

POLICY – Medicines Management

Rationale/Purpose

Many students attending school need medication to control a health condition. It is necessary that teachers, as part of their duty of care, assist students, where appropriate to take their medication. Schools should ensure the students privacy and confidentiality and should exercise sensitivity towards this issue to avoid any stigmatisation.

Guidelines:

All medication to be administered at the school should be accompanied by written advice providing directions for appropriate storage and administration

A student should not take his or her first dose of a new medication at school as the student should be supervised by the family or health professional in case of an allergic reaction.

Implementation:

- All medication to be administered at the school must be in the original medication bottle or container and clearly labeled including the name of the student, dosage and time to be administered.
- All medication to be administered at the school should be accompanied by written advice providing directions for appropriate storage and administration
- When administering prescription medication, the written advice received must be supported by specific written instructions on the original medication bottle or container, such as that on the pharmacists label noting the name of the student, dosage and time to be administered.
- Analgesics can mask signs and symptoms of serious illness or injury and should not, therefore, be administered by the school, as a standard first aid strategy. Therefore analgesics such as aspirin and paracetamol should not be stored in the schools first aid kit
- The principal (or nominee) should inform the classroom teacher of those students in their charge who require medication to be administered at the school and teachers should release students at prescribed times so that they may receive their medications from the principal or nominee.
- Medication prescribed for a particular student should be retained solely for the use of that student. Only in a life threatening emergency would consideration be given to any variation of this requirement, such as in the case of an Asthma first aid - if the student's own blue reliever puffer is not readily available, one should be obtained from the school's asthma emergency kit or borrowed from another student or staff member and given without delay.
- The principal (or nominee) administering medication needs to ensure that:
 - ↳ the right child;
 - ↳ has the right medication;
 - ↳ and the right dose;
 - ↳ by the right route (for example, oral or inhaled);
 - ↳ at the right time; and
 - ↳ that they write down what they have observed.
- All medication to be administered at the school should be accompanied by written advice providing directions for appropriate storage and administration. Ideally, the school should receive this advice from the student's medical/health practitioner who should complete the relevant Department's Medication Authority Form. This ensures that the medication is medically warranted. If this advice cannot be provided by the student's medical/health practitioner, then the principal may agree to the Medication Authority Form being completed by the student's parent/carer or adult/independent student. Please note that a Medication Authority Form is not required for students with Asthma or Anaphylaxis as this is covered under ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis and the Asthma
- A medication log or an equivalent official medications register should be completed by the person administering the taking of medication.

- The school should seek written permission by the student's medical/health practitioner or parent/carer or adult/independent student, ideally via the completion of a Medication Authority Form to carry their medication with them. Please note that a Medication Authority Form is not required for students with Asthma or Anaphylaxis as this is covered under ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis and the Asthma Foundation's School Asthma Action Plan.
- It is up to the Principal's discretion to agree for the student to carry and manage his/her own medication. This would be advisable only where:
 - the medication did not have special storage requirements such as refrigeration;
 - the practice did not create a situation where there was potential unsafe access to the medication by other students; and
 - Ideally, the medication carried and self-managed by students should be in the original pharmacy-labelled container and be limited to daily requirement (preferred).

Monitoring the effects of medication

- Where required, schools can observe and document behaviour such as for attention disorders or epilepsy, where such observations can be used by the student's medical/health practitioner.
- It is not the role of the school to interpret behaviour in relation to a medical condition. Nor can they be expected to monitor the effects of medication. If the school is concerned for any reason about a student's health, then appropriate first aid and emergency procedures should be put in place.

Medication error

- If a student takes the wrong medication, the wrong amount of medication, or takes medication via the wrong route, the following steps should be followed:
 - if required, follow first aid procedures as outlined on the Student Health Support Plan (see 4.5.3.1) (or in the case of Anaphylaxis an Anaphylaxis Management Plan (see 4.5.10.2).
 - ring the **POISONS INFORMATION LINE 13 11 26**
 - give details of the incident and student
 - act immediately upon their advice (for example, if you are advised to call an ambulance you should immediately do so)
 - contact the student's parents/carers or the emergency contact person to notified them of the medication error and action taken
 - review medication management procedures at the school in light of the incident.
 - Principals must undertake the responsibilities in relation to emergency and security management.

Further information about medication management

- Clarification about an individual student's medication should always be directed through the parent/carer or adult/independent student to the prescribing medical/health practitioner.
- General information about medication (that is, questions relating to safe medication practices but not identifying individual students) can be obtained from local or hospital pharmacists.

References: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – Victorian Schools Reference Guide

Ratified by School Council: 20th September 2011

To be Reviewed: 2014

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