

**Saplings Special School**  
**For children with autism and complex needs**

**Rathfarnham, Dublin 16**

**Pupil Illness and Medications Policy**

**Reviewed and approved by Board of Management:**

## Introduction

The school has a duty of care to all its pupils and members of staff. This policy aims to set out procedures to be followed when children become unwell, to ensure that they are well cared for and that, where the cause is of an infectious nature, others are not exposed needlessly. Procedures regarding the administration of medicine during the school day are also outlined.

Your child's health and safety is of prime concern to us and it is essential that parents and teachers work together for the good of the child in this regard.

Saplings Rathfarnham does not have a 'sick bay' where a child who is unwell can stay during the school day.

## Illness or Infection at School

### Responsibility of Parents/ Guardians

#### When children should be kept at home

Parents are asked **not** to send their child/ children to school if any of the following apply:

The child has symptoms of an infectious illness that is mentioned in the list of 'Common Ailments requiring Pupils to Stay at Home' at the back of this policy (**Appendix 1**) or in HSE Publication: 'Management of Infectious Diseases in School – 2014', Chapter 9. [http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/lifestages/schoolhealth/File\\_14304\\_en.pdf](http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/lifestages/schoolhealth/File_14304_en.pdf)

- The child does not feel well enough to participate in the normal programme of curriculum activities.
- The child requires more care than the classroom team is able to provide without affecting the health, safety and schoolwork of the other pupils.
- If antibiotics are prescribed for a contagious illness or infection, the child should not attend school until at least 24 hours after treatment has begun and must be showing signs of improvement.
- If headlice or ringworm is noticed, the child may not come to school until treatment has begun. See the end of **Appendix 1** at the back of this policy.

If a child has been sent to school and is clearly unwell, as described above, a parent or guardian will be asked to collect him/ her from school as soon as possible.

### **Pupil Absence - Informing the bus escort**

If a pupil becomes ill overnight or at the weekend and is unable to attend on the next school day, the parent/ guardian should contact the bus escort so the school bus need not come unnecessarily to the house. The evening before a pupil returns to school, the parent/ guardian should phone the bus escort to ensure their son/ daughter is collected in the morning.

### **Pupil Absence - Informing the school**

As well as contacting the bus escort, the parent/ guardian must also contact the school office, stating the reason for the child's absence.

This is very important for the following reasons:

- If a child has an illness which is recognised by HSE as an infectious disease, staff, other parents/guardians or the authorities may need to be notified. It is vital that information about an infectious disease is passed to the school as soon as possible.
- National Educational Welfare Board requires the reason for absence to be recorded
- Child absences may affect how staff members are assigned during the school day.

### **Returning to school**

A pupil who has an infectious ailment, e.g. diarrhoea, vomiting, heavy cold, should remain at home until they are no longer infectious. The length of time before return will depend on the ailment and on the treatment. Guidelines in **Appendix 1** at the back of this policy, or in 'Management of Infectious Diseases in School' (Chapter 9), should be followed. For some infectious diseases, the school may require a doctor's 'fitness to return' note before the child is allowed to come back to school.

### **Collecting child when ill**

If the Principal or Class Teacher contacts a parent/ guardian to say that their child has been examined and is not well enough to be at school or travel home on school transport, the parent/ guardian must arrange to collect the child as soon as possible. This is primarily for the well-being of the child who is unwell. In the case of infectious diseases, it is also very important for the well-being of the other pupils and the school staff. Classroom staff will aim to keep the child as comfortable as possible while waiting for a parent/ guardian to arrive. The parent/ guardian will be handed a 'Return to School' Slip (See **Appendix 7** at the back of this policy) where an infectious illness is present or suspected. This slip is to be completed and sent in with the child on his/ her first day back at school.



## **Responsibility of School**

If a child has two occurrences of vomiting or diarrhoea within one hour of each other they will need to go home. Children are required to be home for 48 hours of first bout of sickness in school. If your child feels unwell or appears unwell, on arrival at school or during the school day, the procedures at the back of this policy, in **Appendix 2**, will be followed for the well-being of the child who is sick and of all members of the school community.

On an ongoing basis, Saplings Special School aims to promote good hygiene practices that will help prevent transmission of infection. These practices will be taught as part of the SPHE curriculum and will be consolidated throughout the school day. They will include:

- Teaching and implementing effective handwashing throughout the school, with staff leading by example
- Teaching and implementing respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, e.g. to turn away when coughing or sneezing, etc.
- Facilitating the Schools Immunisation Programme
- Provision of gloves, aprons, suitable sanitising cleaning products and cleaning equipment for staff who are in contact with bodily fluids when caring for a child.

