

NSW Department of Education

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Student Health in NSW Public Schools: A summary and consolidation

This policy provides a summary and consolidation of policy on student health in NSW public schools. It is designed to be read in conjunction with the department's student health website and the policy implementation documents.

Changes since previous update

Changes since previous version

2022 Aug 11 - updated links in policy statement.

Document history

2022 Mar 31 - updated contact details in policy statement.

Implementation document - Anaphylaxis and allergy procedures for schools - added to the Policy Library (previously available on the Anaphylaxis section of the Student Wellbeing intranet page).

Updated implementation document to align with the National Allergy Strategy Best Practice Guidelines (released in October 2021). Streamlined the document to provide clearer guidance and included the reintroduction of the Anapen adrenaline autoinjector in addition to the EpiPen (which remains the general use adrenaline autoinjector for department schools and preschools).

School-based staff will need to familiarise themselves with the updated procedures and undertake the mandatory training for using the Anapen adrenaline autoinjector.

Added link - Anaphylaxis information for schools - to related documents (previously an implementation document).

2022 Mar 02 - updated links at 4.1.2 and 4.1.9 in the policy statement.

2021 May 10 - updated policy statement and implementation document - links and headings. Removed implementation document: The role of the school community in supporting student health.

2021 Feb - updated policy statement - updated contact details.

Updated administration of medications at school training module. Updated contact details.

This policy replaces various policies listed in superseded documents.

Superseded documents

Administration of Prescribed Medications Health Care Procedures in Schools 95/085 (S.083)

Administration of Prescribed Medications and Health Care Procedures in Schools 96/031 (S.030)

Adolescent School Based Vaccination Programs DN/05/0002457

AIDS Information for Teachers in the Primary School 90.023 (S.015)

An Important Health Message for Parents: Protection Against Infectious Diseases 88/341

Asthma 90/098 (S.076)

Asthma Update 99/375 (S.280)

Children Who Are Allergic to Bee Sting 80/065
 Diabetic Children in Schools 81/193
 Dispensing of Medication 89/206 (S.133) 24/7/89
 Enclosed Booklet The AIDS Manual 90/046 (S.033)
 Facilities for School Screening by the Department of Health 91/135 (S.087)
 General Communicable Diseases: Revised Schedule for Exclusion of Students from School and Pre-School 90/013 (S.009), 90/062 (S.049)(amendment)
 General Hygiene and Communicable Diseases including Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) 89/038 (S.027)
 HIV/AIDS Education in Primary Schools 91/162 (S.103)
 HIV and AIDS Education in Primary Schools
 Immunisation: Children Entering Kindergarten 88/341 (S.190)
 Immunise Australia Program 99/088 (S.062)
 Meningococcal Disease 97/286 (S.259)
 Meningococcal Disease DN/02/00285 including attachments
 National Meningococcal C Vaccination Program DN/03/00293 including attachment signed by Dr Denise Robinson, A/Chief Health Officer 17 July 2003
 Notification to Parents Concerning Cases of Meningococcal Disease DN/02/00257
 NSW Adolescent Vaccination Program 2004 DN/04/00137
 NSW Immunisation Documentation Requirements DN/04/00351
 Pediculosis in School Children 83/12 (S.129)
 Physical as Anything: Collaborative Support for Students with Physical Disabilities and Medical Conditions DG 96.1348 (superseded by Second Edition)
 Protection from the Sun. Guidelines to assist in implementing the student health policy
 Prescribed Medicines Enrolment of Children with Continuing Need; Administering to Students 86-158 (S.570)
 Public Health (Amendment) Act 1992 93/016 (S.013) Education Gazette No 5 21.4.93
 Reminder of Guidelines for Supporting Students in Hot Weather DN/04/00438
 Scoliosis Awareness Program 96/120 (S.114)
 Student Health: Administration of Prescribed Medications in Schools 95/078 (S.076)
 School Students: Spinal Problems 85 281 (S.443)
 Student Welfare: Protection from the Sun 85-156 (S.013)
 Teachers Handbook Part 3 3.2.17 Misuse of Drugs or Medicines
 The AIDS Manual 90/046 (S.033)
 Update: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) DN/03/00188
 Use of Analgesic Substances in Schools HO Circular 78/79

1. Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy requires schools to implement practices related to student health that comply with the [NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#), Common Law obligations, and anti-discrimination and privacy legislation, and that demonstrate a commitment to collaborating with parents to support student wellbeing.
- 1.2 Schools assist students with health support needs at school in a range of ways, including: providing first aid (including emergency care), providing temporary care when students become unwell at school, administering medications and health care procedures, and developing individual health care plans if required.
- 1.3 The health and safety of students is relevant to learning and is important to schools.
- 1.4 Quality learning and positive experiences at school can enhance the present and future health of students.
- 1.5 All children and young people of legal school age are entitled to participate in education and training regardless of their health support needs.
- 1.6 Support for students on health issues must be provided in a way that does not discriminate unlawfully against any student.
- 1.7 Students benefit if they have opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and understandings relevant to managing their own health. Considering what is reasonable and safe in an individual case, schools are expected to support students to develop independence in managing their own health.
- 1.8 Schools rely on and value the cooperation of parents, medical practitioners, health services, other relevant agencies and local community resources to support the health of students.
- 1.9 Schools must assist with administering medication or health care procedures during school hours, where this support cannot reasonably be undertaken by parents or others outside school hours. The non-emergency administration of medication and health care procedures by staff is performed on a voluntary basis.
- 1.10 The school's duty of care does not extend to administering medication and/or health care procedures to students who are able to administer this medication or carry out this procedure themselves. If, however, a

student self-administers medication and/or health care procedures, the school has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure this is carried out safely.

1.11 First Aid

- 1.11.1** Schools are responsible for providing first aid at a local level and are required to implement department policy and procedures regarding first aid in schools.

Related information can be found at [First aid](#) (staff only).

1.12 Care of students who become unwell at school.

- 1.12.1** Students who become unwell at school are best transferred to the care of parent/carer. Schools should aim to make students comfortable in the interim.
- 1.12.2** Each school needs to identify the staff members(s) who will care for students who are unwell and the procedures they need to follow. The principal can ask staff members to carry out these duties, or staff members can volunteer.
- 1.12.3** The principal is responsible for negotiating an appropriate arrangement for temporary care of students who are unwell at school. Learning and wellbeing [school support contact staff](#) are available to assist.
- 1.12.4** In the special case of residential schools, arrangements for short-term care for minor ailments may be undertaken as part of the school's provision in the residential facility.
- 1.12.5** Administration of medications and health care procedures.

1.13 Administration of medications and health care procedures.

- 1.13.1** Staff members can volunteer to administer medications and health care procedures in schools. Such staff members will need training to do so. An administration of medications allowance is paid to school administrative and support staff members to carry out this role. A health care procedures allowance is paid to school learning support officers to carry out this role.
- 1.13.2** Where no staff member volunteers for the non-emergency administration of medication or health care procedures and community resources cannot assist, the school must seek the advice of relevant learning and wellbeing [school support contact staff](#). The learning and wellbeing staff will, in some cases, seek the advice of the Disability Learning and Support Office or Student Engagement and Interagency Partnerships Office. An enrolment cannot be refused solely on the ground that no staff member is willing to assist. See also [individual health care plans for students with complex health care needs](#).

1.14 Individual health care plans.

- 1.14.1** The school must develop an individual health plan for any student diagnosed with severe asthma, type 1 diabetes, epilepsy or anaphylaxis; diagnosed as being at risk of an emergency; or who requires the administration of health care procedures.
- 1.14.2** In other cases, principals can decide whether a formal, written individual health care plan will help the school manage support for a student. Their decision will be guided by circumstances where the principal judges that a formal plan will assist in the schools management of the support for the student.
- 1.14.3** Principals must consult with relevant staff when developing individual health care plans, as well as in any cases where they may need to help administer medication and/or health care procedures. It is particularly important that they are consulted regarding students diagnosed with a condition that might require an emergency response. See also [individual health care plans for students with complex health care needs](#).

2. Audience and applicability

- 2.1** NSW public schools, including preschools, parents/guardians/caregivers and the public.

3. Context

- 3.1** The department is committed to meeting its obligations under the NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Common Law, to keep students safe while they are at school. The department also seeks to provide opportunities for students to learn about and practise ways to adopt and maintain a healthy, productive and active life through the student welfare policies and procedures of schools and through Personal Development, Health and Physical Education and other key learning areas.
- 3.2** On specific issues related to student health and on public health priorities, the department is guided by advice from the [NSW Ministry of Health](#). Local health districts, including [Public Health Units](#), provide information and advice on local health issues.
- 3.3** Principals, as workplace managers for work health and safety, and injury management, are accountable for safety within their school. Principals are required to recognise their obligations as workplace managers, ensure they implement department policies and procedures relating to their school's safety, and use resources available to manage safety issues in their school. See also [Health and Safety](#) (staff only).
- 3.4** Legislation
- 3.4.1** Under the [NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977](#) and the [Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, 1992](#), it is unlawful to discriminate against students in relation to enrolment, or once enrolled, on the grounds of their disability. The definition of disability is very wide in both Acts and would include students who must take prescribed medication and/or who need health care procedures administered either on an ongoing or emergency basis.

