

# **ATKINSON HOUSE SCHOOL**

## **POLICY ON SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH MEDICAL NEEDS**

### **Foreword**

This policy follows the Northumberland County Council model policy “Policy on Supporting Children with Medical Needs” that had been prepared by the Personnel Directorate Health and Safety team in consultation with Northumberland Health Authority and chiefly refers to essential prescribed medication. However, this policy has been tailored to Atkinson House School by giving greater elaboration and specificity, especially in the areas of storage and administering of medication. The guidance fully complements information contained in the DfEE document ‘Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs’ which was issued to all schools in 1997. The latter document contains information of a broader and more general nature and also includes several useful forms, a number of which have been adapted for use by schools. Proforma and letters used by the school are attached as appendices.

The guidance below supersedes that in the document ‘Guidelines to School Staff and Parents/Guardians on Administration of Medication to Pupils in Mainstream Schools’ issued by the Education Directorate in September 1994.

### **Responsibility of Parents and Guardians**

Parents and guardians have the principal responsibility for the administration of medication to their children who have the right to be educated with their peers, regardless of any short or long term needs for medication whilst at school.

It is preferable for medication to be given at home whenever possible. If medicines are prescribed to be taken three or more times per day, parents should ask the prescribing doctor if the administration of the medication can occur outside normal school hours. Non-prescription medication will not be given to pupils under any circumstances and will not be permitted in school.

However, for example paracetamol may be given to pupils if it has been prescribed to the pupil.

### **Responsibility of School Staff**

There are two main sets of circumstances in which requests may be made to the Head to deal with the administration of medicines to pupils at school:

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- (a) cases of chronic illness or long-term complaints, such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or ADHD;
- (b) cases where children recovering from a short-term illness are well enough to return to school but are receiving a course of antibiotics or other medication.

Each request for medicine to be administered to a pupil in school should be considered on its merits. The head teacher should give consideration to the best interests of the pupil and the implications for the school. Staff administering medication in accordance with appropriate training or the details supplied by the parent or guardian may rest assured that they are covered by the County Council's insurance policy.

It is generally accepted that identified school staff may administer prescribed medication whilst acting *in loco parentis*. However, it is important to note that this does not imply a duty upon school staff to administer medication and the following should be taken into account:

- No member of staff should be compelled to administer medication to a pupil
- No medication can be administered in school without the agreement of the head teacher or his/her nominated representative
- If it is agreed that medication can be administered named staff should be identified to administer it
- Appropriate guidance and training (where necessary) has been given to the identified staff
- Parents or guardians requesting administration of medication should be given a copy of this document and asked to complete the form 'Parental Request for Medication to be Administered to Pupils'. Completion of this form safeguards staff by allowing only prescribed medication to be administered
- School staff may consult with the parents/guardians to liaise with the person prescribing medication to enquire whether it can be given outside of school hours. This may help reduce to a minimum the amount of medication being given in school.

### **Procedures to be Followed**

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1. If medication cannot be given outside of school hours, parents or guardians should fill in a request form giving the dose, the method of administration, the time and frequency of administration, other treatment, any special precautions and signed consent. An example of this form is reproduced in Appendix 1, "Request for School to Administer Medication".
2. All essential medication should be brought to school and should be delivered personally to Miss S Pearson or Mr D Elliott. Medication delivered to school by a taxi driver or escort on behalf of parents is acceptable. The school does not consider it inappropriate for older / more mature pupils being responsible / trusted to bring their medication to school.
3. All medication taken in school must be kept in a clearly labelled pharmacy bottle, preferably with a child safety top or box which must give the pupils name, contents and the dosage to be administered. (Pharmacist's label).
4. Whilst medication is in Atkinson House School it should be kept in the medical inspection room. The door will be kept locked at all times. Medication will be kept in a locked cabinet within the room. Individual pupil's medication will be kept in a separate container with that pupil's name written on the container. Any inhalers that we are asked / decide to look after will be labelled with the pupil's name.
5. Medication to be taken orally should be supplied with an individual measuring spoon or syringe. Eye drops and ear drops should be supplied with a dropper. A dropper or spoon must only be used to administer medicine to the owner of that implement.
6. When medication is given, the name, the dose, the mode of administration, time of the dose and date of expiry should be checked. A written record should be kept of the time it was given and by whom to avoid more than one person ever giving a dose. This should be kept with the parental consent form. An example of this form is reproduced in Appendix 2, "Record of Medication Administrated to Pupils".

