

Protocol for Obtaining Information About Childrens Health

General Practitioners have been unnecessarily contacted by schools and other bodies to provide information about children's health, which could have been provided by other professionals, as stated in the third report "Making a difference: reducing General Practitioners (GPs) paperwork" David Hayloer et al (2001) for the Cabinet Office. The consensus of the Department of Health, the Department for Education and Employment, the Cabinet Office and the Local Government Association was that Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and Health Authorities would agree protocols to address the issues. This protocol has been produced by the Local Authorities to ensure the information can be obtained from the most appropriate source so that GPs are not contacted unnecessarily.

Children Needing Alternative Educational Provision

- It is the responsibility of the school to have procedures in place for ensuring that pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs have access to education.
- Referral for alternative educational provision by medical professionals should be made through the school.

For the information on the referral route for provision please see **Access to Education for Children and Young People with Medical Needs** in the Wakefield Metropolitan District (Circular No. 02/10/31).

Special Examination Requirements for Children in School

Schools have guidance on examination requirements for the examining body and reference should be made to this in the first instance. Should further information be required:

1. For children with known longstanding health problems, medical information required for special examination requirements should be sought from the School Health Service in accordance with exam board regulations.

- Parents would discuss the health issue with the school.
- The school will then refer to the School Paediatrician or School Nurse.

- The parent will be invited to bring their child for medical assessment.
- Written information and advice will be given to the school regarding the child's health and the impact it may have on the child's education/examinations.
- The school will forward this advice with a covering letter to the exam board.

2. Acute Health Problems

When children develop an acute illness which results in them being unfit to take an examination (or take the examination before they are fully recovered), often the only medical professional they have seen is their General Practitioner. In this event there is little alternative to the GP being asked (by the child's parent) for information about the illness which is relevant to the situation.

Similar situations arise with children having emergency surgery or who fracture limbs – when they are either too ill to take the examination or can only take the examination with special provision. In such circumstances the GP is in the best position to prove (to parents) the information required.

Home to School Transport

- Any school or GP who identifies that a child with medical needs may require the provision of home to

school transport will contact the School Paediatrician/School Health Service at Castleford Hospital.

- The School Medical Officer will make the request on the appropriate form and return it to:

**Education/Transport Department,
County Hall, Wakefield, WF1 2QL**

Eligibility to Undertake Sport/School Trips

- If a child is experiencing difficulty undertaking regular sporting activities in school, this should be brought to the attention of the parent (eg It may be that asthma medications needs adjusting).
- If the problem is persistent, advice can be sought from the School Paediatrician or GP, if this is found to be necessary.
- For children with medical needs who are taken on school trips, advice can be sought from the School Nursing Service in the first instance, and an appropriate referral can be made if this is found to be necessary.

Children Requiring Medication/Inhalers

- Schools have clear guidelines on children requiring medication at school. **Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs** DfEE good practice guide 1996.
- If the school require further advice on a child's medication/inhalers they should contact the School Nursing Service.
- For children who may need medication such as Epipen, school should contact the School Nursing Service to receive the appropriate training and to initiate an Individual Health Care Plan.
- To avoid being contacted unnecessarily about asthma medication, the GPs can initiate the school asthma card, which is part of the asthma record card for children. Parents should be encouraged to fill the school card in every time a child's medication is changed, so that schools always have up to date information regarding the child's medication needing to be taken at school.

Immunisation Status of Children in the Care of the Local Authority

- All parents should have a record of the immunisations their children have received throughout their childhood in the parent held record.

- If this information is not available from the parents it can be obtained from the Child Health Department at Castleford Hospital **Tel: 01977 605500.**

Children Requiring Medical Intervention

- Some children needing a medical intervention in school, for example children with severe allergies and who have been prescribed Epipen, will need an Individual Health Care Plan to ensure a safe system of care.
- The Individual Health Care Plan will be agreed with parent, school and the prescribing doctor.
- The school nurse would have a key role in these health care plans and would have the responsibility for training schools and providing updated training as and when necessary, usually on a yearly basis. The school nurse would also ensure that the Individual Care Plans will be reviewed on a yearly basis ensuring up to date health information and consent is always available.
- After each review the prescribing doctor will receive an up to date copy of the Individual Health Care Plan.