**Schoolcare**

**Program**

**Guidelines**

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# **Introduction**

The Schoolcare Program (SCP) is a service provided by the Department of Education and Training (the Department) in partnership with the Royal Children’s Hospital (RCH), which provides Victorian government school staff with the skills and knowledge to support students who have complex medical needs.

The Schoolcare Program enables students with ongoing complex medical needs to have their health care requirements met safely at school. This service provides specialist training to staff who deliver interventional medical care to students while they are attending school.

Schools are not mandated to access specialist training from the Schoolcare Program; in many instances specialist training can be sourced either from local health service providers, or from appropriately qualified nurses in specialist schools. It is the Principal’s responsibility to ensure that staff are competent and skilled in the health care requirements of their students.

## A Student Health Support Plan (or in the case of Anaphylaxis, an Anaphylaxis Management Plan) is required for any student with an identified health care need, guided by medical advice received by the student’s medical/health practitioner and developed in consultation with the student and student’s parent/guardian/carer(s).

## For further information refer to the Health Support Planning Forms available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/supportplanning.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/supportplanning.aspx)

# **Schoolcare Program Eligibility Requirements**

## The majority of health care needs for students are managed by schools utilising existing resources, and a referral to the Schoolcare Program is not appropriate.

The Schoolcare Program is available for students with complex medical care needs who require regular interventional medical procedures during the school day and where the staff members require specific training in order to be able to perform these procedures. This program is available where the student would not be able to attend school without the procedure being performed.

The following list includes examples of the procedures for which Schoolcare Program training is provided:

**Tube feeding (nasogastric or gastrostomy feeding)**

* infection control
* use of correct methods to check position of nasogastric tube
* administering correct volumes of feed at regular intervals, at correct rate and temperature, specific to individual child
* use of feeding pump as required
* ensuring stomach is empty of excess air
* cleaning of equipment

**Tracheostomy care**

* infection control
* use of correct humidification
* ensuring clear airway and using suction and saline as required
* ability to effect efficient tube change if unable to be cleared of blockage
* implementation of emergency procedures around respiratory needs as required

**Suction**

* infection control
* knowledge of when to suction and why
* use of correct suctioning technique for specific child
* awareness of specific types of mucus to observe for and reporting of abnormalities to relevant people
* prevention of complications of incorrect suction procedure—vomiting, aspiration and damage to mucous membrane

**Oxygen**

* maintenance of oxygen supply and tube patency
* maintaining skin integrity, in the case of nasal cannulas and face masks
* ensuring appropriate humidification
* observation of child’s general health status and adjustment of oxygen level according to set criteria
* awareness of dangers of oxygen therapy and prevention of complications
* change of oxygen cylinders as required

**Stoma care** (if stoma care is the sole medical need of the child this will not be deemed eligible for

Schoolcare and will require referral to Stomal therapy)

* ileostomy and colostomy management
* regular emptying of pouch
* changing of pouch as required
* adequate protection of the stoma
* appropriate surrounding skin care management
* complete flange changes, as required

## Eligibility is based on the student’s medical condition and medical care needs while attending school, and is determined by the Department in consultation with the Schoolcare Program staff at the Royal Children’s Hospital.

# **Student Health Support**

The Schoolcare Program does not provide training where the sole medical need of the student includes seizure management, diabetes management, stoma care or catheterisation.

The following may be helpful in providing further information and support for these conditions:

### Seizure management

Schools seeking professional development or training relating to the support needs of students with epilepsy should contact the Epilepsy Foundation on 1300 761 487 or [epilepsy@epilepsyfoundation.org.au](mailto:epilepsy@epilepsyfoundation.org.au). Curriculum materials and classroom support are also available.

### Diabetes management

Schools can access information and advice relating to the support of students with Type 1 Diabetes at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/diabetes.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/diabetes.aspx)

### Stoma care

Schools seeking training relating to the support needs of students requiring stoma care and catheterisation should contact the Royal Children’s Hospital Stomal Therapy Clinic on 9345 5338.

## First aid training

Schools can access information and advice relating to first aid training at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/firstaid.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/firstaid.aspx)

Detailed advice and condition-specific Student Health Support Plan templates are available in the School Policy and Advisory Guide for a range of conditions; including epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibrosis, anaphylaxis, and diabetes at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/conditions.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/conditions.aspx)

# **Training Provided**

Training is provided to the teachers and education support staff with responsibility for caring for the student.[[1]](#footnote-1) It is recommended that the training is provided to a small number of staff members (i.e. 2 to a maximum of 4) who have frequent and ongoing responsibility for the student’s medical support needs. It is not appropriate for larger numbers of staff with limited responsibility for complex medical care to undertake Schoolcare Program training, as infrequent practice of the medical procedures raises unacceptable risks of mismanagement. Education of whole staff should be sourced from other providers.

Every student on the Schoolcare Program must have all carers (new and established) trained by RCH nurses six-monthly - at the beginning of the year for new training and refresher training, followed by 6 month assessments in the second half of the year. This is vital to maintain consistency of care for the student and is a requirement of the RCH and the Department of Education and Training.

Schoolcare Program nurses will offer group sessions (e.g. for 2-4 carers), where possible. To assist an efficient service, it is recommended that schools prioritise these sessions and make appropriate arrangements to ensure all nominated staff are available for the training. It is acknowledged some staff are employed on a part-time basis, and arranging group sessions may require flexibility with staff time-tabling and/or arranging replacement staff to ensure their full participation.

The school must ensure that staff carers are available for the training session on the scheduled day or request for the day to be rescheduled. It is important that schools immediately notify the Department’s Schoolcare Program Coordinator if training cannot proceed due to changed student or staff circumstances so that new appointments can be made and the nurses informed before the day.

