

**“What are the rules about sun cream for pupils?”** is a question frequently asked by schools. No specific rules exist but as the “SunSmart” campaign information suggests, sun cream should only be used as the last line of defence with time-limited exposure, use of shade, suitable clothing / headwear being the preferred options.

It should be noted that schools are not required to provide or apply sun cream to pupils but neither is it “banned”. A number of potential problems do exist and schools should consider this issue as part of their work in formulating their overall policy on sun safety and advise parents accordingly.

### **Potential problems associated with sun cream in schools**

Depending to some extent on the age of the children and their ability to self-apply sun cream, schools should consider the following points when deciding whether or not to allow sun cream into school;

- ◆ miss-use of the product by pupils (cleaning up, allergic reactions etc)
- ◆ the time required by school employees to apply it to the class group if the pupils cannot self-apply
- ◆ concerns over inappropriate physical contact between school employees and pupils
- ◆ the potential consequences if a pupil does not have sun cream adequately applied and then suffers sunburn when the school has undertaken to apply it - can adequate application be guaranteed ?
- ◆ if sun cream is to be shared (not recommended), has the greater potential for allergic reaction been considered and can a sufficiently high sun protection factor (SPF) be guaranteed ?