Wentworthville Public School

Individual Health Care Plans for students with more complex health needs.

An individual health care plan formalises the plan of support for students with complex health care needs.

The principal will initiate the development of such a plan in the following circumstances or when the situation is complex or where a plan would be of assistance in managing support for the student.

Individual health care plans should be developed for:

- severe asthma, type 1 diabetes, epilepsy and anaphylaxis
- any student who is diagnosed as being at risk of an emergency
- any student who requires the administration of specific health care procedures (see glossary).

Information from the student’s medical practitioner, provided by parents, will inform the planning process.

The plan will describe the student’s needs and how the school plans to meet these needs during the school day, on excursions and in other variations in school routine, such as sport.

The plan must also detail procedures to be followed if an emergency arises. Procedures need to be agreed between the parent and the school, following consultation with the relevant medical practitioner.

Plans should be reviewed annually or when the parent notifies the school that the student’s health needs have changed. A review of a student’s health care plan can also be instigated by the principal at other times.

The individual health care plan will:

- specify the student’s specific health care needs
- describe agreed actions to meet these needs
- include emergency phone numbers for ambulance, the parent and an emergency contact
- include the phone number of the student’s medical practitioner(s)
- include attachments as relevant such as:
  - an emergency care/response plan
  - a statement of the agreed responsibilities of different people involved in support
  - a schedule for the administration of prescribed medication
  - a schedule for the administration of health care procedures
  - an authorisation to contact the medical practitioner.

The individual health care plan must address circumstances that may impact on the student’s health care needs, such as variation in school routine, absence of staff, special transport arrangements, physical activity and environmental conditions.

The possible effects of emergencies arising at the same time with a number of students need to be considered and addressed in individual health care plans.

The principal is responsible for assessing, in consultation with appropriate school staff, the parent and the medical practitioner, how the school will meet the health care needs of the student.

The development of the individual health care plan may incorporate a risk management process to manage risk to the student or other students or staff.

The principal will arrange a meeting with the parent and appropriate school staff to discuss the management of the student’s health care needs.

The meeting with the parent may be supported by input from the school counsellor, student welfare consultant and/or the disability programs consultant, a member of the school’s OH&S team, as appropriate.

A copy of the individual health care plan should be provided to the parent and for students with special transport needs, to relevant staff in the Special Transport Scheme.

In the event that a student changes schools, the parent should be encouraged to provide a copy of the individual health care plan to the new principal. This can assist the process of health care planning in the new school and can also assist the student’s transition to that school.
School Practices and Programs

School practices and programs relating to student health are implemented within a framework provided by the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Act, 2000 and the Common Law. The Department has a duty to ensure the safety of staff and students. The OH&S Act also provides that an employee must, while at work, take reasonable care for the health and safety of people who are at the employee’s place of work or who may be affected by the employee’s acts or omissions at work. As a minimum this means that any staff member must, if necessary, assist in an emergency. Where a student has been diagnosed as being at risk of an emergency reaction, the Principal will coordinate the development of an emergency response plan as part of the Individual Health Care Plan for the student.

Where training is needed it is essential for all staff who are likely to be called upon to administer prescribed medication or health care procedures in an emergency, to be appropriately trained by a suitable qualified person (see training guidelines).

In an emergency a staff member administers prescribed medication or health care procedures to a student in accordance with his or her training and agreements documented in the emergency care section of the student’s individual health care plan.

Except in an emergency, staff administer prescribed medication or health care procedures to students on a voluntary basis.

Legal Liability

Should a student be injured or made ill as a result of the administration of prescribed medication or health care procedures by a member of staff, the staff member is protected by the legal principle of vicarious liability in relation to personal injury proceedings.

This means that unless the staff member has deliberately injured the student, or behaved with reckless disregard for the student’s safety, the Department will be liable for any injury caused by the negligence of the staff member.