



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Supporting learners with healthcare needs



**A quick guide  
for parents**



## The purpose of this guidance

Most learners will at some point have a short-term healthcare need. This could include conditions like a chest infection or a broken bone. For a small number of learners, their healthcare needs may have a longer-lasting impact requiring support to be put in place. The purpose of this quick guide is to assist parents\* to be fully involved in the decisions of how their child will be supported at school. The aim of this support must be to make sure learners with healthcare needs have access to a full education, including trips, and physical education.

\*When we refer to parents we mean parents and carers.

## Working together as a team

For some learners, supporting their healthcare needs may be as simple as assisting them with taking a course of antibiotics, while for others it may be more complex.

Whatever the learner's healthcare need, it is important for the parents, the school and the learner to work as a team. For some healthcare needs, this team could include the school nurse and other health professionals. When working as a team, it is important to listen to the wishes and advice of the learner, parents and everyone else involved. If you, the parent, need help and support, contact the appropriate parent group or charity and get them involved as part of the team.

Many parent groups and charities are listed in the guidance at:

<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/supporting-learners-with-healthcare-needs/?lang=en>

## Basic principles of working together

**The basic principles guiding this teamwork approach are that:**

- the best interests of the child must always be the main concern when making decisions which affect them
- the parents and their child must be central to the decision making and involved in all healthcare planning
- schools must provide the parents and the child with all relevant policies, and take time to explain them
- schools should provide the parents and the child with a central point of contact for the management of healthcare needs
- schools must not ignore the views of children or parents, or ignore healthcare evidence or opinion
- decisions outlined in the child's healthcare plan must be kept to unless there is a very good reason not to.



# How should the school support parents and their children – and what do parents need to do?

## The school should:

- help parents and children be aware of their rights/responsibilities
- arrange a meeting with staff, parents, the child and appropriate clinicians, to determine if an individual healthcare plan is required
- work within the principles of inclusivity and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, never denying children a real voice in how they are supported at school
- understand its role in supporting your child and ensure staff are appropriately trained
- design lessons and activities in a way which allows children with healthcare needs to participate fully
- always inform the parents of any change to their child's health or behaviour and how any change is affecting their child's education.

## As a parent you must:

- provide the school with information about your child's health, including any guidance regarding medicines and other treatment from healthcare professionals
- provide relevant in-date medicines, correctly labelled, with written dosage and administration instructions
- provide the school with updates on your child's health, including changes to their medication, dosage or its administration
- ensure a nominated adult is contactable at all times and all necessary forms are completed and signed
- inform the school if your child has/had an infectious disease or condition while in attendance.



## Individual healthcare plans (IHP)

An IHP sets out what is required to support a learner with healthcare needs. Not all children with healthcare needs require an IHP; however, when a child has continual or episodic healthcare needs, or where there is high risk of an emergency intervention, then an IHP may be required.

IHPs do not need to be complex, but they should include the key information and actions required to effectively support a learner with healthcare needs.

Working with the school and healthcare professionals, the parents and the child must be fully involved in creating the IHP.

The IHP should be easily accessible to all who need to refer to it, while maintaining the required levels of privacy/confidentiality.



### Learners' rights

- Learners have the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.
- Learners with healthcare needs are entitled to a full education.
- Learners have a right to information about their health and well-being and the right to a voice in how they are supported while at school.

### Providing medication

Parents must provide medication agreed in the IHP. It must:

- be in date
- be correctly labelled with the child's name
- include instructions for dosage, administration, and storage
- be in the original container – except insulin pen or pump.

For non-prescribed medicine, requirements are as above, except instructions can come from the parents.

# Sharing your child's healthcare information

Sharing medical information can be a sensitive issue. You and your child must be happy with who this information is shared with and how this sharing (notice boards, intranet, etc.) will take place. If you are not happy you can prevent this sharing, but that may affect your child's support, so it is important you talk to the school and come to a positive agreement.

## It is unacceptable to:

- prevent children with healthcare needs attending school unless it would be likely to cause harm to the child, or others, unless specified in their IHP
- require parents to attend school trips and off-site activities, to administer medication or provide support to their child, including toileting
- create barriers to a child's participation in all aspects of their education, including trips, by requiring a parent to accompany the learner
- prevent children from accessing their inhalers/other medication
- prevent children from drinking, eating or taking toilet or other breaks whenever needed to manage their healthcare needs or to ask a child to leave the activity/classroom if they need to administer non-personal medication or consume food in line with their health needs.

## When you can't agree

If you're not satisfied with the school's arrangements, you can complain. Ask for a copy of the school's complaints procedure, and if you are still not satisfied, contact your local authority's education department.

## Thank you for reading this

The full guidance is on this website:  
[learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/supporting-learners-with-healthcare-needs](https://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/supporting-learners-with-healthcare-needs)

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