

# Supporting children with health needs in school

A guide to training for school staff in Rotherham



## **Working together to support children with complex health needs in school**

In Rotherham, as in the rest of the country, we have increasing numbers of children with complex health needs attending our schools. By working together, we can ensure that these children are able to access education and be fully included in school life. This leaflet sets out how the Special education nursing service in Rotherham aims to support school staff to meet the practical, day to day health needs of individual children. It is designed to be read alongside Rotherham's 'Guide to partnership working in schools' which describes the service offered by the Special education nursing team and how schools, parents and nurses can all work together to best meet the needs of children.

Information in this leaflet is based on two sets of guidance available nationally. The first is a government publication called 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' which can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf)

The second is published by the Royal College of Nursing and is called 'Meeting health needs in educational and other community settings' and can be accessed here:

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/royal-college-of-nursing/documents/publications/2018/january/pdf-006634.pdf>

## **Roles and responsibilities – training and supporting school staff to meet health needs**

As the numbers of children with complex health needs go up, it is recognised that school staff are being asked to take more of a role in their day to day, routine medical care. This is the same sort of care that parents would normally provide at home.

School staff play a vital role in continuing to meet health needs whilst children are at school which helps them to stay well – so that they can maximise their attendance, learn and develop to the best of their ability. However, it is also recognised that this means school staff being asked to broaden their knowledge and to learn new skills. Clearly, they can only be expected to do this if they are provided with the right training and support from health services – and it is important that all those concerned, including parents, are confident that working in this way will not put any child or young person at risk.

It is crucial that roles and responsibilities are clearly understood. The following summarises what is expected from all those involved:

***Special education nurses have a responsibility to:***

- Delegate only those health care tasks that can be done safely by others, in line with guidance from the Royal College of Nursing.
- Provide high quality training including refresher sessions for staff already signed off as competent
- Provide clear protocols to follow which make it set out when staff need to get further advice and help – and detail what to do in an emergency situation
- Make sure that school staff are competent to carry out tasks – by observing and supporting them working with individual children
- Provide care plans for individual children so it is clear what they need
- Sign off school staff to deliver care only when they are sure that they understand what is required and can do this safely
- Be available in school to trouble shoot and provide additional support when needed, acknowledging that being competent and feeling confident are different things - and that both are important

***School staff have a responsibility to:***

- Carry out tasks in the way that they have been taught and in line with the protocol
- Let someone senior in school and/or the special education nurse know if there is a change in the child's condition or there is a problem of any sort
- Keep a record of their own training and attend for refreshers at agreed intervals
- Keep a record of the health care they deliver to individual children

***The head teacher, supported by the Governing Body, has a responsibility to:***

- Make sure that staff in school are able to attend health care training and, once signed off as competent, will be available to support children's individual care plans
- Provide a suitable environment for meeting children's needs: some of the time this may be the classroom e.g. for delivering feeds at mealtimes, but at other times children may require access to a private area such as a bathroom or changing area for intimate care e.g. catheterisation
- Provide non-clinical support and supervision – so that staff know who to go to if they have a concern or need support with the potential emotional impact of working with this group of children. Any clinical issues will be referred back to the special education nurse.

- Ensure that school staff are insured to deliver routine healthcare interventions appropriate to their grade and role once they have been trained and signed off by the nurse. Clear protocols will be in place for staff to follow and children will have their own care plans written by the nurse which will set out their individual needs. The special education nurses will be available to provide additional support and advice as required.
- Keep a training record and ensure that staff attend refresher sessions at agreed intervals to maintain their skills

### Training provided by the Special education nursing team

Special education nurses provide a range of training which covers day to day care for children with a range of medical needs. The training is aimed at people who have no previous medical knowledge or experience of working in healthcare but who understand how to build caring relationships with children and how to encourage and support them in everyday situations.

The training covers the following medical needs:

Health need	Description	Outcome
<b>Gastrostomy</b> <b>Jejunostomy</b>	<p>A <i>gastrostomy</i> is a surgical opening through the abdomen into the stomach. A <i>jejunostomy</i> is a surgical opening through the abdomen into the small intestine (gut).</p> <p>In both cases a feeding device is inserted through this opening which allows a child to be fed directly into their stomach or gut, bypassing the mouth and throat. These procedures may be done when children can't take food by mouth – or not enough to keep them well nourished – or when they have a problem with their stomach.</p> <p>These courses teach participants how to feed children through their tube, clean the equipment, problem solve e.g. a blockage in the tube, and keep the skin around the tube clean and healthy.</p>	Children can have food at school like everyone else and stay well nourished

<b>Nasogastric feeding</b>	<p>Another way of getting nutrition into a child who can't take food orally is through a nasogastric tube. This is a tube that is inserted into the child's nose and runs down into their stomach. Feeds can be passed straight into the child's stomach this way. Nasogastric tubes are not normally used long-term because of the risk of complications, but can be very useful in the short to medium term.</p> <p>As above, the course teaches participants how to feed children through their tube, clean the equipment, problem solve e.g. a blockage in the tube</p>	<p>Children can have food at school like everyone else and stay well nourished</p>
<b>Tracheostomy</b>	<p>A tracheostomy is a surgical opening into the trachea (wind pipe) where a tube is inserted allowing the child/young person to breathe. Tracheostomies can be performed for various reasons e.g. for children with incomplete airways or children who have difficulty maintaining their own airway due to their medical condition.</p> <p>This full day course will teach in more depth, why tracheostomies are needed, how to care for a child/young person with a tracheostomy, how to change a tracheostomy tube and how to provide basic life support to a child with a tracheostomy in an emergency situation whilst waiting for an ambulance. Staff will need to be observed doing up to 3 tracheostomy changes before being signed off as competent.</p>	<p>Children who have a tracheostomy can attend school safely</p>
<b>Oral suction</b>	<p>Some children need help to clear mucus from their mouth and nose so they can breathe more easily. This course teaches how to use and undertake day to day maintenance of a suction machine to help clear congestion.</p>	<p>Children can breathe more easily, feel more comfortable and concentrate on living life</p>

