



SCHOOL POLICY:

**ADMINISTRATION OF PRESCRIBED MEDICATION,
CATHETERS & INJECTIONS TO STUDENTS**

- This policy replaces *Administration of Medication, Catheters and Injections to Students in ACT Public Schools*, Circular Minute Nos 8/88 and 35/88, 18 and 25 January 1988.
- This policy must be read in conjunction with the *First Aid* policy, published in *Bulletin* No. 638 of 2 November 1995.

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IDENTIFIER:

APC199703

POLICY OWNER:

Director, Student Services

CONTACT:

Injury Prevention and Management Section

RELATED POLICIES:

First Aid

NOTE: The following procedures do not apply to the use of bronchodilator inhalers in the emergency treatment of an asthma attack or suspected asthma attack. Refer to *Asthma Attacks* policy for details regarding the use of these inhalers.

1 DEFINITION

Parents is inclusive of guardians and legal guardians.

2 CONTEXT

These procedures seek to clarify the responsibilities of staff in relation to handling requests from parents who seek assistance for their children in the administration of prescribed medication.

The following procedures do not apply to special schools where there is a registered nurse, or other qualified health professional available. Where a school nurse is stationed at the school it is appropriate to refer requests for assistance to this person.

If schools are asked to consider special cases, the matter should be referred to the relevant Director School Operations.

3 PROCEDURES

- 3.1 While these procedures set out advice on the administration of prescribed medication, catheters and injections by departmental staff to students, staff should be aware that they have no legal obligation to administer such medication, catheters or injections. Medical management should normally be performed by medically qualified practitioners, nurses or suitably qualified personnel.
- 3.2 There is, however, a duty of care on staff to administer first aid to students in their care (refer to *First Aid* policy).
- 3.3 Where a school accepts responsibility for the administration of prescribed medication, catheters and injections by department staff to students, written agreement must be obtained between the school principal and the relevant staff, parents, and the student's doctor.

- 3.4 An exception to the above applies to the administration of bronchodilator inhalers for the emergency treatment of an asthma attack or suspected asthma attack. The ACT Department of Health advises that bronchodilator inhalers are safe and should be used without delay in these cases. Information on the emergency treatment of asthma attacks is provided to parents when asked to complete the Medical Information Form (refer to *Asthma Attacks* policy).
- 3.5 Before any staff member accepts responsibility for administering prescribed medications, catheters and injections to a student in their care, the principal must:
- ensure a comprehensive written authority is obtained from the student's parent(s) for a member of staff to administer the prescribed medication, injection or catheter.
 - seek from the student's parent(s) a written statement from the student's doctor authorising a member of staff to administer the prescribed medication, injection or catheter. The statement should also set out the necessary directions and specify any special precautions that exist.
 - give written approval for a member of staff to administer the prescribed medication, catheter or injection.
- 3.6 The original authorisations should be retained on file at the school and maintained in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles outlined in the *Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)*.
- 3.7 If the department through the principal gives written approval for staff to administer such treatment, then it has the duty as an employer to safeguard the welfare of those employees. Therefore, a claim against a staff member would be deemed to be a claim against the department or the ACT Government. That is, the department would be vicariously liable and would bear the costs of a legal action brought against the staff member involved. (Vicarious liability affords protection to staff proved negligent in the course of their duty.)
- 3.8 Should it be necessary, due perhaps to staff changes, for another member of staff to seek authorisation, the procedures in item 3.5 above should be adhered to.
- 3.9 The administration of non-prescribed medicines kept by the school must be carried out within the definition of care and first aid and only if parents have given their written approval. For the administration of the analgesic paracetamol (Panadol) reference must be made to item 5.9 of the *First Aid* policy. Frequent requests for paracetamol should prompt the school to suggest referral to a medical practitioner.
- 3.10 Any medications, catheters and injections held by the school must be kept in a secure place.
- 3.11 Schools must keep a record of all cases where medication, catheters and injections have been administered to students.
- 3.12 Any points of further clarification should be addressed to the Injury Prevention and Management Section.