



# Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

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This booklet explains how schools should support pupils with medical conditions. It is based on guidance written by the Department for Education also called Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.

### **What is a medical condition?**

There are many types of medical conditions which can result from illness or injury.

Medical conditions can include physical health needs, for example, diabetes, epilepsy, asthma and heart conditions. They can also include mental health needs such as anxiety and depression.

Medical conditions can sometimes affect a child's ability to learn as they might not be well enough to attend school at times.

Sometimes medical conditions can affect a child's confidence or self-esteem and they might make it difficult to keep in touch with friends.

### **What do schools have to do to support pupils with medical conditions?**

By law (the Children and Families Act 2014) governing bodies of schools have to make arrangements to support pupils at school with medical conditions so that they can:

- take part in all school activities, including school trips and P.E.;
- stay healthy; and
- do well in their school work.

Schools have to make sure that pupils with medical conditions can enjoy the same opportunities as any other pupil. Schools must have a written policy explaining how they will support pupils with medical conditions.

## **What should be included in the school's policy?**

The policy should explain:

- What the school will do when they are told a pupil has a medical condition;
- How the school will organise training for staff at the school;
- Who will develop individual healthcare plans for pupils who need them;
- How the school will help pupils to take care of their own health needs and medicines;
- How the school will store medicines and that they will keep a written record when these are given to pupils;
- What should happen in an emergency;
- How complaints about support for pupils with medical conditions may be made and what will happen with these.

The school's policy should recognise that all children and young people are different even if they have the same medical condition.

## **What should schools do to support individual pupils?**

Schools should ask for help from health practitioners; e.g. a doctor or nurse, about how to look after pupils with medical conditions. They should also talk to the pupil and their family about how they want to be supported. How

schools support pupils will vary because each pupil has individual needs.

Some pupils might need support from a member of staff throughout the day, or at specific points during the day. They may need help to take their medication or keep them well. Others might need to have special medicines given to them in emergency situations. Sometimes staff will need special training from medical professionals to ensure they can do this properly.

Schools are not allowed to make parents attend school or off-site trips to administer medication or provide medical support to their child, including where they need help going to the toilet. Schools must make sure that they have support in place so that pupils with medical needs can attend all school activities, including school trips. Some pupils might need to take time off school to attend medical appointments or have treatment. Schools have to allow this and must not penalise pupils for their attendance record if absences are for genuine medical reasons.

Schools should develop individual healthcare plans for children with complex medical conditions or health needs.



## **What is an individual healthcare plan?**

Individual healthcare plans are written documents that explain:

- what medical condition a pupil has;
- what needs to be done to help them in school;
- when this needs to happen; and
- who should provide the help needed.

They are especially important where medical conditions change a lot or where emergency intervention is often required. Individual healthcare plans will be written by a group of people including someone from the school, a relevant medical professional (e.g. a specialist nurse), parents and the pupil whenever possible. Individual healthcare plans are reviewed each year.

Some pupils might need help to go to the toilet when they are at school. In these cases, the school will write a slightly different plan called an intimate care plan. If a pupil needs help to go to the toilet and already has an individual healthcare plan, the school won't need to write a separate intimate care plan; the two can be combined.

## **Does having a medical condition mean that a pupil is disabled?**

Some children and young people with medical conditions may be considered to be disabled by law (the Equality Act 2010). If so, governing bodies of schools have to make sure they meet their legal duties for disabled pupils as well.

There is more information about disabilities in the leaflets, 'Disability: what the law says' and 'What should a school do if a pupil has a disability?' All leaflets are available from the Physical and Medical Needs Service.

## **Are schools allowed to keep medicines on site?**

Schools can keep medicines in the school for individual pupils who need them. They can only give medicines to pupils if they have written permission from their parents.

Parents have to provide medicine for the school to use. Medicines must be:

- in-date;
- labelled;
- in the original container; and
- provided with instructions for administration, dosage and storage.

Medicines have to be stored safely by schools but children should know where they are at all times and be able to get them quickly.

Some medicines, called controlled drugs have to be stored in a special container and only certain staff are allowed to have access to these.

Schools have to keep a written record of all medicines administered to individual pupils.

### **Can a pupil look after their own medicine?**

Schools should encourage pupils to look after their own medicines and devices (e.g. asthma inhalers) where they are old enough and feel comfortable doing so.

### **School trips**

Pupils with medical conditions should be able to go on school trips and visits, and take part in sporting

activities. Schools might have to think and do things differently so that pupils can take part in such activities.

Schools should carry out a risk assessment to make sure that pupils with medical conditions are included in school trips and activities. They should involve parents and pupils in this process and make sure they have up-to-date advice from a relevant medical professional.

Risk assessments involve thinking about how any risks (e.g. things that might cause harm or injury) to a pupil or the staff helping them can be managed and reduced.

Sometimes a health professional, such as a GP might say it is not possible for pupils to take part in trips and activities. If this happens, the school must follow their advice.