

GIVING MEDICINE IN SCHOOLS

Introduction

A few pupils, while fit to attend school, may need to take medicines in school hours (usually at midday). Although pupils will normally administer their medicines themselves, they may require support from school staff. Anyone may legally administer medication provided that the doctor's instructions are followed exactly.

For the most part this guidance refers to prescribed medicines. However, the same issues also apply to non prescribed medicines and this is specifically covered in paragraph 5 below.

1. Headteacher and Staff's responsibility

Mrs Dempsey is the named person responsible for medicines at St. Joseph's School, together with a nominated deputy (Mrs Santangeli in her absence). The headteacher should be aware, however, that no member of staff can be required to administer medicines to a pupil.

It should be noted that unless arrangements have been agreed with carers, we will not accept responsibility for the administration of medication to pupils where:

- a) the precise timing of its administration is crucial to the health of the pupil
- b) some technical or medical knowledge and/or specialist training is required
- c) intimate contact with the pupil is necessary. This would include administration of rectal diazepam, assistance with catheters or use of equipment for pupils with tracheostomies

Staff administering medicines should only do so under the strictly controlled guidelines as described in this document, fully confident that the administration will be safe. A member of staff who does take responsibility for administering medicines takes on a legal duty of care to discharge the responsibility appropriately. Every reasonable precaution must be taken.

2. Parent's or Carer's Responsibility

A clear written statement of parental responsibilities should be given to all parents/carers, preferably on admission, detailing:

- How to make a request to the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher for medicines to be given at school by completion

of the attached for 'Request for Storage and Administration of Medicines in School' (example form enclosed).

- Medicines must be provided in original dispenser container fully labelled with the following information:

Pupil's name, name of medicine, full directions for use and date of dispensing.

Parents/carers may need to consult their GP or pharmacist in order to clarify this or obtain an additional labelled container for use in school

- The need for the parent/carer to notify the school in writing of any changes in medicines or doses to be given
- The need for the parent/carer, in person, to replenish the supply of medicines if necessary
- A requirement that the parent/carer advises the school nurse of any significant medical condition or allergy their child may have, subject to confidentiality. The headteacher should be informed by the parent/carer if their child is having medical treatment
- Confirmation that if the doctor has said a medicine should be taken once or twice a day it should normally be given at home rather than at school (i.e. wherever possible the need to give medicines at school should be avoided).

3. Storage of medicines in Schools

Medicines, when not in use, should normally be kept in a suitable locked cupboard. Medicines requiring refrigeration may be kept in a closed container within a domestic refrigerator, which must not be accessible to pupils.

It is recommended that certain medicines need to be immediately available to the pupil, e.g. asthma inhalers. It is recommended that this is discussed individually with parents/carers in order to ensure immediate access to medicines if required. The practice of pupils holding their own inhalers should be encouraged. (Please see Asthma Policy).

4. Administration of Medicines

Normally pupils will be expected to self administer any medication. However, if the parent/carer has requested that the pupil be supervised, then a nominated person who has received appropriate

training may undertake this. The school should be informed of all medicines held by a pupil.

5. Administration of non prescription (over the counter) medication

- a) the same general procedures should be followed as with prescription medication
- b) all medication should be brought into school in the original container bearing the manufacturer's instructions/guidelines
- c) parents should complete the form 'Request for Storage and Administration of Medicines in School'. (Example enclosed)

Dosage must not exceed the manufacturer's instructions

- d) School staff have the right to refuse the administration of any medication if:
 - i) it does not carry the manufacturer's instructions / guidelines
 - ii) the nature of the medication is unclear/unfamiliar

6. Recording

The administration of all medicines in school and those stored centrally must be recorded in the school medicine record sheet (example enclosed). For any pupil requiring more than one medicine to be administered, a separate school medicine record sheet should be completed for each medicine.

The label on the medicine container should be checked against the details on the 'Request for Storage and Administration of Medicines in School' form (completed by the parent/carer) and the school medicine record sheet. Any discrepancy should be queried with the parent/carer before administering the medicine. A parent/carer should confirm their intentions in writing if their instructions differ from those in the medicine container.

7. Disposal

Medicines no longer required should be returned to the parent/carer for disposal at the earliest opportunity, and this should be recorded on the school medicine record. If this is not possible, they should be returned to a community pharmacy for destruction.

8. Medicine for pain relief

Paracetamol is the only non prescribed pain relieving drug, which may be given to pupils. This will only be administered in exceptional circumstances and only when provided by the parents in line with this policy and agreed by school management staff. Parents should be informed of the school's policy in relation to the administration of paracetamol on admission, and parents/carers should inform the school if they wish their child to receive paracetamol under these circumstances.

Paracetamol may be given in either liquid or tablet form in a dose appropriate for the pupil's age according to the instructions in the container. This dose may be given ONCE ONLY during the school day. The headteacher will consider whether the pupil is well enough to remain in school.

The administration of paracetamol should be recorded in a book identified for this purpose and kept with the container of paracetamol. It is advisable that parents/carers should be informed when paracetamol is given to their child.

Paracetamol may be dangerous if an overdose is taken. The keeping of paracetamol (or any other) tablets in first aid boxes or in any place accessible to pupils is expressly forbidden.

9. Information

Additional information about individual medicines and their correct use may be obtained through the school nurse.

Request for Storage and Administration of Medicine in School

In order for your child to be supervised during the administration of any medicines at school, the following information is required to be completed by the parent/carer and sent to the headteacher or assistant headteacher. If there are any subsequent changes in medicines or doses to be given, then these **must** be notified immediately to the school, all doses given during school hours, whether by pupil or staff, will be recorded on the school medicine record sheet.

Name of pupil: _____

Class: _____

Name of medicine (to include full details as given on the containers label issued by the pharmacist).

Dose and when to be taken.

Any additional information (about medicine).

Contact telephone number

Any prescribed medicine must be supplied to the school in a container clearly labelled (by the pharmacist) with the name of the medicine, full instructions for use, and name of the pupil. Any non prescribed medicine should be in the original container bearing the manufacturer's instructions/guidelines. The school staff may refuse to administer any medicines supplied in inappropriate containers.

This form should be renewed by the parent/carer at the beginning of each term for pupils on long-term medication.