



Northern Ireland
Assembly

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Administration of medication in schools in other jurisdictions

Summary

This Briefing Note considers policies and arrangements for the administration of medications to pupils in schools in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. In each of these jurisdictions there is no statutory obligation for school staff to become involved in administering medications, although they may choose to do so on a voluntary basis. In England, Scotland and Wales employers are required to provide insurance, while in Ireland boards of management are required to seek an indemnity from the parents in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of medication.

1 Northern Ireland context

Principals, Vice Principals and teachers are not contractually required to administer medicines to pupils; it is a voluntary role and there is no legal obligation to do so. However, some non-teaching staff are employed on contracts which require them to carry out certain medical procedures.¹

Departmental guidance states that dealing with medical conditions and medication needs must take into account the risks arising from these and should aim to minimise

¹ DE and DHSSPS (2008) *Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs* Bangor: DE

the probability of anything more serious happening to the child.² The remainder of this Briefing Note provides an overview of arrangements in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

2 England

In England there is no statutory duty requiring school staff to administer medication to pupils. It is left up to schools and their employers to develop their own policies on the administration of medication to pupils.³ Some schools develop roles that include the administration of medicines within their core job description, and some support staff have this duty in their contract of employment. Employers are required to have adequate insurance cover for staff who undertake this role.⁴

3 Scotland

There is no legal requirement for school staff in Scotland to administer medicine to pupils. Statutory responsibility for meeting the medication needs of children in school lies with NHS Boards, however school staff may do so on a voluntary basis (and some staff may be contracted to do so). Guidance highlights a need for the local authority to provide insurance cover for staff who volunteer to undertake this role, and the need for an individual health care plan to be put into place.⁵

4 Wales

As in England and Scotland, school staff in Wales have no statutory obligation to administer medication to pupils, but may do so in a voluntary capacity. Some support staff may have a contractual obligation to administer medicines. Guidance states that schools should have appropriate policies in place and notes that employers should ensure that they have adequate insurance to cover staff.⁶

5 Ireland

In line with the other jurisdictions, school staff in Ireland have no legal duty to become involved in the administration of medications to pupils, but may do so on a voluntary basis. Schools in Ireland should have a policy on the administration of medication, and should seek an indemnity from the parents in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of the medication.⁷

² DE and DHSSPS (2008) *Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs* Bangor: DE

³ Department for Education: *Managing medicines in schools* [online] Available at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/pastoralcare/b0013771/managing-medicines-in-schools>

⁴ Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings* DfES

⁵ Scottish Executive (2001) *The administration of medicines in schools* Edinburgh: The Stationery Office

⁶ National Assembly Training & Education Department (1997) *Supporting pupils with medical needs in schools* Cardiff

⁷ Allianz (2008) *Schools Journal* Dublin: Allianz