

Oakfield Primary School

Policy for the Administration of Medicine in School

Introduction

At Oakfield Primary School, we do all we can to enable children to gain the maximum benefit from their education and to participate as fully as possible in school life. We believe that all children have a right to be educated and should not be excluded purely as a result of requiring medication. Although school staff have a professional and legal duty to safeguard the health and safety of pupils, the administration of medicine is ultimately the responsibility of parents/carers.

Responsibility

Neither the Headteacher nor the staff has a duty to administer medication. Participation in the administration of medicines in school is on a voluntary basis. Individual decisions on involvement must be respected. Punitive action will not be taken against those who choose not to volunteer. Whilst every care will be taken in administering the medicine school cannot be held responsible for any failure to carry this out for whatever reason.

Advice for Parents

Parents/carers are asked to send a note, or telephone school if their child is away for any reason. School should be notified on the first day of absence whenever possible. Parents/carers are advised that pupils who are unwell should not be sent to school. However, many pupils need to attend school while taking prescribed medicines either because they are:

- i) suffering from chronic illness or allergy; or
- ii) recovering from a short-term illness and are undergoing or completing a course of treatment using prescribed medicines.

If a pupil has been prescribed treatment by a GP, parents are asked to keep the child at home and administer at least one full day's treatment, to ensure that the child does not suffer any allergic reaction.

Parents/carers and doctors should decide how best to meet each child's requirements. Carefully designed prescribing can sometimes reduce the need for medicine to be taken during school hours.

To help avoid unnecessary taking of medicines at school, parents/carers should:

- be aware that a three times daily dosage can usually be spaced evenly throughout the day and does not necessarily have to be taken at lunchtime; and
- ask the family doctor if it is possible to adjust the medication to avoid school time doses.

Where occasionally this cannot be arranged, parents/carers are encouraged to note that if the pupil needs a dose of medicine at lunchtime, wherever possible, the parent/carer should come to school to administer the medicine. Parents must make arrangements for administering medicines themselves if:

- the medicines or tablets are dangerous.
- the timing and nature of administration are of vital importance.
- where serious consequences could result if the dose is not administered.
- where some technical or medical knowledge or expertise is required.

Parents are asked to inform school of any long-term medical needs that their child may have. It may be necessary to complete a healthcare plan for any pupil with on-going medical needs. (See Appendix 1)

Guidelines for Medicine in School

If it is not possible for parents/carers to administer medication in school, the following guidelines should be followed.

Written Instructions

All medicines that are to be administered in school must be accompanied by written instructions from the parent and/or the GP. Parents/carers must notify school immediately should the dosage arrangements change. We are only able to administer non-prescription medication in exceptional circumstances.

Labelling of Medicines

On the few occasions when medicines have to be brought into school, the original container, complete with the original dispensing label should be used. Medicine should not be decanted - whatever is supplied in the container by the chemist should be brought into school. The label should clearly state:

- i) Name of Pupil.
- ii) Date of Dispensing.
- iii) Dose
- iv) Cautionary advice/special storage instructions.
- v) Name of medicine.
- vi) Expiry date - where applicable.

Storage

Medication must at all times be stored in the original container with a childproof lid. Medicines are kept safely and are accessible when required. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that, when medicines are admitted to school premises, a system of safekeeping is in place, which limits open access by pupils to medicines. If any medication requires special storage arrangements, parents/carers must make this clear to staff when it is brought into school

Administration of Medicines

There are 2 general situations which apply to the Administration of Medicines in schools, these are as follows:

The pupil self-administers the medication under supervision. This is particularly applicable to those pupils requiring asthma inhalers. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that, as a minimum safeguard, self-administration of medicines that are safely stored is supervised by an adult. This involves ensuring:

- Access to the medication at appropriate times. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure the medicine is appropriately stored

to prevent any unsupervised self-administration of the medicine, as per the guidance on storage.

- The medication belongs to the named pupil and it is within the expiry date.
- A record is kept noting that session was supervised but clearly indicating that medication was self-administered by pupil. (See Appendix 2)

A named volunteer at the school administers the medicine. The school will, in this circumstance, be storing the medicines and all the points on the storage of medicines will be adhered to. The names of the volunteer staff are kept up to date and cover during periods of absence is provided.

To avoid the risk of double dosing in schools the Headteacher will clarify who is responsible for administering medications. As an extra precaution, staff who administer medication routinely consult the record form before any medication is given.

The Headteacher ensures that all relevant staff are aware of pupils who are taking medication and who is responsible for administering the medication; and that this person would be routinely summoned in the event of a child on medication feeling unwell, as they will be aware of any symptoms, if any, associated with the child's illness which may require emergency action. Other trained staff who may be required e.g. first aider should be summoned as appropriate.

Before administering the medication, the volunteer member of staff will:

- ii) read the written instructions/parental consent for each child prior to supervising or administering medicines, and check the details on the parental consent against those on the label of the medication;
- iii) confirm the dosage/frequency on each occasion, and consult the medicine record form to ensure there will be no double dosing;
- iv) be aware of symptoms which may require emergency action, e.g. those listed on an individual healthcare plan where one exists;
- vi) check that the medication belongs to the named pupil and is within the expiry date;

- vii) record on the medication record form (see Appendix 2) all administration of medicines as soon as they are given to each individual;
- viii) understand and take appropriate hygiene precautions to minimise the risk of cross contamination;
- ix) ensure that all medicines are returned for safe storage

Heather Farrell
February 2005

Approved by Governors March 2005