## **Administration of Medication in School**

In Sapling Special School, medication is administered by approved school staff.

### **Administration of Infrequent Medicines**

#### **Responsibility of Parents/ Guardians**

If a child has been prescribed a short-term antibiotic, or requires 'over the counter' medication when in recovery, the parent/guardian should attend to the following:

- ensure the medicine is in its original container, is clearly named and dated and has clear instructions about administration. If the medication is prescribed by a doctor, the prescription should be enclosed.
- ask the bus escort to pass the medication to the teacher in the morning and to bring it back in the afternoon.
- inform the class teacher about the child's need for medication through a note in the child's communication diary.

- supply Principal or Class Teacher with any other information they need to safely administer the medication, either through a note in the communication diary, in an enclosed letter or by phone

### **Responsibility of School**

When a class teacher receives a child's medication from a bus escort/ parent or guardian and notification in the communication diary regarding the need for the administration of this medication during the school day, the teacher should make arrangements regarding the storage of the medication, and the time and place for the medication to be administered. At the end of the school day, the teacher will hand the medication to the bus escort/ parent or guardian.

### **Administration of Regular Medication**

If a child requires medication during the school day on a regular or an ongoing basis, parents and guardians must notify the Principal in writing as soon as possible, i.e. on application, or as soon as the medication has been prescribed. The Principal will make contact directly with a parent/ guardian.

In order for the administration of the medication to begin, the parent must provide;

- a valid medical prescription
- medication in original packaging with the pharmacy label intact
- written consent

At March 2020, nine members of staff have given their written consent to administer medication. These are all the five class teachers, the BA, The Principal and the two first aiders.



## Appendix 1

### Common Ailments requiring Children to Stay at Home or to Visit GP

**CHICKEN POX:** The child should not attend school until all scabs are dry and crusted. This is usually 5-7 days after appearance of rash.

**DIARRHOEA:** When your child has had diarrhoea due to infection, he/ she should only return to school once 48 hours have passed following the last loose bowel movement. For example, if your child has his/her last loose bowel movement at 11 am on Sunday morning, he/she cannot return to school until Wednesday morning.

**VOMITING:** As in the case of diarrhoea, the child should remain at home until 48 hours have passed since last episode of vomiting due to infection.

**FEVER:** The normal body temperature is 36.5 to 37.2 C. If the child develops a temperature, she/he should remain at home until 24 hours after the fever has passed.

**HEAVY COLD SYMPTOMS OR FLU LIKE SYMPTOMS:** e.g. large amount of yellow-green nasal discharge, sleepiness, ear pain and/or fever. The child should be kept at home until these have subsided and the he/ she is able to participate in the normal school curriculum.

**MILD COLD SYMPTOMS:** If a child's mild cold symptoms would prevent him/ her from participating in normal school curriculum, e.g. significant weariness at onset, streaming watery discharge from nose, persistent cough, he/ she should be kept at home.

**CONJUNCTIVITIS:** inflammation of the lining of the eye and eyelid, causing sore or red eyes; can be highly contagious if bacterial or viral. Children with red eye/s and a watery or sticky discharge must be evaluated by a doctor, who will advise about return to school - at least 24 hours after start of treatment, perhaps until fully recovered.

**IMPETIGO:** The fluid inside the blisters is very infectious. The child should be taken to the doctor who will advise about return to school, usually when blisters have dried and healed or a minimum of 24 hrs after commencing antibiotics,

### Common Conditions requiring Immediate Treatment

**HEAD LICE:** It is important to avoid contact between an affected child and others. If parents/guardians notice head lice, or are advised that they have been noticed in the child's hair at school, treatment must begin before the child returns to school. So long as the treatment begins before bed-time, the child may attend school the next day.

**RINGWORM:** A child with suspected ringworm should be taken to their GP and, if ringworm is confirmed, treatment should begin as soon as possible. Once parents/guardians attend to this, the child may return to school.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Internal School Procedures when Child is Unwell**

- If a class teacher is concerned that a child is unwell, she/ he will inform the Principal.
- If the child needs to go home because he/ she has an infectious illness, or is too unwell to participate in school activities, the Principal or class teacher will inform the parents/guardians.
- If a child has two occurrences of vomiting or diarrhoea within one hour of each other they will need to go home. Children are required to be home for 48 hours of first bout of sickness in school. The Principal or class teacher will inform the parents/guardians.
- In the case of a child who is unwell and is awaiting collection, staff will ensure that the child is supervised, reassured and made as comfortable as possible.
- If the child has an infectious condition:
  - further contact with other children will be limited by moving the child to a separate space in the classroom or by removing him/ her from the classroom.
  - all other necessary precautions will be taken to limit the spread of infection, i.e. careful hand-washing and use of suitable sanitising cleaning products, as required
  - the parent/ guardian will be handed a 'Return to School Slip' to be completed and sent to child's class teacher on his/ her return
- If a particular child has symptoms of an infectious disease which needs to be reported to staff and other parents, or to the HSE, the Principal will ensure this is communicated promptly.

