School Health Services Handbook

A medical guide for parents of students in the Colonial School District
Dear Parents,

It is a pleasure to welcome you and your child to the Colonial School District. We extend a very special greeting to those who are attending our schools for the first time.

We hope this booklet will answer some of your questions and familiarize you with the role of the nurse in our schools and the school health services provided.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact the nurse at your child’s school. We believe that open communication is the key to our working together to keep our children healthy and learning to their fullest potential in Colonial School District.

Sincerely,

The Nursing Staff
School Health Services

The primary purpose of the Colonial School Health Program is the optimal maintenance, promotion, protection, and improvement of student, staff, and community health. The school nurses collaborate with students, parents, educators, staff members, and other community resources to assist the student to develop competence to confidently cope with the complexities of life.

The school nurses work daily to address the physical, emotional, educational, developmental, and social challenges facing our students. For some, chronic health problems may impact student achievement and success. To assist the students’ school adjustment, school nurses help other staff members understand the special needs of these students.

Changes in family structure, parental work patterns, finances and health care access have contributed to the increasing number of students arriving at school ill or injured. School nurses provide immediate primary care and strive to help parents find available community resources for any continuing student health problems.

The nurses participate in meetings with teachers, guidance counselors, administrators and parents regarding students’ education, physical and social needs. In addition to teaching on an individual and classroom basis, the school nurse acts as a resource person when any question on a medical or health-related matter arises.

The following are some of the questions that nurses hear most frequently from parents. It is hoped that this will serve as a useful guide.
Does my child need a physical to start school?
Your child will need a physical exam done at entry into school (usually kindergarten or first grade), in sixth grade and eleventh grade and upon transferring from another school district if no previous documentation is provided. You will receive a form to be completed by your child’s health care provider and returned to the nurse. Physical examinations must be completed within 1 year of the school start date for those grades requiring physicals (KG/1st, 6th, 11th).

Does my child need a dental exam?
Your child will need a dental exam done at entry into school (usually kindergarten or first grade), third grade and seventh grade. You will receive a form to be completed by your child’s dentist and returned to the nurse. Dental examinations must be completed within 1 year of the school start date for those grades requiring dentals (KG/1st, 3rd, 7th).

Can my child have a physical or dental exam done at school?
Parents can request that a physical and/or dental exam be done by the school physician and/or school dentist. If we do not receive a completed physical or dental examination form from you by the designated date, your signed consent on the emergency form gives permission for the examination to be completed at school.
Are sports physicals given at school?

Sports physicals are given at school. Prior to the exam by the school physician, parents/guardians, along with their student must complete sections 1, 2 and 3 of the PIAA sports physical forms. These forms are available in the Main Office, the Nursing Office and may be downloaded from the Colonial School District website. Dates and times of the exams will be posted. If recommendations are made by the school physician, parents/guardians are responsible to follow-up with their health care provider. Parents have the option of having the sports physical completed by their health care provider. Exams and paperwork must be completed prior to practicing and tryouts for the sport.

If my child played a fall sport, will he/she need another physical to play a winter or spring sport?

Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) requires only one sports physical examination for the entire school year. The exam may be completed on or after June 1st of the current school year, and will be valid for the school year to follow. However, the exam is only valid for the sports that the parent/guardian gave permission for in Section 2 of the PIAA paperwork. Please check this section carefully and sign off on any sport that your child may consider trying out for during the entire school year. Since the physician’s sports clearance is based only on the sports that were signed off on in Section 2, adding a sport after the initial exam will require an additional sports physical exam.

Are school nurses required to report any specific medical conditions?

Yes, school nurses are required to report certain infectious diseases to the local health department. The health department assists the school nurse in managing a suspected outbreak and computing statistical data for our county. Incidences of dog bites are also reportable to the local health department to ensure community safety.
**Are immunizations given at school?**

No immunizations are given at school. However, the school nurse must monitor each child’s immunizations and ensure they are current with the state’s guidelines. Please provide the nurse with documentation from your health care provider anytime your child receives an additional immunization.

The Pennsylvania School Health Code requires that the following immunizations (starting school year 2017-18) be completed within 5 days of the start of school for a student to attend school:

~DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis) – 4 doses, one given after the fourth birthday  
~Polio – 4 doses, one given after the fourth birthday and at least 6 months after previous dose  
~MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) – two doses after 12 months of age,  
~Hepatitis B – 3 properly spaced doses, with the last dose given after age 24 weeks  
~Varicella (chicken pox) – 2 doses after 12 months of age or written proof of the disease from your health care provider

**additional 7th grade requirements**

~Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis)  
~Meningococcal Conjugate

**additional 12th grade requirement**

~Meningococcal Conjugate – 2nd dose if first dose given before age 16
My child seems to have trouble seeing the blackboard. Will his/her eyes be examined at school?

Yes. Vision screening is done every year for all students. A referral will be sent home if any problems are detected. If you have concerns about your child’s vision at any time, please contact the nurse at your child’s school.

Will my child’s hearing be tested in school?

Yes. Hearing screenings are done in kindergarten, first, second, third, seventh and eleventh grades. A referral will be sent home if any problems are detected. If your child has frequent ear infections or you have concerns at any other time, please contact the nurse.

Are there other screenings done at school?

All students’ heights and weights are checked yearly. A BMI (body mass index) percentile will be calculated for each student using his/her height and weight measurements. BMI percentile is used as a guideline to help assess whether a person may be overweight or underweight. A written report of your child’s BMI percentile will be sent home to you.

