



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Supporting learners with healthcare needs



**A quick guide for  
support staff and teachers**



# Healthcare needs

## What do we mean by healthcare needs?

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. The purpose of this quick guide is to assist you to provide the appropriate support to learners with healthcare needs, so they can have access to a full education, including trips, and physical education.

## The role of teachers and support staff

You or any other staff member within your school may be asked to provide support to learners with healthcare needs. This may include assisting/supervising the administration of medicines; however, this role is entirely voluntary. To carry out this role, you must receive suitable training and achieve the necessary level of competence before you take on this responsibility. No staff member can be required to administer or supervise medication unless it forms part of their contract, terms and conditions or a mutually agreed job plan.



## Individual healthcare plans (IHPs)

Not all learners with healthcare needs require an IHP; however, when a learner has continual or episodic healthcare needs, then an IHP may be required.

IHPs do not need to be complex but they should explain how the learner's needs should be met. An IHP should be easily accessible to all who need to refer to it, while maintaining the required levels of privacy. Each plan should capture key information and actions required to effectively support the learner.



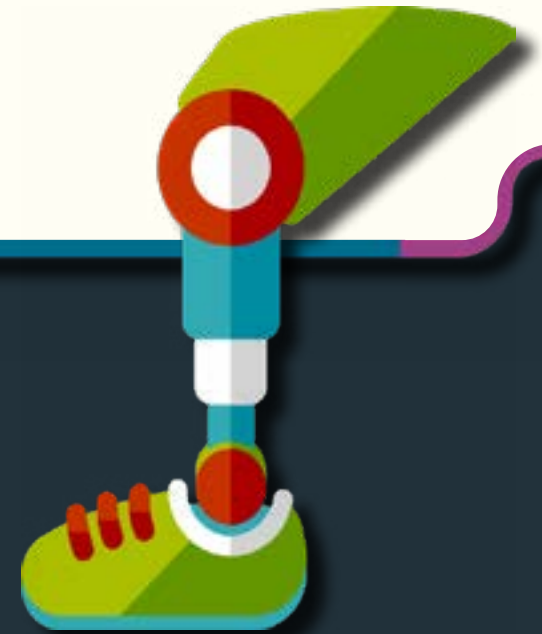
# How should the school support me – and what do I need to do?

## The school should help you:

- fully understand the school's healthcare needs policies and arrangements
- have knowledge of which learners have more serious or chronic healthcare needs and what to do in an emergency
- be aware of the signs, symptoms, triggers and emergency procedures of common life-threatening medical conditions
- be aware of how healthcare needs can impact on a learner's behaviour and their ability to learn
- feel confident when you are supporting a learner with healthcare needs
- understand and work within the principles of inclusivity.

## You must:

- understand the school's emergency procedures and be prepared to act appropriately
- listen to the concerns of learners (or their friends) if they feel ill at any point and consider the need for medical assistance
- help keep parents informed of how the healthcare need is affecting the learner, include any deterioration, concerns or changes to learner or staff routines
- help make sure learners with healthcare needs are not excluded from activities they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason, including any external trips/visits
- help make sure new or temporary staff are fully aware of the healthcare needs of the learners they are supporting.



# Administering medication

## Medication must be administered as agreed in the individual healthcare plan.

Prescribed medicines must:

- be in date
- have contents correctly labelled
- be labelled with the learner's name
- be accompanied by written instructions for administration, dosage and storage
- be in their original container/packaging except insulin pen or pump.

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

## Training

When assisting learners, most support will require little training; however, when training is needed, the school must ensure appropriate training is provided. If a learner has complex needs, input may be needed from healthcare services and the local authority who will be able to advise and signpost to further training and support.



## Storage of medication

- All medicines should be stored both appropriately and safely.
- It is important for learners to know where their medication is stored and how to access it.
- Emergency medication must be readily available to learners who require it at all times during the day or at off-site activities.

## Record keeping

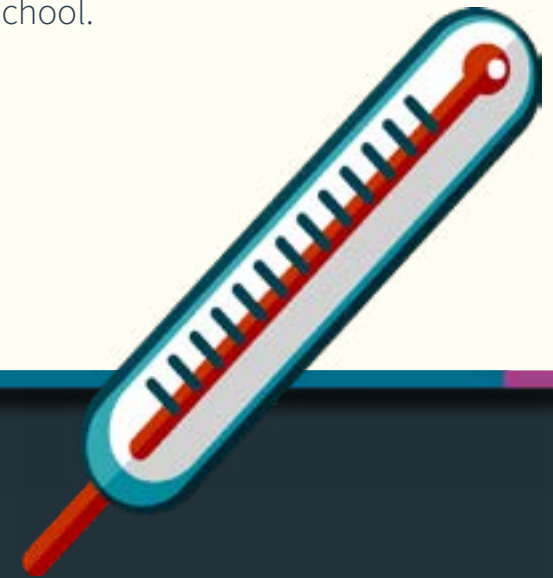
Your school will have record-keeping systems for recording the administration of medication support. It is important these systems are used and kept fully up to date.

## Key principles

- You should understand and work within the principles of inclusivity.
- Lessons and activities should be designed in a way which allows those with healthcare needs to participate fully.
- You should understand your role in supporting learners with healthcare needs and appropriate training should be provided.
- You should feel confident you know what to do in a healthcare emergency.
- You should be aware of the needs of your learners through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual learner's healthcare plans.
- Whenever appropriate, learners should be encouraged and supported to take responsibility for the management of their own healthcare needs.

## Learners' rights

- Learners have the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.
- All learners 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.



## Thanks 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)