

## School Health Services

# How Can You Help?



Qualified professionals, such as registered nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists, dental hygienists, health educators, physicians, physician assistants, and allied health personnel, provide a variety of services to students and families. School health service providers deliver first aid and acute and emergency care for students and assist with managing chronic conditions (such as asthma or diabetes) at school. They also promote prevention and wellness by providing or verifying vaccines, encouraging proper nutrition and physical activity, and providing health education for both students and parents.

School health services staff can connect students and their families to community and other health care providers and promote a healthy and safe school environment.<sup>1</sup> Some schools have school-based health centers that deliver direct medical, dental, nutritional, and mental health services to both students and families.<sup>2</sup>

Knowing the answers to the following questions can help you support your child's school to provide health services. If you don't know the answers to these questions, check out the school handbook or school website, attend a school wellness meeting or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting, or simply ask your child's teacher.

### What's Happening at School?

1. Is there a full-time registered nurse in the school building at all times or a school-based health center to help students with chronic medical and dental conditions or with emergencies?
2. Is there a school-based health center available for students or their families?
3. How are medications and medical procedures administered at school? What are district policies about students carrying and self-administering medications?
4. Does the school nurse develop individualized health care plans for students with chronic health conditions?<sup>3</sup>
5. Are there resources available at the school to help me find out if my child is eligible for health insurance and to help with enrollment forms?
6. Is there a bullying prevention policy in the school or district that discourages bullying or encourages awareness or anti-stigma of students with medical conditions?
7. Does the district and school promote a healthy school environment by providing good nutrition, physical activity, and health education opportunities?<sup>4</sup>
8. Does the school district have a wellness policy to create and support a healthy school environment?<sup>5</sup> If so, is the school following the policy?





## Ideas for Parents

You can be involved in your child's school by **attending** meetings, workshops, or training events offered by the school; **communicating** with school staff and other parents; **volunteering** for school events or in your child's classroom; **reinforcing** healthy messages and practices your child learns at school; **helping** make decisions about health in the school; and **being part** of community activities supported by the school. Here are some specific ideas for how you can support your child's school in providing health services.

- Have an ongoing conversation with your child to discuss their health concerns. Find out if your child feels safe and supported at school.<sup>6</sup>
- Work with your child's health care provider to coordinate care for health issues with school nurses and other health service staff and to ensure required school forms are completed. Encourage communication between school health services and your child's health care provider.
- Communicate with your child's teachers, counselors, and school nurse about your child's health concerns and how they are coping while at school.
- Volunteer with your child, or get involved at school health events that promote healthy and active lifestyles.<sup>7</sup>
- Join a group such as the PTA, school wellness, or school health advisory council, that addresses the needs of a supportive and healthy school environment.<sup>7</sup>
- Get involved with community organizations that support the health and safety of children.
- Advocate for a full-time registered school nurse for every school.
- Volunteer to help write grants that may help to improve school health services.



Check out additional resources for parents related to the school nutrition environment and services, physical education and physical activity, and managing chronic health conditions at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/P4HS.htm>.

## REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. *Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child*. 2014. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsc/index.htm>. Accessed March 25, 2019.
2. American Academy of Pediatrics, Council on School Health. School-based health centers and pediatric practice. *Pediatrics*. 2012;129:387.
3. National Association of School Nurses. *Position Statement: Individualized Healthcare Plans: The Role of the School Nurse*; 2015.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School health guidelines to promote healthy eating and physical activity. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2011;60(RR05):1-76.
5. Local school wellness policy implementation under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Proposed Rule. *Fed Regist*. 2014;9(38):10693-10706.
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors among Youth*. Atlanta: US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2009.
7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health*. Atlanta: US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2012.