- 3.4.2 Under the [NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#), the department must do everything reasonably practicable to ensure that students are not exposed to risks to their health or safety while they are at school. Under the Common Law, the department and its staff have a duty to take reasonable care to keep students safe.
- 3.4.3 Under the [NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998](#), the department and its staff have certain obligations regarding the collection, use and storage of personal information. Principals may obtain further information from [Legal Services Privacy](#) (staff only).
- 3.4.4 The [Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002](#) protects the health information of individuals in NSW.

4. Responsibilities and delegations

4.1 Principals:

- 4.1.1 must implement policy and procedures to ensure that systems are in place to protect the health and safety of all students when they are at school or involved in school activities
- 4.1.2 need to develop and document local procedures to support student health. These need to reflect department policy and incorporate local needs, including [First aid](#) (staff only); temporary care of students who become unwell at schools (see section 1.12); administering prescribed medications and health care procedures (see section 1.13 and related website information); [individual health care plans](#) (see section 1.14 and related website information); [immunisation documentation requirements](#) (see related website information); supply and storage of medication; [provision of emergency care](#) (see related website information at staff training, and see [Training and Policies Requiring Regular Review](#)).
- 4.1.3 must include [First aid](#) (staff only) in local procedures
- 4.1.4 must include temporary care of students who become unwell at schools (see section 1.12) in local procedures
- 4.1.5 must include administering prescribed medications and health care procedures (see section 1.13 and related website information) in local procedures
- 4.1.6 must include [individual health care plans](#) (see section 1.14 and related website information) in local procedures
- 4.1.7 must include [immunisation documentation requirements](#) (see related website information) in local procedures
- 4.1.8 must include supply and storage of medication in local procedures
- 4.1.9 must include [provision of emergency care](#) (see related website information at staff training, and see [Training and Policies Requiring Regular Review](#) in local procedures.

4.2 All school staff:

- 4.2.1 take reasonable measures to protect students against risk of injury or harm that should reasonably have been foreseen
- 4.2.2 take reasonable care for the health and safety of all persons in the workplace and to cooperate with the employer to ensure the health and safety of all in the workplace, including assisting in an emergency
- 4.2.3 provide assistance, where staff do not have first aid qualifications, to ensure that a student receives medical attention including first aid.

4.3 Staff members who volunteer and are trained in administering medications, to perform health care procedures, and in administering first aid:

- 4.3.1 must do so in accordance with department policy and procedures.

4.4 Parents/guardians/caregivers need to:

- 4.4.1 cooperate with the school on student health matters
- 4.4.2 inform the school of their child's health needs at enrolment or when health conditions develop or change
- 4.4.3 liaise with the child's medical practitioner about the implications of any health condition for their schooling, and convey this advice and information to the school
- 4.4.4 if required, provide medication and 'consumables' for the school to administer in a timely way and as agreed with the principal
- 4.4.5 where relevant, collaborate with the school to support the child's health needs at school, including updating information and reviewing health care plans. The department's website has a [student health and physical care](#) section and a [parents and carers](#) page with a link to student [wellbeing](#).

4.5 Students need to:

- 4.5.1 contribute to the provision of a healthy and safe school environment
- 4.5.2 ensure that medication is taken for the purpose for which it is intended by the person for whom it is intended
- 4.5.3 cooperate with staff in managing their health
- 4.5.4 as relevant to the individual, develop the understandings and skills needed to progressively manage their own health.

5. Monitoring and review

- 5.1 The [NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) requires the school to report certain work-related incidents within given timeframes. Depending on the type of incident, the school may need to notify WorkCover.
- 5.2 Incidents and injuries are reported in accordance with the [Incident Notification and Response policy](#) (staff only).
- 5.3 Principals will ensure that individual health care plans are reviewed at least annually.
- 5.4 Directors, educational leadership will monitor the local implementation of this policy and report to their Executive Director, School Performance.
- 5.5 The Leader, Child Protection, Health and Mental Wellbeing monitors the implementation of this policy, regularly reviews its contents to ensure relevance and accuracy, and updates it as needed.

6. **Contact**
Leader, Student Health and Safety
Student.Health@det.nsw.edu.au



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