sunglasses.
- Remember that children's skin is more delicate and burns far more easily.
- Utilise broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher and a minimum 4-star UVA rating.

1.1 Regulatory & Statutory Framework (2026)

This policy is developed and reviewed in consultation with our whole school community (including parents, staff, and governors) and has been fully updated to comply with the latest statutory requirements, standards, and guidance in force for the 2026/2027 academic year:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 (DfE Statutory Guidance):** Frames sun safety and extreme weather protection as an essential safeguarding and student welfare responsibility. Schools have a strict duty of care to provide a safe learning environment, identify environmental health risks, and implement measures to prevent physical harm (including severe UV damage, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke). It also governs the safeguarding boundaries around physical contact and staff-pupil interactions during supervised cream application.
- **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF):** Inspectors evaluate how effectively the school safeguards pupils and promotes their physical health, mental wellbeing, and personal development. A robust sun safety protocol provides direct evidence of effective health and safety management and the proactive promotion of healthy lifestyle choices within the curriculum.
- **DfE Statutory Health Education Curriculum (PSHE):** Legally mandates that primary schools teach pupils about the benefits and risks of sun exposure, enabling them to make informed choices about protecting their skin and reducing their risk of long-term damage.
- **UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) & Met Office Weather-Health Alerts (2026):** Aligns school operational protocols with the updated impact-based Adverse Weather and Health Plan to manage extreme heat events dynamically based on regional alerting systems (Yellow, Amber, and Red alerts).

2. Core Pillars of the Sun Safety Policy

Our strategic approach is structured around three foundational, curriculum-aligned pillars designed to ensure a whole-school culture of sun safety:

2.1 Protection: Creating a Safe Sun Environment

We are committed to providing physical environments and operational structures that enable pupils and staff to remain protected from high UV radiation. Key environmental controls include:

- **Shade Infrastructure:** The school regularly reviews and audits school grounds to ensure the availability of adequate shade. A large, high-quality permanent shaded area has been constructed on our playground to allow comfortable outdoor rest.
- **Playtime Adaptations:** Alternative play arrangements are enacted on extremely hot days or during periods of elevated UV. Outdoor play is redirected to fully shaded structures, or indoor supervised play is substituted.
- **Timetabling & Outdoor Events:** We actively modify the school timetable based on prevailing weather conditions. For example, high-exposure outdoor events such as Sports Days are scheduled exclusively in the early morning to avoid peak UV periods, and PE lessons are relocated to shaded areas or indoors during extreme conditions.
- **Protective Sun Hats:** Official school sun hats are made available to pupils throughout the academic year. Parents are strongly encouraged to provide wide-brimmed hats that protect the face, ears, and neck.

2.2 Education: Empowering Pupils with Knowledge

Mere School integrates sun safety into its standard educational delivery to cultivate lifelong healthy habits:

- Teaching staff explicitly discuss sun safety and UV protection as a formal component of our statutory Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and Physical Health curriculum.
- Pupils are taught to understand the UV Index system (particularly focusing on the risk threshold of UV 3 and above) and are encouraged to check local weather data as part of their STEM/geography learning.
- Active peer-led and teacher-led campaigns promote the practical understanding of the CRUK 'Sun Smart' principles, making children active participants in their own skin protection.

2.3 Collaboration: Working with Parents & Partners

A healthy school environment is only achievable when reinforced by the wider community. We work closely with parents, carers, and governors through:

- Disseminating regular communications and safety letters to parents prior to and during the summer terms to reinforce sun-safe behaviors at home.
- Requiring parents to apply a high-factor sunscreen to their children before they arrive at school each morning.
- Establishing a clear, transparent agreement regarding sunscreen use, self-application, and the supply of named protection bottles for the school day.

3. UKHSA & Met Office Weather-Health Alert (WHA) Protocol

In accordance with the 2026 UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Adverse Weather and Health Plan, Mere School operates a dynamic heat-health alerting protocol. During the core alerting season (1 June to 30 September, and during extraordinary periods), the school management team monitors the regional Weather-Health Alerts (WHA) and implements the following mandatory operational actions based on the alert levels:

Alert Level	Risk Context	Mandatory Operational Actions
Green (No Alert)	Standard summer temperatures. Baseline risk to health.	• Standard sun protection guidelines apply. • Encourage wide-brimmed hats and shade during break times. • Promote hydration; children keep water bottles accessible. • Baseline PSHE sun safety lessons taught.
Yellow (Enhanced)	Temperatures rise. Potential localized impacts on vulnerable pupils and staff.	• Increase active vigilance by playground supervisors. • Staff remind and prompt children to drink fresh, cool water regularly. • Relocate physical education and active sports to early morning hours. • Remind pupils to reapply sunscreen prior to lunch breaks. • Ensure children with sensitive skin or clinical needs wear long sleeves.