<p><b>Epipen</b></p>	<p>An Epipen is a medication device that is to be administered to a person who suffers from Anaphylaxis – a life threatening condition where a person has a severe allergic reaction to a certain trigger – such as nuts, bee stings, dairy plus many more.</p> <p>Training lasts about an hour and is beneficial to ensure a child or young person can remain safe and so staff can respond appropriately to deliver this life saving medication. No follow up is needed after this course to sign off staff as competent.</p>	<p>A child with a severe allergy can participate fully in school life whilst also staying safe</p>
<p><b>Catheters (girls only at the moment)</b></p>	<p>This is a simple procedure that helps girls to empty their bladder when for various medical reasons they may be unable to do so themselves.</p> <p>The course will teach staff why this procedure done, how to do it safely and in a way which respects the child’s privacy, and how to manage any possible problems.</p> <p>Members of staff will require up to 2 observations of catheterising a female pupil before they can be signed off as competent. Training will take up to an hour.</p>	<p>Children can remain comfortable in school and stay healthy so they are ready to learn and participate</p>
<p><b>Giving medications</b></p>	<p>Some children may require medication during the school day. Medication policies should be adhered to, to ensure the safe administration of medications to the child. Training will take about an hour and will teach school staff how to safely check that the medication is correct for the child, in date and how to measure the correct dosage.</p> <p>Staff will need to be observed at least twice by Special education nursing team before being signed off as competent.</p>	<p>Children can continue their treatment throughout the school day rather than have to be at home or take time off</p>

<p><b>Nebuliser</b></p>	<p>A nebuliser is a machine that helps children to breathe in a medicine as a mist mixed with oxygen through a mask or a mouthpiece. It is used with children who have lung conditions.</p> <p>The course will show participants how to set up the nebuliser, attach it to the child and measure out the right amount of medicine to go in it. It will also cover how to trouble shoot common problems and how to keep the machine clean and in good working order.</p>	<p>Children can breath more easily and receive the medication they need to manage their lung condition</p>
<p><b>Adrenal insufficiency</b></p>	<p>Adrenal insufficiency means that the child’s adrenal glands are not producing enough hormones. These hormones have to be replaced by long-term medication. Although this condition can be well controlled, it is important that the people in the child’s life know what to look out for that might indicate that the child is becoming unwell.</p> <p>This course will give you important information about the condition and explain what ‘red flags’ to look out for – and what to do if you spot them. No follow up is needed after this course to sign off staff as competent.</p>	<p>Children with adrenal insufficiency can stay well and participate in school life.</p>

## What staff should expect when they attend for training

Depending on the best way to teach an individual skill, we use a combination of teaching sessions, demonstration and discussion in our courses. All our courses are delivered by members of our team who are experienced practitioners with lots of ‘hands on’ experience to draw on. We aim to provide a supportive and relaxed learning environment where course participants feel they can ask as many questions as they need to in order to understand what is required and why - and feel confident in their own knowledge.

As part of the training, staff members will be provided with a competency 'grid' which sets out clearly what they need to know and be able to do to deliver care safely. Each part of this will be explained and worked through so that staff feel they have a full understanding of what is required and why each step is important.

Attendance on a course is followed up by at least one individual session when one of our registered nurses (who have an additional mentorship qualification) will visit the member of school staff to see them working with an individual child and coach them through delivering the procedure. Only when the nurse and staff member are in agreement that the skill has been fully learnt and fully understood, and the staff member can carry out and/or explain the procedure without help, will they be signed off as competent. The member of staff will be given a copy of their competency grid, signed off by the nurse, which they should keep for their own records. A copy of this will also be provided for their school.

If a member of staff is working with a one or more children / young people who have multiple health needs, then they may need to access training on more than one procedure. They may also be offered training on conditions or procedures which are not mentioned in the list of packages above – but which is needed in order to care for a specific child. This will be arranged by the nursing team on a case by case basis. For members of staff in this position, the special education nursing team will provide an individual training passport which includes a competency grid for each of the skills required. If staff move into new roles within Rotherham, they can bring their training passport with them as evidence of all their skills.

All staff will require an initial sign off and then to be assessed each year on all the skills they have been taught to help them maintain their competencies. Where possible, they will be observed working with a child they care for but, if this is not possible, they may be signed off if they can demonstrate they know what to do in different scenarios and can answer questions. This will be recorded at the back of the training passport and signed by a registered nurse with a mentorship qualification or a Band 4 Children Community Health Care Support Worker with an assessor qualification.

## Contacts and further information

A yearly training schedule is produced at the start of each school year and sent out to schools who may need to access one or more of the courses.

For more information about training, please contact:

**Katy Wragg** – Special Education nursing Team - Nurse Educator

**Working hours:** Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 5.00 pm

**Work mobile:** 07387 064719

**Admin Team:** 01709 427596. The admin team will take a message and pass it on.

**Special School Nurse Desk** – 01709 423869. Please note there is no voicemail facility on this number

**Generic e-mail** – [rg-h-tr.senurses.rotherham@nhs.net](mailto:rg-h-tr.senurses.rotherham@nhs.net)

**Clare Gill** is the team leader for this area of service and can be emailed at [Clare.gill1@nhs.net](mailto:Clare.gill1@nhs.net) or contacted via the numbers above

*Written by the Special Education Nursing Team – February 2020*

*To be reviewed February 2021*