

Administration of Medicines in School

1. No teacher can be required to administer medicine or drugs to a pupil.
2. Any teacher who is willing to administer medicines should only do so under strictly controlled guidelines, fully confident that the administration will be safe. It is wise to limit this willingness to emergency situations only. A teacher who does take responsibility for administering medicines takes on a heavy legal duty of care to discharge the responsibility correctly. Every reasonable precaution must be taken. Clear instructions about medicines requiring regular administration must be obtained and strictly followed.
3. The parent(s) of the pupil concerned should write to the Board of Management requesting the Board to authorise a member of the teaching staff to administer the medicine.
4. The request should also contain written instructions of the procedure to be followed in administering the medication.
5. The Board of Management, having considered the matter, may authorise a teacher to administer medication to a pupil. If the teacher is so authorised she/he should be properly instructed by the Board of Management.
6. A teacher should not administer medication without the specific authorisation of the Board.
7. In administering medication to pupils, teachers should exercise the standard of care of a reasonable and prudent parent.
8. The Board of Management should inform the school's insurers accordingly.
9. The Board of Management should seek an indemnity from the parent(s) in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of the medication.

Arrangements should also be made by the Board of Management for the safe storage of medication and procedures for the administration of medicine in the event of the authorised teacher's absence. It is the parent's responsibility to check each morning whether or not the authorised teacher is in school unless an alternative arrangement is made locally.

In emergencies teachers should do no more than is obviously necessary and appropriate to relieve extreme distress or prevent further and otherwise irreparable harm. Qualified medical treatment should be secured in emergencies at the earliest opportunity.

Where possible medical practitioners should arrange times for medication so that they don't coincide with school time.

It is important that parents ensure that teachers be made aware in writing of any medical condition suffered by any children in their class. Children who are epileptics or diabetics or who are prone to anaphylactic shock syndrome may have an attack at any time and it is critical, therefore, to identify the symptoms in order that treatment can be given by an appropriate person if necessary.