Prior to training, school staff are required to complete the Hand Hygiene Online Learning Package ‘Standard module’ available at [www.hha.org.au/LearningPackage/olp-home.aspx](http://www.hha.org.au/LearningPackage/olp-home.aspx) (and any pre-reading and assessment material provided by the RCH Schoolcare Coordinator). Training cannot proceed until these prerequisites are complete.

There are two levels of training provided based on the complexity of the student’s medical needs. The level of training provided will be determined by the Department in consultation with Schoolcare Program staff at the RCH.

**Level 1** involves the development of a child-specific care plan and training program, an education session, and a training session.

**Level 2** is appropriate for more complex medical needs with longer training sessions and includes the development of a ‘child-specific care manual’ including child-specific care pages, theory training, written and practical assessment, and a mid-year review.

The child-specific care plans are individualised and training cannot be transferred to other students. It is the responsibility of the school to notify the RCH Schoolcare Coordinator of any changes to the child- specific plan, as carers are only trained to follow the specific instructions included in the manual. It is the role of the RCH Schoolcare Coordinator to ensure the plans are medically approved and that best practice and safety are maintained. If you have any queries regarding the student care plans please contact the RCH Schoolcare Coordinator on 9345 4664 or email [Schoolcare.Program@rch.org.au](mailto:Schoolcare.Program@rch.org.au)

# **Application Process**

## **Student Support Groups**

A Student Support Group must be established and maintained to plan and implement the educational support program for the student. A Student Support Group is a cooperative partnership between the parent/guardian/carer(s), school representatives and professionals to ensure coordinated support for the student’s educational needs.

The Student Support Group will have a key role in developing the Student Health Support Plan and advising the principal on the nature of the resources required to support the student’s medical needs including referral to the Schoolcare Program.

## The Student Support Group Guidelines are available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/diversity/pages/handbook.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/diversity/pages/handbook.aspx)

## The Health Support Planning Forms are available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/supportplanning.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/supportplanning.aspx)

## **Submitting the Documentation**

Referrals to the Schoolcare Program must be submitted by a Victorian government school and must be completed jointly with the student’s parent/guardian/carer(s) and the medical practitioner.

All referrals to the program must be made using the referral form available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/programsupp.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/programsupp.aspx)

Completed applications should be **mailed** to the following address:

Schoolcare Program

Resources Coordination Group

Wellbeing, Health and Engagement Division

Department of Education and Training

GPO Box 4367

MELBOURNE 3001

Or

Scanned and **emailed** to: [schoolcare.program@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:schoolcare.program@edumail.vic.gov.au)

It is essential that all necessary details are included in the referral form. The following checklist sets out the required documentation.

□ Part A – Parent consent and student details

□ Part B – School details

□ Part C – Medical information

Please ensure all details including signatures and dates are complete before sending.

**Incomplete referral forms will be returned to the school for completion and resubmission. No training can be provided by RCH staff until a fully completed referral is received.**

## **Helpful Tips for a Smooth Referral Process**

1. The student’s name to be included on both pages 1 and 3
2. The parent’s name, signature and date of signing on pages 1 and 4
3. The medical practitioner’s name, signature and date of signing to be completed on page 4
4. If scanning documents, please check that your scans are complete and clear
5. If scanning multiple referrals, please scan each student’s referral separately.

# **Referral Timelines**

It is recommended that the student’s parent/guardian/carer(s) are notified of the following timelines in advance to ensure relevant appointments can be arranged for the student’s medical practitioner to complete Part C (Medical information) of the referral form.

**Existing Schoolcare Program students:** In order for RCH staff to deliver relevant and appropriate training, the Schoolcare Program Referral Form must be submitted each year to ensure an accurate profile of a student’s current medical needs is obtained. It is recommended that the referral form be submitted by mid-November to assist the Department with program delivery planning.

**New Referrals:** New referrals should be submitted as early as possible before commencement of the school year to assist with program delivery planning.

**Late Referrals:** Referrals can be received at any time during the year for students with deteriorating conditions or students transferring into government schools.  Training will be arranged to support eligible students as soon as possible once all required documentation is received.

If referrals are received after **1 July** and Schoolcare Program training is required again for the following year, then schools must still complete a new referral with updated staffing details and signed parent consent. However, updated medical information is not required under these circumstances unless the student’s medical condition and needs have changed.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact the Department’s Schoolcare Program Coordinator on 9097 1055 or email [schoolcare.program@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:schoolcare.program@edumail.vic.gov.au)

# **Administration Process**

After a referral has been received by the Department it will be considered in consultation with the RCH staff to determine eligibility for the program.

Once eligibility has been confirmed, the nominated school contact person will be notified to arrange a suitable time to provide the training. Where possible, schools are asked to be flexible in accommodating these arrangements to assist the Department and RCH in scheduling training sessions for all referring schools across Victoria during peak demand periods.

If the referral is not appropriate for the Schoolcare program, the school will be provided with advice by the Department regarding other suitable support arrangements.

# **Further Information**

## Schoolcare Program Coordinator

Department of Education and Training, Wellbeing, Health and Engagement Division

Telephone: (03) 9097 1055 Email: [schoolcare.program@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:schoolcare.program@edumail.vic.gov.au)

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## School Policy and Advisory Guide

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/spag.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/spag.aspx)

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## Epilepsy Foundation

## <http://epilepsyfoundation.org.au>

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## Diabetes Victoria

[www.diabetesvic.org.au](http://www.diabetesvic.org.au)

## Stomal Therapy Clinic

Telephone: (03) 9345 5338

1. Please note that the RCH Schoolcare Program nurses do not provide training to school nurses. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)