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7. Where any change of medication or dosage occurs, clear written instructions from the G.P should be provided. Without this, no changes to dosage will be made. If a pupil brings to school any medication for which consent has not been given, the staff of the school will refuse to administer it. In such circumstances the designated staff should contact the parent as soon as possible.
  
8. Renewal of medication which has passed its expiry date must be the responsibility of the parent or guardian. However, if parents are unable to collect expired medication then staff should take it to the local pharmacy so that it can be disposed of safely. The medication must not be disposed of in any other way.
  
9. In all cases where, following the administration of medication, there are concerns regarding the reaction of the pupil, medical advice should be sought immediately.

If in doubt about any of the above procedures the member of staff should check with the parents or guardians or a health professional before taking further action.

### **Refusal or Forgetting to Take Medication**

If pupils refuse to take medication, the school should inform the pupil's parent or guardian as a matter of urgency and it will also be documented in the medication record. If staff feel that it is necessary as the pupils behaviour is unmanageable or dangerous then the pupil may be returned home to parents or the school should call the emergency services.

### **Further Guidance Relating to Children with Specific Medical Needs**

A very small number of pupils need medication to be given by injection, epi-pen or other routes. This is an unusual circumstance and the arrangements are best worked out between the school, parents, school doctor and the doctor who prescribes the medication. Experience suggests that it is helpful to have a meeting

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of all interested parties in school as it is essential that both the parents and the teaching staff are happy about the arrangements that are made.

Staff identified to administer medication should be made fully aware of the procedures and properly trained. Usually this will be provided by the local Health Authority. An individual care plan for each pupil with a medical need should be completed.

### **Anaphylaxis**

Anaphylaxis is an extreme allergic reaction requiring urgent medical treatment. Appropriate local arrangements should include:

- the establishment of procedures on the use of epi-pens and injections
- the provision of appropriate instruction and training to nominated staff
- awareness of all staff that the pupil has this particular medical condition
- the symptoms associated with anaphylactic shock
- the epi-pen type and content eg adrenalin, anti-histamine
- the locations of the epi-pen, preferably in an easily accessible place which is known to staff
- labelling of epi-pens for the pupil concerned
- the names of those trained to administer it, eg first aiders
- records of dates of issue
- emergency contacts

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This type of information should be suitably posted in the areas where the medication is to be kept and should accompany the medication on school trips etc. The arrangements for swimming and other sporting activities should also be considered. This information should include the name of the pupil and, ideally, a photograph.

## **Asthma**

People with asthma have airways which narrow as a reaction to various triggers. The narrowing or obstruction of the airways causes difficulty in breathing and can be alleviated with treatment, usually in the form of an inhaler. It is good practice to allow pupils who can manage their own medication from a relatively early age to do so. If pupils have asthma and can take their medication themselves, they should be allowed to carry their inhaler around at all times. This is especially important if the inhaler or nebulizer is needed to relieve symptoms regularly or if attacks are sporadic and particularly severe.

If pupils are not able to do so then inhalers should be stored safely away and issued by staff as and when needed by the pupil. This method may be more appropriate for younger or immature pupils with asthma who may not be able to use the inhaler without help or guidance.

Even if the inhaler is needed as a preventative measure to be taken three times a day it is unlikely that it will need to be kept in school.

Pupils with asthma learn from their past experience of attacks; they usually know just what to do and will probably carry the correct emergency treatment. Because asthma varies from pupil to pupil, it is impossible to give rules that suit everyone.

## **Epilepsy**

People with epilepsy have recurrent seizures, the great majority of which can be controlled by medication.

Further, general information on all of the above conditions is given in chapter 5 of the DfES document.

## **Staff**

There have been three members of staff identified to administer medication to pupils.

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Lead staff are Miss S Pearson and Mrs D Elliott.

In the event of lead staff being absent, Miss R Kemper will be responsible for administering medication.

Lead staff will audit and archive medication records on a monthly basis.

**Consultation** : All the staff of Atkinson House School were consulted about this adaptation of the County Council Model Policy.

**Adoption** : This policy was adopted by the governing body at their full meeting held on September 2015

**Review** : There is no formal review cycle for this document. Staff at Atkinson House School will continually monitor this policy and initiate a formal review on an annual basis.

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