

Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs Policy



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Ratified by the Board of Governors

signed: _____

date: _____

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The Board of Governors and staff of Thornfield House School wish to ensure that pupils with medication needs receive appropriate care and support at school. The Principal will accept responsibility in principle for members of the school staff giving or supervising pupils taking prescribed medication during the school day **where those members of staff have volunteered to do so.** (See Appendix i)

Please note that parents should keep their children at home if acutely unwell or infectious.

Parents are responsible for providing the Principal with comprehensive information regarding the pupil's condition and medication.

Prescribed medication will not be accepted in school without complete written and signed instructions from the parent.

Staff will not give a non-prescribed medicine to a child unless there is specific prior written permission from the parents.

Only reasonable quantities of medication should be supplied to the school (for example, a maximum of four weeks supply at any one time).

Where the pupil travels on school transport with an escort, parents should ensure the escort has written instructions relating to any medication sent with the pupil, including medication for administration during respite care.

Each item of medication must be delivered to the Principal or Authorised Person, in normal circumstances by the parent, **in a secure and labelled container as originally dispensed.**

Each item of medication must be clearly labelled with the following information:

- Pupil's Name.
- Name of medication.
- Dosage.
- Frequency of administration.
- Date of dispensing.
- Storage requirements (if important).
- Expiry date.

The school will not accept items of medication in unlabelled containers.

Medication will be kept in a secure place, out of the reach of pupils. Unless otherwise indicated all medication to be administered in school will be kept in a locked medicine cabinet.

The school will keep records, which they will have available for parents.

If children refuse to take medicines, staff will not force them to do so, and will inform the parents of the refusal, as a matter of urgency, on the same day. If a refusal to take medicines results in an emergency, the school's emergency procedures will be followed.

It is the responsibility of parents to notify the school in writing if the pupil's need for medication has ceased.

It is the parents' responsibility to renew the medication when supplies are running low and to ensure that the medication supplied is within its expiry date.

The school will not make changes to dosages on parental instructions.

School staff will not dispose of medicines. Medicines, which are in use and in date, should be collected by the parent at the end of each term. Date expired medicines or those no longer required for treatment will be returned immediately to the parent for transfer to a community pharmacist for safe disposal.

For each pupil with long term or complex medication needs, the Principal, will ensure that a Medication Plan and Protocol is drawn up, in conjunction with the appropriate health professionals, as well as ensuring all relevant staff are appropriately trained.

Where it is appropriate to do so, pupils will be encouraged to administer their own medication, if necessary under staff supervision. Parents will be asked to confirm in writing if they wish their child to carry their medication with them in school.

Staff who volunteer to assist in the administration of medication will receive appropriate training/guidance through arrangements made with the School Health Service.

The school will make every effort to continue the administration of medication to a pupil whilst on trips away from the school premises, even if additional arrangements might be required. However, there may be occasions when it may not be possible to include a pupil on a school trip if appropriate supervision cannot be guaranteed.

All staff will be made aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.

SECTION 6: DEALING WITH MEDICINES SAFELY

Safety Management

All medicines may be harmful to anyone for whom they are not prescribed. Where a school agrees to administer this type of medicine the employer must ensure that the risks to the health of others are properly controlled. This duty derives from the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, (COSHH).

The Medicines Act 1968 places restrictions on dealings with medicinal products, including their administration. In the case of prescription only medicines anyone administering such a medicinal product by injection must be an appropriate medical practitioner, e.g. a doctor, or else must act in accordance with the practitioner's directions and authority.

There are exceptions for the administration of certain prescription only medicines by injection in emergencies (in order to save a life). An example of an exception is injection by a fully assembled syringe and needle delivering a set dose of adrenaline by intramuscular injection in the case of anaphylactic shock. Examples are EpiPen® and Anapen®. There are also junior versions for use in children.

Storing Medication

In a school where staff have volunteered to administer medication and where the Principal has agreed to this, the Principal is responsible for making sure that medicines are stored safely.

Schools should not store large volumes of medication. Parents should be asked to supply weekly or monthly supplies of the doses to be taken at school. Schools should only store, supervise and administer medicine that has been prescribed for an individual child. Medicines should be stored strictly in accordance with product instructions, (paying particular note to temperature), and in the original container in which dispensed. Staff should ensure that the supplied container is clearly labelled with the name of the child, the name and dose of the medicine and the frequency of administration. This should be straight forward if medicines are only accepted in the original container as dispensed by a pharmacist in accordance with the prescriber's instructions.

Where a pupil needs two or more prescribed medicines, each should be in a separate container. Non health care staff should never transfer medicines from their original containers.

If the school locks away medication that a pupil might need in an emergency, **all staff should know where to quickly obtain keys to the medicine cabinet.**

Careful note should be taken of any requirements regarding the temperature at which the medication should be stored. Some medicines need to be refrigerated. Medicines can be kept in a refrigerator containing food, but should be in an airtight container and clearly labelled. If a school has to store large quantities of medicines then a lockable medical refrigerator should be considered. The school should restrict access to a refrigerator holding medicines. Ideally the fridge should be fitted with a minimum and maximum thermometer.

Local and community services pharmacists may give advice to schools about storing medicines.

Controlled Drugs

The supply, possession and administration of some medicines are controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act and its associated Regulations. Some may be prescribed as medication for use by children, e.g. methylphenidate.

Increasing numbers of children are taking methylphenidate, e.g. Ritalin®, Equasym®, Concerta®, for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These are controlled drugs and therefore care must be taken regarding its storage.

Any member of staff may administer a controlled drug to the pupil for whom it has been prescribed, provided they have received appropriate training. Staff administering medicine should do so in accordance with the prescriber's instructions.

A pupil who has been prescribed a controlled drug may legally have it in their possession. It is permissible for schools and settings to look after a controlled drug, where it is agreed that it will be administered to the child for whom it has been prescribed.

Schools and settings should keep controlled drugs in a locked non portable container and only named staff should have access. A record should be kept for audit and safety purposes.

A controlled drug, as with all medicines, should be returned to the parent when no longer required to arrange for safe disposal (by returning the unwanted supply to the local pharmacy). If this is not possible, it should be returned to the dispensing pharmacist (details should be on the label).

Misuse of a controlled drug, such as passing it to another pupil for use, is an offence. The school has a policy in place for dealing with drug misuse.

Access to Medication

Pupils must have access to their medicine when required. They should know where their own medication is kept and who holds the key.

Some medicines, such as inhalers for asthma, must be readily available to pupils and should not be locked away. Many schools allow pupils to carry their own inhalers. If a pupil is likely to suffer a severe allergic reaction, the pupil may be old enough to carry his or her own medication (e.g. EpiPen®/ Anapen®) but if not, a suitable, safe, yet accessible place for storage should be found. Other medicines should generally be kept in a secure place not accessible to pupils. Further details relating to specific conditions are contained in Part V.

The school should make special access arrangements for emergency medication that it keeps. It is also important to make sure that medicines are only accessible to those for whom they are prescribed.

Disposal of Medicines

School staff should not dispose of medicines.

Medicines, which are in use and in date, should be collected by the parent at the end of each term.

Parents are responsible for disposal of date expired medicines. Date expired medicines or those no longer required for treatment should be returned to the parent immediately for transfer to a community pharmacist for safe disposal.

Sharps boxes should always be used for the disposal of needles. Sharps boxes can be obtained by parents on prescription from the child's GP or paediatrician. Collection and disposal of the boxes should be arranged with local authority's environmental services.

Hygiene/Infection Control

All staff should be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection and must follow basic hygiene procedures. Staff should have access to protective disposable gloves and take care when dealing with spillages of blood or other body fluids and disposing of dressings or equipment.

Appendix i

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE

There may be occasions where school staff may be asked to administer medication, but they cannot be directed to do so.

The administration of medication to children remains the responsibility of the parent or those with parental responsibility.

Medication should only be taken to school when absolutely essential and with the agreement of the Principal.

Parents should be encouraged to request, where possible, that medication be prescribed in dose frequencies which enable it to be taken outside school hours e.g. medicines that need to be taken three times a day could be taken in the morning, after school hours and at bedtime.

Schools should be alerted to the particular risks for young persons in taking Aspirin and Ibuprofen and should not routinely administer these unless under clear medical guidance.