

CHSHA STUDENT HEALTH CARE GUIDELINES

Supervisory staff owe a duty to take reasonable care for the health and well-being of students placed in their care.

All supervisory staff are required to hold a current recognised first aid certificate [including CPR].

- **Student Health Record Form:**

The duty of care requires staff to request and even urge a parent or guardian for information as to a student's health so that appropriate action may be taken should the student become sick or is injured. For this reason, parents or guardians should be requested to complete and sign the Student Health Record Form.

It should be noted, however, that legal opinion suggests that a parent or guardian cannot be 'directed' to complete the form. This reasoning equally applies to directions to students to undergo medical examinations and directions to medical practitioners to complete the 'Physical Examination' section of the Student Health Record Form.

- **Consent:**

Medical treatment carried out without the consent, express or implied, of a patient will in general constitute actionable trespass. A minor is capable of giving effective consent to medical treatment if he or she fully comprehends the nature and consequences of the proposed treatment. Regard will be had to the age and maturity of the child and to the type of treatment proposed.

Where the minor is not legally capable of giving consent, his or her parent or guardian is required to consent on the minor's behalf. Where the patient's or parent's or guardian's consent cannot be obtained and emergency treatment is required, the medical practitioner may as an agent of necessity carry out such treatment as is necessary to meet the emergency.

There is no reason why supervisory staff should voluntarily assume responsibility for giving consent to treatment, including the administration of an anaesthetic; there is no legal obligation for them to assume this role in the discharge of their duty of care. This is the responsibility of the student or of his or her parent or guardian and, as a last resort, in an emergency situation, of the medical practitioner. In these circumstances, supervisors should not seek permission from parents or guardians for them to authorise medical care or hospitalisation for students.

While supervisors have no legal obligation to authorise medical treatment for students placed in their care, their duty of care responsibility requires them to seek appropriate medical attention for a student from a medical practitioner or hospital in the event of illness or injury where required. Parental consent to such a course and the opportunity for parents to specify preferred medical practitioners would be prudent but lack of consent would not relieve supervisors of their responsibilities to the students at common law.

- **Existing Medical Conditions:**

Once supervisory staff are made aware of students who have medical conditions such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, heart conditions or who have allergic reactions [eg to specific medications or bee stings] then they must exercise special care to protect those students in situations where the medical condition exposes them to a special risk of injury or illness.

An emergency action plan should be developed for students with known medical conditions, such as the above, in consultation with the parents or guardians and treating doctor with an agreed protocol to be put in writing.

- **Administration of prescribed Medication:**

Parents or guardians should be requested to provide **authorisation in writing**, together with the treating doctor's **instructions in writing**, for the administration to students of prescribed medication on a regular basis for a known medical condition.

- **Administration of non-prescribed Medication:**

Supervisors who administer non-prescribed medications to students, such as Panadol or Cold and Flu tablets, should ensure that they observe the manufacturer's instructions as to dose, frequency and precautions to be taken. They should also ensure that the student's Health Record is checked for specified allergic reactions to medication or special instructions.

Certain medications, such as aspirin, have the potential to cause medical problems. Medications which have the potential to harm, should not be administered without parental consent.

Parents or guardians should be requested to authorise supervisors to administer specified types of medication in specified circumstances. These medications should be supplied in correctly labelled containers and the information recorded in the student's Health Record Form.

- **Student Medical Records:**

Student medical records should be accorded strict confidentiality. Records should be kept until the student's twenty fifth birthday. A person who has a potential cause of action in law which arose while he/she was a minor has, in certain circumstances, a period of six years from his/her eighteenth birthday in which to commence legal proceedings. In the ordinary course, a writ must be served on a defendant within twelve months of its issue.

- **Procedure for notification of illness:**

- All students feeling unwell should report immediately to supervisory staff for assessment.
- Accurate documentation as to the date, time, symptoms and action taken should be kept whenever a student approaches supervisory staff with an illness or injury. If appropriate, details should also be provided on any attempt to contact the student's parent or guardian. This information should be recorded on the student's Medical Record form`.
- An appointment should be made for the student to be seen by a medical practitioner on student request, parent request or if staff are unsure of the seriousness of the illness or injury.
- Parents or guardians must be advised immediately if a student has a serious illness or injury.
- If deemed necessary, the student should be confined to bed. Students absenting themselves from school must be confined to bed all day, however if they have recovered by lunchtime they should be allowed to return to school.
- Students confined to bed should be closely monitored at regular intervals [eg every 30 minutes] by rostered supervisory staff. Ample fluids should be available at all times and meals served in the student's cubicle/room.
- Should the illness extend beyond one or two days and there is inadequate resource to continue close supervisory coverage, consideration should be given to either returning the student home or being admitted to hospital, as appropriate.

- All drugs and medications should be kept in a locked cupboard under the control of supervisory staff and prescribed medications administered only under written instructions from a medical practitioner.
- Non-prescribed medication such as Panadol should not be administered indiscriminately. A written record must be kept and the recommended time frame complied with.
- All head and eye injuries should always be referred to a medical practitioner.
- Students diagnosed with an infectious disease, on the advice of the medical practitioner, should be sent home or hospitalised.
- Students who are ill or on medication, such as antibiotics, must refrain from any involvement in sport or other strenuous activity for the period of the illness.

REMEMBER:

Medical advice should always be sought if staff have any concerns about the health of a student.