

Medical Conditions and Medication Policy

Wheelock Primary School



Person Responsible for the Policy	Headteacher
Date Approved	September 2025
Signed	S Whitehead
Date for Review	September 2027
Audience	Governors, Staff and Parents/Carers

Most young people will at sometime have short-term medical needs i.e. finishing a course of antibiotics. Some young people will also have longer term medical needs and may require medicines on a long-term basis such as controlled epilepsy etc. Others may require medicines in particular circumstances, such as those with severe allergies who may need an adrenaline injection. Young people with severe asthma may have a need for inhalers or additional doses during an attack. Any longer term need for medication requires an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP). An individual health care plan can help staff identify the necessary safety measures to help support young people with medical needs and ensure that they, and others, are not put at risk.

The following safeguards should be observed in any case where a head teacher agrees to accept responsibility for the administration of medicines to children -

- The school should receive a written request from the parent giving clear instructions regarding the required dosage. Where appropriate a doctor's note should be received to the effect that it is necessary for the child to take medication during school hours. **Prescribed medicines can only** be administered and these must have a prescription/pharmacy label. This includes travel sickness medication.
- The head teacher should obtain informed consent from the parent. It must, however, be remembered that in spite of any form of disclaimer, the head teacher must continue to exercise the duty of care. The necessary form should be completed by the parent whenever a request is made for medication to be reviewed/changed.
- Where possible, in the case of young children the medicine, in the smallest practicable amount, should be brought to school by the parent or nominated responsible adult, not the child and should be delivered personally to the head teacher or a nominated member of staff.
- **Prescribed medicines** must be clearly labelled with contents, owner's name, dosage and expiry date and must be kept in a safe and secure place appropriate to the contents, away from the children, unless they may be needed urgently (eg for asthma) and must be documented for receipt administration and dispatch.
- **Non-prescribed medicines** - Staff should **never** give a non-prescribed medicine to a young person. For example if a young person suffers from frequent or acute pain the parents should be encouraged to refer the matter to their GP. **A young person under 16 should never be given aspirin or medicines containing ibuprofen unless prescribed by a doctor.**
- Large volumes of medicines should not be stored. Medicines should be stored strictly in accordance with the product instructions. Staff should ensure that the supplied container is clearly labelled with the name of the young person, name and dosage of the medicine, the frequency of administration and expiry date.
- A few medicines need to be refrigerated. A secure refrigerator is available in the Head Teachers Office.

- The young person should know where their own medicines are being stored. All emergency medicines, i.e. asthma inhalers and adrenalin pens should be readily available to the young person and should not be locked away. Asthma is also subject to a separate policy.
- School nurses or the district pharmacist can advise on the design and position of safe storage of medicines. They can also offer advice on suitable temperatures required for certain items, possible damage by exposure to light and the life span of certain medications.
- Arrangements are in place to **avoid the risk of double dosing**. Each administered dose must be signed off by a member of staff giving the medicine to ensure double dosage does not happen and cross-checked by another member of staff.
- The school has sufficient members of support staff who are employed and adequately trained to manage medicines as part of their duties. These members of staff agree to accept responsibility for administering prescribed medicines to a young person, have appropriate training guidance and support from health professionals. They should be aware of any potential side effects of the medicines and what to do if they occur. A written record of training and authority to carry out procedures should be kept both by the school and the member of staff. See the school's health plans (health and safety file). These members of staff train and oversee other members of staff to ensure this Medication Policy is adhered to.
- If a pupil brings to the school any medication for which the head teacher has not received written notification the staff of the school will not be held responsible for that medication and it will not be administered.
- In all cases where following the administration of medication there are concerns regarding the condition of the child, medical advice must be sought immediately.
- The school will keep written records each time medicines are given and staff should complete and sign this record. Good records help demonstrate that staff have followed the agreed procedures. In early years settings such records must be kept and parents should be requested to sign the form to acknowledge the entry. If a young person refuses to take medicine, staff should not force them to do so, but should note this in the records and follow agreed procedures. Parents should be informed of the refusal on the same day.
- If a child arrives more than 30 minutes late to have their medication administered, the staff member must contact the parent for permission to continue with dosage.
- Staff members will ensure that medication in school is taken by a nominated staff member when the child is on an Educational Visit (Visit Leader will have completed a Risk Assessment).

Exception

Inhalers for children with asthma need to be readily available. Inhalers should be kept by teachers in a readily accessible place and available for PE. The school office keeps a record in conjunction with the IHCP. An emergency inhaler is available at the school office.

Long-Term Medical Needs

All long term medical needs have an Individual Health Care Plan written with parents and are covered in the Medical Conditions in School Policy.