Amber (High Risk)	Sustained extreme temperatures. High risk of heat-related illness in children.	• Restrict vigorous physical activity and PE lessons between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM. • Move outdoor play times to shaded play structures or organize indoor quiet activities. • Open school building windows early in the morning to release heat; close blinds/curtains during peak hours to protect indoor environments. • Enforce supervised sunscreen reapplication before going outdoors. • Formulate clinical support check-ins for pupils with high-risk health conditions.
Red (Critical)	Extreme heat. Imminent risk to health and physical wellbeing of the whole setting.	• Prohibit all outdoor play and outdoor physical activities. • All pupils and staff remain in actively cooled indoor spaces. • Conduct comprehensive local risk assessments on indoor temperatures. • Liaise with the Local Authority regarding emergency operational adjustments or altered school hours. • Ensure strict clinical protocols are executed for highly vulnerable/SEND pupils.

4. Sunscreen Administration & Safeguarding Boundaries

To balance our health-and-safety duty of care with robust safeguarding guidelines (under KCSIE 2026), Mere School operates a clear protocol regarding the storage, use, and application of sunscreen during school hours. This replaces the previous impractical requirement of parents reapplying cream at lunch with a streamlined, safe supervised self-application system:

- **Parental Responsibility:** Parents and carers must apply a high-factor sunscreen (SPF 30+ or SPF 50+ with 4 or 5-star UVA protection) to their child before school. Parents are responsible for supplying their child with a named bottle of sunscreen during warm weather.
- **Supervised Self-Application:** As a rule, pupils are expected to self-apply their own sunscreen at lunchtime prior to going outdoors. This self-application must be fully supervised by school staff to ensure appropriate, thorough coverage and to encourage independent personal care. Staff will monitor the process and ensure pupils treat the products respectfully.
- **Safeguarding Boundaries (KCSIE):** To protect both pupils and staff from allegations of misconduct and to respect child privacy, staff are not permitted to physically apply sunscreen directly to pupils under standard conditions. Staff interactions will be limited to verbal instruction, prompting, and visual checks.
- **Hand Hygiene & Cross-Contamination:** To maintain sanitary conditions and prevent cross-contamination or spread of allergens, both pupils and staff must wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately before and after the application of sunscreen. Staff must supervise hand hygiene during self-application blocks.

- **Sunscreen Storage:** Sun protection products must be stored in the designated classroom cupboard or the school office to prevent loss, ingestion, or misuse by other children during the school day. Sunscreen must never be left unsupervised in standard school bags.

5. Equality Act & Reasonable Adjustments

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), Mere School ensures that reasonable adjustments are actively made for pupils with protected characteristics, disabilities, complex special educational needs (SEND), or severe clinical/skin vulnerabilities (such as extreme eczema, solar urticaria, or those taking photosensitising medications):

- **Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP):** For children with documented clinical vulnerabilities, the school will coordinate with parents and clinical teams to establish tailored precautions. Advice from clinical specialists will be documented and shared confidentially with all teaching and supervising staff.
- **Direct Physical Assistance:** Direct physical assistance with sunscreen application by school staff is restricted to younger pupils (e.g., in Early Years/Nursery settings) or pupils with SEND who lack the physical coordination or cognitive capacity to self-apply. This assistance is strictly governed by the following safeguarding protocol:
 1. The parent must complete and sign the Parental Consent Form (Appendix 1) giving explicit permission.
 2. Sunscreen must be provided by the parent and clearly labeled with the pupil's name.
 3. Any direct physical assistance by staff must be witnessed by another staff member (the two-adult safeguarding rule) to ensure a transparent, safe environment.
 4. Staff must wash hands between applications to different children to prevent cross-contamination or allergen transfer.

Appendix 1: Parental Consent Form

Please complete and sign this form to grant permission for your child to store and self-apply sunscreen, or to request direct assistance with sunscreen application as a documented reasonable adjustment.

Section 1: Pupil Details	
Child's Surname:	
Child's Forename:	
Date of Birth:	
Class / Year Group:	
Section 2: Sun Protection Product Details	
Brand & Type of Sunscreen:	
Full Directions for Application:	
Known Allergies or Side Effects:	
Special Precautions:	
Section 3: Parent / Carer Contact Details	
Full Name & Relationship:	

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the following terms regarding sunscreen at Mere School:

- I will deliver the named sun protection product personally to the School Office or Classroom Teacher.
- I understand that the school is not legally obliged to undertake sunscreen administration, but provides this as a safeguarding and welfare service.
- I authorize my child to self-apply their sunscreen under teacher supervision, OR I have requested direct assistance as a reasonable adjustment because of my child's SEND/clinical needs and filled in the specific directions and I certify that the product supplied has been tested on my child's skin previously and has caused no adverse reactions or side effects.

Parent/Carer Signature:

Date: _____

Print Name:

Relationship to Pupil: _____

Emergency Contact Phone:
