



Title: Administering Medicines Policy

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Administration of Medicines

This briefing sets out the legal position of School staff with regard to administration of medicines to pupils and The Trust policy guidance on this area, which is designed to protect the rights of individual members while ensuring that the health and safety of pupils is safeguarded. Since 1st September 2014, section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a statutory duty on governing bodies of maintained schools, proprietors of academies, including free schools, and management committees of pupil referral units to make arrangements for supporting pupils with medical conditions.

Summary of Advice

There is no legal or contractual duty on school staff- teachers, support staff or first aiders to administer medicine or to supervise a pupil taking it. This is a purely voluntary role and is recognised as such by the government. While school staff have a general legal duty of care to their pupils, this does not extend to a requirement to routinely administer medicines. Support staff may, as part of their contract, have specific duties to administer medication.

Staff may volunteer to administer medication but should be particularly wary about agreeing to administer medicines where:

- The timing of its administration is crucial to the health of the child.
- Some technical or medical knowledge is required.
- Intimate contact with the pupil is necessary (this would include administration of rectal Diazepam, assistance with catheters or use of equipment for children with tracheotomies).

Staff who do volunteer to administer medicines should not agree to do so without first receiving appropriate information and training.

The Trust will support members who do not wish to administer medicines or who feel that they are being unfairly pressurised to do so.

Children with Long-Term Health Problems

The Trust recognises that it is desirable for children with long-term recurring health conditions, such as asthma, epilepsy and diabetes, to be accommodated within school in order that they can continue their education.

For this to be done, however, proper and clearly understood arrangements for administration of medicines must be made. This will help ensure that children are comfortable with the arrangements. Parents should be encouraged to provide maximum support and assistance in helping the school accommodate the pupil. This would include measures such as self-administration (where necessary and only after approval from a GP) or parental supervision.

School Staff

School staff conditions of service do not include any legal or contractual obligation to administer medicine or to supervise a pupil taking medicine. While staff have a professional duty to safeguard the health and safety of pupils and a general legal duty of care towards pupils, both when they are authorised to be on the school premises and when they are engaged in authorised school activities elsewhere, this does not imply a duty upon teachers personally to undertake the administration of medicines.

The Trust advises that school staff who do volunteer to administer medicines should not agree to do so without first receiving appropriate information and training. The employer should arrange appropriate training in collaboration with local health services, which will also be able to advise on further training needs. While schools benefit from a nurse on site, it is important that schools should be able to seek advice from a nurse where necessary.

As noted earlier, the Trust advises teachers, and other staff, should be particularly wary about agreeing to administer medicines to pupils where the timing of its administration is crucial to the health of the child; or where some technical or medical knowledge is required; or where intimate contact with the pupil is necessary.

The Trust also advises that any staff who administer medicines should only do so under strictly controlled guidelines, fully confident that the administration will be safe. It is wise to limit this willingness to emergency situations only. Every reasonable precaution must be taken. Clear instructions about medicines requiring regular administration must be obtained and strictly followed.

Any decision on the part of a school staff to agree to administer medicines has to be a matter of individual choice and judgement. Apart from the obvious distress to a staff member who makes an error, all staff who agree to administer medicines take on a legal responsibility to do so correctly. There is consequently always the risk that the member of staff might be named in legal claim for negligence. Generally, however, any school staff acting in accordance with agreed procedures would be regarded as acting in the interests of the employer and, since the employer would also be the subject of the action, the staff member would therefore be effectively indemnified against personal liability by the rules of vicarious liability.

In cases of accident and emergency, school staff must, of course, always be prepared to help as they can other school staff in charge of pupils have a general legal duty of care to act as any reasonably prudent parent would. In such emergencies, teachers should do what is obviously necessary and appropriate to relieve extreme distress or prevent further and otherwise irreparable harm, qualified medical treatment should be secured in emergencies at the earliest opportunity.

The Trust will fully support any teacher members who do not wish to administer medicines or any members who feel that they are being unfairly pressured to inappropriately administer medication.

School Policies and Individual Pupils' Health Care Plans

Every school within The Trust should establish a clear policy on supporting individual pupils with medical needs, which must be understood by staff, parents and pupils. An individual health care plan should be drawn up and agreed for every pupil who may need medical care during the school day. The type of plan will vary according to the medical needs of the child, ranging from a short-written agreement with parents to a more detailed document requiring the involvement of appropriate health professionals. Such care plans should be reviewed on a regular basis as agreed with parents. It is also important that the child's teachers – including any supply or temporary staff- are made aware of the plan, and especially of what to do in cases of emergency. All medical details should be treated confidentially, and only be made available to others with the consent of the child/parent.

Further guidance on individual health care plans can be found in the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance Supporting Pupils at school with Medical Conditions.

This includes:

- Clarity about what needs to be done, when and by whom.
- Liaising with parents.
- Staff training and confidentiality of medical information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

parents are responsible for their child's medication and children who are genuinely unwell should not attend school. Headteachers are responsible for deciding whether the school can assist a pupil who needs medication during the school day.