Controlled Drugs (Controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act)

Any nominated member of staff may administer a controlled drug to the young person for whom it has been prescribed (in accordance with the prescriber's instructions). It is permissible for the school to look after a controlled drug, where it is agreed that it will be administered to the young person for whom it is prescribed.

The school must keep controlled drugs in a lockable non-portable container and only nominated staff have access to it. The safe is in the school manager's office.

Disposal of Medicines

All medicines, including controlled drugs, should be returned to the parent, when no longer required, for them to arrange for safe disposal. They should also collect medicines held at the end of the Summer term. If parents do not collect all medicines they should be taken to a local pharmacy for safe disposal.

Emergency Procedures

The school has arrangements in place for dealing with emergency situations. This is part of the first aid procedures. Individual health care plans should include instructions as to how to manage a young person in the event of an emergency and identify who is the responsible member of staff, for example if there is an incident in the playground a lunchtime assistant needs to be very clear of their role.

Circumstances Requiring Special Caution

Whilst the administration of all medicines requires caution, there are certain circumstances which require special attention before accepting responsibility for administering medicine when the parents are unable to come to the school themselves.

These are:

1. Where the timing and nature of the administering are of vital importance and where serious consequences could result if a dose is not taken;
2. Where some technical or medical knowledge or expertise is required;
3. Where intimate contact is necessary.

In such circumstances the head teacher will consider the best interests of the child as well as considering carefully what is being asked of the staff concerned. The head teacher will seek advice from the consultant community paediatrician or school doctor. Clear policies exist for

administration of such medication and there should be clear written instructions, which are agreed by the parents, teachers and advisory medical staff.

Invasive Procedures

Some children require types of treatment which school staff may feel reluctant to provide. Only staff who are willing and have been appropriately trained are to administer such treatment. This must be in accordance with instructions issued by the paediatrician or GP. Training in invasive procedures should be conducted by qualified medical personnel. For the protection of both staff and children a second member of staff must be present while more intimate procedures are being followed. Where it is known in advance that a child may be vulnerable to life-threatening circumstances the school should have in place an agreed plan of action. This should include the holding of appropriate medication and appropriate training of those members of staff required to carry out the particular medical procedures. This has implications for school journeys, educational visits and other out of school activities

Staff Competence in Administering Medicines

Under health and safety legislation, it is necessary to ensure that staff are competent to perform the tasks which might confront them. This includes reacting to an emergency. Staff whose pupils may have conditions such as asthma or diabetes sufficiently severe to cause an emergency are entitled to proper instructions. If the school undertakes responsibility for the administration of special treatment it is essential that adequate training is provided for the nominated persons.

The head teacher should approach the appropriate community paediatrician who is willing to provide the necessary training.

Guidance For Teachers On Parental Consent For Treatment

For younger pupils parental consent does not constitute a problem in the vast majority of cases. Sometimes a teacher does meet the problem of a pupil belonging to a religious body, which repudiates medical treatment. Normally the parent will make the decision and this should be regarded as the most desirable course of action. However, the problem could be urgent or the parent unavailable. Parents who have specific beliefs which have implications for medical treatment should make their views and wishes known to the school so that the consequences of their beliefs can be discussed and accommodated. In an emergency a teacher would have recourse to ordinary medical treatment.

Common Conditions and Practical Advice

The medical conditions in young people that most commonly cause concern are asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis). The following notes offer some basic information but it is important that the needs of the young person are assessed on an individual basis – individual Health Care Plans should be developed.

Asthma

Asthma is common; one in ten young people have asthma in the UK. The most common symptoms of asthma are coughing, wheezing or a whistling noise in the chest, tight feelings in the chest or getting short of breath.

Staff may not be able to rely on the very young to be able to identify or verbalise when their symptoms are getting worse or what medicines they should take and when. Therefore staff in early years/primary school, who have such children in their classes must know how to identify when symptoms are getting worse and what to do when this happens.

There are two main types of medicines to treat asthma, relievers and preventers:

- Relievers (blue inhalers) are medicines taken immediately to relieve asthma symptoms and are taken during an attack. These quickly open up narrowed airways and help breathing difficulties.
- Preventers (brown, red, orange or green inhalers) taken daily to make airways less sensitive to the triggers. Usually preventers are used out of school hours.

Young people with asthma need to have immediate access to their reliever inhalers when they need them. Staff should ensure they are stored safely but in an accessible place, clearly marked with the young person's name and always available during physical education, sports activities and educational visits. The school has an asthma policy.

Epilepsy

Young people with epilepsy have repeated seizures that start in the brain. An epileptic seizure, sometimes called a fit, turn or blackout can happen to anyone at any time. Around one in 200 children have epilepsy, but most children with diagnosed epilepsy never have a seizure during the school day.