### Appendix 3

#### Medical Procedure to be Performed by Non- Nursing Staff.

**Request to Board of Management of  
Saplins Special School for children with autism and complex needs**

1. I / We, the parents / guardians of .....  
ask the Board of Management of Saplins Special School to allow a member of  
staff to .....  
.....
  
2. I/We enclose a completed form from Dr. ...., stating:
  - (a) The Procedure
  - (b) The reason this is required
  - (c) The frequency with which this is required
  - (d) Approval for procedure to be carried out by non-nursing staff
  
3. Should there be any change in my child's medical condition or in this procedure,  
I/we will write to the Principal before this change takes place, to inform the Board  
of Management.
  
4. I /We understand that the school's insurers will be notified of this arrangement.
  
5. I/We indemnify the Board of Management in respect of any liability that may arise  
regarding my/ our child receiving this treatment.

Signed: .....  
Parent / Guardian

Signed: .....  
Parent / Guardian



Date: .....

Date: .....

## **Appendix 4**

### **Administration of Medicine**

#### **Procedures to be followed by Board of Management**

The Board of Management of Saplings Special School for children with autism and complex needs will aim to ensure that:

- The authorised SNA /Teacher is aware that this is a voluntary role and that if they wish to withdraw at any point or have concerns about their role, that they should speak with the Principal.
- The SNA/ Teacher is fully informed of all administration details supplied directly to the Board by the parent/guardian and the GP/ consultant.
- The SNA/Teacher has been trained to in the administration of the medicine process; this supervision will involve monitoring, recording on **Appendix 6 Form**, informing parents when medication is running low and checking parent/guardian regarding any medical concerns.
- A trained and willing substitute is appointed to supervise on occasions when the authorised SNA/ Teacher is absent
- Suitable safe storage of the medication has been considered and agreed, e.g. in a locked container on high shelf in classroom. The key to this container will be held by the authorised SNA/ Teacher
- Relevant details are recorded in the pupil's Personal Care Profile

## Appendix 5



### Parental Consent Form – Administration of Medication (Short Term) -To be reviewed on a weekly basis

Student	
Medical Condition or Illness	
Name of medication (as described on the container)	
Expiry Date	
Dosage	
Method	
Time	
Administered by.....	Principal / Behaviour Analyst / Class Teacher / First Aid

**NB: Medicines must be in the original container as dispensed by the pharmacy**

**Medicines must be stored in locked storage in Classroom or Admin Office(s)**

The above information is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate at the time of writing and I give consent to the school staff to administer the above medicine and dosage.

I will inform the school in writing, if there is any change in dosage or frequency of the medication or if the medicine is stopped.

I understand that it may be necessary for this treatment to be carried out during educational visits and other out of school/setting activities, as well as on the school/setting premises.

Parent / Guardian (please print name).....

Parent / Guardian Signature(s).....  
 Date.....

**Appendix 6**

**Administration Medication Chart Record**



**RECORD OF ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION – SHORT TERM**

Medication Chart for \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Student</b>			
<b>Name of medication</b>	<b>Dosage</b>	<b>Route (e.g., oral)</b>	<b>Time/s to be given during school day</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Dosage</b>	<b>Administered by</b>	<b>Witnessed by</b>

Medication Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dosage: \_\_\_\_\_



Time/s to be administered: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 7**  
**Return to School Slip**

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

In order to comply with the school Pupil Illness Policy on infectious illnesses or conditions, please complete the following and send in with your child on his/ her return to school.

Name of Child:.....

Nature of Illness or Condition:.....

Date: .....

**PLEASE NOTE: If vomiting or diarrhoea occurred due to infectious condition, your child should not return to school until 48 hours have passed since last episode.**

Date and time of last symptom: .....

If condition required treatment, date/ time of treatment:.....

Signed: .....

(Parent/ Guardian)

If you have any queries, please check the HSE publication 'Management of Infectious Diseases in School'. <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/National-Emergencies-Public-Health-Issues/Management-of-Infectious-Disease-in-Schools.pdf>