

Appendix 4

Supporting Children with Medical Conditions or Needs – Information for Parents

This information leaflet aims to give parents some general information about the way in which the Children and Young Peoples Service supports children with medical conditions or needs and suggests some of the ways in which parents can help play their part.

General

Local Authorities (LAs) and childcare providers* are responsible for the health and safety of children in their care. We expect those looking after children to take the same care that a reasonable, responsible and careful parent would take in similar circumstances while they are responsible for the care and control of children. In Kirklees, the LA works closely with the Health Authorities in order to provide schools and other childcare providers with effective support and guidance to meet the medical needs of children by providing detailed information and advice on expectations and best practice.

In summary, childcare providers are able to develop their own policies and procedures based on guidance from the LA for supporting children with medical conditions or needs, including arrangements for administering medication. Your childcare provider should be able to provide you with information regarding its specific policy.

In general, staff cannot legally be required to administer medication or supervise a child taking it. This is a voluntary role. In some cases, where a child has very complex needs a support assistant may be appointed who will be responsible for administering medication and carrying out personal care. Nevertheless, childcare staff including teachers have a duty to act as any reasonably careful parent would to make sure that children in their care are healthy and safe. This might extend to administering medicine or taking action in an emergency.

For children with more complex medical conditions or needs, an Individual Health Care Plan must be drawn up together with parents and health professionals, where appropriate in which everyone concerned agrees what action they will take to support the child.

*** The term childcare provider used in this document refers to registered settings, young persons services e.g. youth clubs, play schemes, children's homes and schools**

The Headteacher/registered person or senior manager in charge of the childcare provider is accountable for local decisions about the provider role in administering medication. The Headteacher/registered person or senior manager will consider each case and agree with the parents exactly what support can be provided. The Headteacher/registered person or senior manager has to formally accept responsibility where the agreement involves "volunteer" members of staff giving or supervising children taking prescribed medication or carrying out prescribed procedures whilst in their care. He/she will make sure that the members of staff receive adequate information, instruction and training to ensure their competency to carry out their roles safely and effectively.

Where there is a concern about whether the childcare provider can meet the needs of a child, The Headteacher/registered person or senior manager can seek further advice.

Ideally, the Headteacher/registered person or senior manager should seek parental agreement before passing on information about their child's health to other staff, but it should be acknowledged that sharing information especially on potentially life threatening conditions is important if staff and parents are to ensure the best care for a child.

Please note:

Childcare providers are advised not to keep medicines for general use, with the exception of paracetamol which may be given in age appropriate doses (with parents' written consent) for certain conditions. Childcare providers cannot be expected to take responsibility for any other non-prescribed medicines to help with minor ailments.

How you can help your childcare provider. It will help if you:

- Make sure your child is fit and well enough to attend your childcare provider
- Provide full details, in writing, of any health problems he/she may have and keep all your childcare providers informed of any changes. Complex/serious conditions should be verified by the GP and/or Consultant in writing. Examples of medical conditions that would need verification include - Epilepsy, Diabetes, Asthma, Anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) this is not an exhaustive list.
- Provide full details of any special religious and/or cultural beliefs which may affect any medical care that the child needs, particularly in the event of an emergency and confirm this in writing
- Make sure you provide the information in good time to allow the childcare provider sufficient opportunity to plan and prepare how they can meet your child's needs
- Attend meetings where requested and co-operate in drawing up the health care plan (if applicable)
- If medicines are prescribed for your child, ask your doctor if they can be taken outside attendance at any childcare provider.
- If appropriate, offer to attend to administer your child's medication
- Provide full details of any medication requirements and make sure that medicines supplied to your childcare provider do not exceed their expiry date ** (Parents are reminded that it is their responsibility to collect and dispose unused or expired medication)
- Try to avoid your child carrying medicines. Primary age children should not carry medicines except possibly inhalers or travel sickness medication (for use on educational visits) accompanied by written consent to the Headteacher/registered person or senior manager
- Make sure the childcare provider has a telephone number where you can be contacted in an emergency and keep them informed of any changes to contact details.
- Make sure that when children change schools or child care provision that you provide the new setting with the most up to date information
- Educate your child about their medical condition e.g. reading food labels, asking questions, early symptoms

** Medicines should be brought to the childcare provider by the parent of the child or another responsible adult and handed to a responsible member of staff in the containers in which they were supplied. Containers should be clearly labeled with the child's name, the type of medicine, dosage, storage instructions and expiry date.