

Administration of Medication to Pupils

Introduction

Under the provision of the Education Act 1998 and the regulations of the Department of Education and Skills, the Board of Management is the body charged with the direct governance of the school. All concerns regarding the administration of medication to pupils should therefore be addressed to the Board of Management. It is important for parents/guardians to note that neither The Department of Education and Skills nor the Board of Management can direct the teaching staff of the school to administer medical treatment to pupils, or to undertake any actions or procedures which are normally carried out by medical professionals such as doctors and nurses. As a general rule in our school teachers and ancillary staff should not be involved in the administration of medication to pupils.

The Board of Management does recognise that at different times there will be children enrolled in the school who at some time may need to take medication during school hours. Often this will merely entail a pupil who is finishing a short course of treatment however some pupils may have a need for a different type of medication. This may include pupils with asthma, epilepsy, diabetes or pupils who have an anaphylactic reaction to food or other natural antigens. In these situations some medication will be preventative whereas some will be more in the form of emergency treatment.

This policy seeks to set out clear procedures and guidelines for parents and staff with regard to the administration of medication in our school.

General Principles

1. The overriding concern must always be the pupils' health and welfare.
2. A pupil who is sick and clearly unwell should not be in school. In such circumstances the Principal is within their rights to ask the parents/guardians to keep the pupil at home.
3. Parents/guardians should always ensure that staff members and the class teacher in particular are made aware in writing of any medical condition suffered by their child. This information should be provided on enrolment or at the development of any medical condition at a later date.
4. As professional educators, teachers implement and maintain professional standards of care for their pupils, but teachers and other staff members are not medics. A teacher has no contractual duty to administer medication and cannot be required to do so. Administering medication is a voluntary act by teachers.
5. Parents/guardians should try to ensure that where medication is required, arrangements are made to have it administered either before or after school. In situations where there is no feasible alternative to the school administering medication parents/guardians should make a written request to The Board of Management.
6. Where a teacher agrees to be responsible for medication, they must be given whatever information and training is needed. Any teacher who is willing to administer medicines should only do so under strictly controlled guidelines, fully confident that the administration will be safe. This willingness is limited by the Board of Management to emergency situations only. A teacher who does take responsibility for administering medicines takes on a heavy legal duty of care to discharge the responsibility correctly. Every reasonable precaution must be taken. Clear instructions about medicines requiring regular administration must be obtained and strictly followed.
7. In all cases where a teacher may have a pupil in class with epilepsy, diabetes or with an allergy which could be potentially fatal that teacher, irrespective of whether they have been trained in the administration of medication, should be advised as to what to do in case of an emergency or how to get help and from whom.

Parental/Guardian Application Procedure

Where there is no feasible alternative to the school administering medication to a child, parents/guardians should make a written application to the Board of Management requesting the Board to authorise a member of staff to administer the medication. The request should include the following:

- (a) General details of the pupil and the condition for which the administration of medication is required
- (b) A letter from the GP/Consultant which:
 - i) explains the need for the administration of medication during the school day
 - ii) gives details of the medication and gives full clear instructions regarding its administration, including how and when it is to be given and what the dosage is.
- (c) An undertaking on the part of the parent/guardian to complete an indemnity to the Board of Management in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of the medication.
- (d) An acceptance of responsibility to:
 - i) personally deliver the medication to the Principal or nominated person in the original container supplied by the GP or pharmacist
 - ii) to ensure the medications are clearly labelled with the child's name, date, contents, dosage and instructions for storage.
 - iii) To check each morning whether the authorised staff member is in school unless an alternative arrangement is made locally.
 - iv) To ensure that in date medication is available in the school.
 - v) Provide appropriate training in the administration of the medication for the staff concerned.

On receipt of an application the Board of Management will consider the request at its next scheduled meeting. Board of Management meetings are normally held every six weeks during the school year. The school principal will be able to advise parents as to when the next meeting is scheduled. After considering the request the Board of Management will inform parents/guardians of its decision within seven days of the Board of Management meeting.

Management of Medications in school and procedures for staff

Where the Board of Management has agreed to a request from a parent/guardian to the administration of medication the following procedures will apply in the school.

- No staff member should administer medication without the specific authorisation of the Board
- The Board will normally authorise the principal and other trained staff to administer medication.
- Medication should be administered only in cases of emergency or as agreed with the parent/guardians by the Board of Management
- Children should self-administer medication where this is feasible.
- Authorised staff members should only administer medication after appropriate training has been provided
- In administering medication to pupils, staff should exercise the standard of care of a reasonable and prudent parent;

- Medication should only be accepted from parents/guardians in its original container, fully labelled with the child's name, in date, with dosage and full instructions regarding when/how the medication is to be administered and stored.
- All medication is to be stored in the locked medications cabinet located in the main school office. The key for the cabinet is kept beside the cabinet.
- A written record is to be kept of all dates and times of administration and any side effects noted.
- In emergencies staff should do no more than 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.
- Parents/guardians should always be contacted in emergency situations.
- In all cases where a teacher may have a pupil in class with a condition which could be potentially fatal that teacher, irrespective of whether they have been trained in the administration of medication, should be advised as to what to do in case of an emergency or how to get help and from whom. The teacher should receive as a minimum the following information in writing:
 - The nature of the pupil's condition
 - The symptoms
 - What medication is required, the prescribed dose, at what times or under what circumstances.
 - Where the medication is kept and how to get access
 - Whether the medication is self-administered or has to be administered
 - Where the record card is kept of the dates and times of administration
 - What action, if any, apart from administering medication, may be needed, and if so, at what times or in what circumstances.
- For school trips and all out of school excursions the class teacher should ensure that parents/guardians are informed and arrangements are made with them regarding the possible need for medication and its administration.
- At the end of the school year parents/guardians will be reminded to collect all medication provided to the school. Any medications not collected will be disposed of once the school closes for the summer holidays.

Implementation

The school principal has responsibility for the implementation of this policy within the school.

Review

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on the 17th January 2018. Next review January 2020.

Fr. Paddy Byrne (Chairperson B.O.M.)