Many pupils with long-term medical conditions will not require medication during school hours. Those that do may be able to administer it themselves.

Where this is not possible, the following procedure is recommended:

- a) The smallest possible dose should be brought to the school, preferably by the parent, labelled with the name of the pupil in addition to clear written instructions for administration- including any possible side effects. It is not safe practice for staff managing medicines to follow re-labelled/re-written instructions or to receive and use re-packaged medicines other than as originally dispensed.
- b) Medicines should be stored safely until needed and children should know where their medicines are and be able to access them immediately.
- c) The medicine should be self-administered if possible, under the supervision of an adult. This may be the headteacher or someone acting with the headteachers authority. It is advisable to keep a written record of the date and time shown of the administration- indeed early years settings must do so by law. Staff managing medicines should ensure that the administration of the medicines is carried out and recorded in line with the school and employer policies.
- d) If in doubt about any procedure, staff should not administer the medicines but check with the parents or a health professional before taking further action.

Further guidance on these and other matters, can be found in the DfE guidance Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions. In meeting their duty to support pupils at their schools with medical conditions, governing bodies must have regard to this guidance.

Safe Storage of Drugs in Schools

The following advice in relation to storage of medication should be adhered to:

- Only prescribed medicines should be brought into school.
- Medicines should only be administered at school where it would be detrimental not to do so.
- Wherever possible children should be allowed to carry their own medicines and devices.
- Schools should not store large volumes of medication. As far as is practicable, the smallest possible dose of medicine should be brought into school. Doses of liquid medicines should not, however, be transferred from the original bottle as this would result in the loss of some of the medicine on the sides of the bottle. Medication should be stored strictly in accordance with product instructions, taking particular account of the correct storage temperature.
- Pupils should know where their own medication is stored and how to obtain it.
- Medicines should be stored in their original containers, clearly labelled with the name of the pupil, the name and dose of the drug, the frequency of administration, any likely side effects, and the expiry date. Parents are responsible for ensuring that this information is provided.
- Medicines should- subject to the exceptions below- be stored in a secure place such as a locked cupboard or a labelled airtight box in a designated refrigerator with restricted access.
- Some medicines, such as asthma inhalers and EpiPen's, must be readily available to pupils and must not be locked away. Children who are capable of carrying their own inhalers should be allowed to do so, following consultation between parents and the headteacher. Generally, it is helpful if the school keeps a spare inhaler for that particular child, in case the original is mislaid. Schools are permitted to hold a spare salbutamol inhaler for emergency use, provided that parental consent has been given for its use in an emergency, should the child's own inhaler not be available.
- Schools should not continue to store surplus or out-of-date medicines. Parents should be asked to collect the containers for delivery back to the chemist and should routinely collect medicines held by the school at the end of each term. If parents do not collect all medicines, they should be taken to a local pharmacy for safe disposal.
- Sharps boxes (obtained by parents on prescription) should always be used for the disposal of needles.
- Local pharmacists can give advice about storing medicines.
- School staff may need to bring their own medication into school. This should be securely stored but does not need to be stored with pupils' medicines.

Non-prescription Medicines

Staff should never volunteer to give non-prescribed medicines to children unless:

- There is specific prior written permission from parents.
- It is carried out in accordance with the employer's policy.

Children under 16 should never be given aspirin unless prescribed by a doctor.

Hygiene and Infection Control

All staff should be familiar with basic hygiene procedures and normal precautions for avoiding infection. Public Health England has published Health Protection in Schools and Other Childcare Facilities <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>. In particular, staff should have access to disposable gloves and should take special care when dealing with spillages of blood or other body fluids, or the disposal of dressings or equipment.

Emergency Procedures

All schools within The Trust should have arrangements in place for dealing with emergency situations. This could be part of a schools first aid policy or critical incident plan. Pupils should know what to do in the event of an emergency (e.g., informing a member of staff). Staff need to be fully aware of a school's policy on emergency procedures, including the identity and role of the member of staff responsible for carrying them out. An appropriate member of staff should be available to accompany a child to hospital in an ambulance and to remain with them until the parent arrives. Staff should not take children to hospital in their own car.

A number of schools in The Trust hold automated external defibrillators (AEDs) on site, which can be used if a pupil or member of staff goes into cardiac arrest. As with administering medicines, staff cannot be compelled to undergo training in administering AEDs, but are able to volunteer to do so if their employer purchases an AED.

Employer Guidelines

The local authority, academy trusts or other responsible body, has principal responsibility for the safety and welfare of pupils. It is essential, therefore, that local authorities and other employers issue detailed policy guidelines to all schools, clarifying the areas of responsibility for medicines, together with the procedure to operate should there be a need for medication to be administered in school. Where an employer has issued guidelines which accord with the principles set out in this briefing, members should follow them carefully.

Action Points

Make sure that in your school:

- Your colleagues are aware of their responsibilities and rights and are indemnified by the employer should anything go wrong.
- A suitable individual health care plan has been agreed for each child with special medical needs in the school.

Additional guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf

Any questions concerning this policy please contact.

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