Seizures can take many different forms. Parents and health care professionals should provide information to schools, setting out the particular pattern of individual young person's epilepsy. This should be incorporated into the health care plan.

If a young person experiences a seizure in school the following details should be recorded and relayed to the parents.

- Any factors which might have acted as a trigger to the seizure e.g. visual/auditory, stimulation or emotion.
- Unusual 'feelings' reported by the young person prior to the seizure.
- Parts of the body showing signs of the seizure i.e limbs or facial muscles.
- Timing of the seizure – when it began and how long it lasted.
- Whether the young person lost consciousness.
- Whether the young person was incontinent.

After a seizure the young person may feel tired, be confused, have a headache and need time to rest or sleep.

Most young people with epilepsy take anti – epilepsy medicines to stop or reduce their seizures. Regular medicine should not need to be given during school hours. Triggers such as anxiety, stress, tiredness and being unwell may increase the chance of having a seizure. Flashing and flickering lights can also trigger seizures (photosensitivity), but this is very rare. Extra care may be needed in some areas such as swimming or working in science laboratories. Such concerns regarding safety of the young person should be covered in the Health Care Plan.

During a seizure it is important to make sure the young person is in a safe position. The seizure should be allowed to take its course. Placing something soft under the person's head will help protect during a convulsive seizure. Nothing should be placed in the mouth. After the seizure has stopped they should be placed in the recovery position and stayed with until fully recovered. Emergency procedures should be detailed in the health care plan.

Diabetes

One in 550 school age children will have diabetes. Most have Type 1 diabetes. Diabetes is a condition where the level of glucose in the blood rises. This is either due to lack of insulin (Type 1 diabetes) or because there is insufficient insulin for the young person's needs or the insulin is not working properly (Type 2 diabetes).

Each young person may experience different symptoms and this should be detailed in their health care plan. Greater than usual need to go to the toilet or to drink, tiredness and weight loss may indicate poor diabetic control. Staff noticing such changes will wish to draw these signs to parents' attention.

Diabetes is mainly controlled by insulin injections with younger children a twice daily injection regime of longer acting insulin is unlikely to involve medicines being given during school hours. Older children may be on multiple injections or use an insulin pump. Most young people can manage their injections but supervision and a suitable private place to administer the injection, at school, may be required.

Young people with diabetes need to ensure their blood glucose levels remain stable and may check their levels by taking a small sample of blood and using a small monitor. They may need to do this during school lunch break, before PE or more regularly if insulin needs adjusting. Most young people will be able to do this themselves but younger children may need supervision to carry out/interpret test and results. Appropriate training for staff should be provided by health care professionals.

Young people with diabetes need to be allowed to eat regularly during the day i.e eating snacks during class time or prior to exercise. Staff in charge of physical education or other physical activity should be aware of the need for young people with diabetes to have glucose tablets or a sugary drink to hand.

The following symptoms, individually or combined, may be signs of low blood sugar – a **hypoglycaemic** reaction: i.e hunger, sweating, drowsiness, pallor, glazed eyes, shaking or trembling, lack of concentration, mood swings or headache. Some young people may experience **hyperglycaemic** (high glucose level) and have a greater need to go to the toilet or drink. The individual's health care plan should detail their expected symptoms and emergency procedures to be followed.

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is an acute, severe allergic reaction requiring immediate medical attention. It visually occurs within seconds or minutes of exposure to certain food or substances. Occasionally this may happen after a few hours. Common triggers include peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, eggs, cow's milk, fish, certain fruit i.e kiwi fruit and also penicillin, latex or stinging insects (bees, wasps or hornets). The most severe form of allergic reaction is anaphylactic shock, when the blood pressure falls dramatically and the patient loses consciousness. More commonly among young people there may be swelling in the throat which can restrict the air supply or severe asthma. Less severe symptoms may include tingling or itching in the mouth, hives anywhere on the body, generalised flushing of the skin or abdominal cramps, nausea or vomiting.

An Ambulance should always be called

Adrenaline injectors, given in accordance with the prescribed instructions, are a safe delivery mechanism. It is not possible to give too large a dose using, this device. In cases of doubt it is better to give the injection than hold back.

Day to day policy measures are needed for food management, awareness of the young person's needs in relation to diet, school menu, individual meal requirements and snacks in school.

Parents may often ask for the head teacher to exclude from the premises the food to which their child is allergic. This is not always feasible, although appropriate steps to minimise any risks to allergic young people should be taken.

Anaphylaxis is manageable. With sound precautionary measures and support from the staff, school life may continue as normal for all concerned.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

DfES Publication

'Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings'.

Asthma UK

'School Policy Guidelines'.