A screening for scoliosis (an abnormal curvature of the spine) is done in sixth and seventh grades. You will be notified of any abnormal findings.
The following chart may assist you in keeping track of health screenings.

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*or upon original school entry or if transferring from another school and the required exams were not received

**My child has a bee sting allergy and/or a food allergy. How would this or other allergies be handled at school?**

It is necessary to provide the nurse with detailed written information regarding the allergy. You should include what your child is allergic to, the date and description of the last allergic reaction and any medication used during allergic reactions. If medication is required for an allergic reaction, you will need to complete the Medication Policy & Dispensing Form and deliver the medication to school in the original pharmacy container. Please note that a new Medication Policy & Dispensing Form will need to be completed and sent to school each year.
When should I keep my child home from school?

When a child has any of the following symptoms during the night or in the morning, he/she should be kept home:

~ Untreated rash or skin eruption anywhere on the body.
~ Diarrhea
~ Severe headache
~ Fever (100 degrees or more) and until without fever for 24 hours without medication
~ Vomiting and until ceased for 24 hours
~ Under the influence of prescription pain medicine

The above symptoms are forerunners of many different diseases. If the ailment is minor, a day or two of rest at home will usually eliminate the symptoms. If the ailment is more serious, resting at home at the onset will help to prevent complications.

Usually, cold symptoms (cough, sneezing and runny nose), from an infectious standpoint, are not a reason to keep your child out of school. Youngsters are contagious a day or two before the onset of symptoms. By the time your child has a runny nose, other children have been exposed. The critical concern is how the child feels. Children who feel ill generally do not concentrate or learn well.

My child has a contagious disease. When may he/she return to school?

Please see the following chart and call the nurse with any questions.
CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

*Children* with the following diseases must remain at home for the designated number of days or longer if there are complications. A written excuse from the health care provider is required for any student who is absent for 3 consecutive days.

**Chicken Pox**  
After last blister has crusted over (usually 5 – 7 days).

**Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)**  
After 12 hours with proof of medical treatment and discharge has ceased.

**E-coli**  
After 2 negative stools.

**Fifth’s Disease**  
Free from fever, generally no exclusion.

**German Measles**  
4 days from onset.

**Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease**  
Free from fever, after all blisters have dried.

**Hepatitus**  
Symptom free and MD note to return to school.

**Herpes Simplex**  
No general exclusion. Students with obvious skin or oral lesions should be excluded from wrestling.

**Impetigo (crusty sores)**  
When all lesions are dry.

**Influenza**  
No fever for 24 hours.
Measles
    4 days from onset.

Meningitis
    After 48 hours of antibiotic therapy and MD note to return to school.

Mumps
    9 days or until swelling subsides.

Pharyngitis / Strep Throat / Tonsillitis
    24 hours after antibiotic therapy begun.

Pediculosis (Head Lice)
    After treatment and no visibly live lice. (Call the nurse to report your child’s case).

Ringworm
    Readmitted with proof of treatment.

Salmonella / Shigellosis
    After 1 negative stool.

Scabies (itch)
    After 12 hours with proof of medical treatment.

Scarlet Fever
    24 hours after antibiotic therapy has begun.

Tuberculosis
    2 weeks after starting treatment and MD note verifying clinical improvement.

Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
    After 5 days of appropriate antibiotic therapy and MD note.

If your child was born in or visited (for 90 days or more) a country designated as high risk for tuberculosis, the results of a tuberculosis test must be provided before the child can start or re-enter school.
My child is returning to school after an illness and is taking medication. Can this be given at school? What should I do if my child needs medication at school on a daily basis?

The Pennsylvania Guidelines regarding medications at school have recently changed. To comply with the state regulations, the following changes have been made to the Colonial School District Medication Policy.

- Students are **not allowed** to transport any medication, either over-the-counter or prescription, to or from school. A **parent or guardian** must deliver the medication to the school nursing office personally. A **parent or guardian** must also personally pick up all medications from school once the medication is discontinued, or at the end of the school year.

- Any medication that a parent delivers to school, either over the counter or prescription, requires the **Medication Dispensing Form** to be signed by both a **parent/guardian AND the attending physician**.

Please attempt to give any necessary medication at home. Some over-the-counter medications are kept on hand in the school nursing office. Parents/guardians may indicate the over-the-counter medications for which they give permission on the yearly Student Emergency form.

Your child should **not** come to school on narcotic medication for pain management as these medications may cause dizziness, light-headedness and sedation which make it difficult for your child to function safely and effectively in school. Students who do not comply with these changes may be subject to disciplinary action as stated in the CSD Handbook.
Can my child carry an asthma inhaler?
Yes, but you must complete the Medication Policy & Dispensing Form and return it to the school nurse. Please obtain the Medication Policy & Dispensing Form on the web site or contact the nurse at your child’s school for the form.

Will I be contacted if my child becomes ill or injured at school?
Yes, if the illness or injury is severe enough for your child to require further treatment or medical evaluation. Each student must have a completed emergency form on file in the nurse’s office. This form designates a parent and emergency contact to be notified in the event of an illness or serious injury at school. The emergency contact should be someone who is local, available during school hours and can assume responsibility in a parent’s absence. To assume responsibility for a sick or injured child is a serious undertaking and should be arranged by mutual consent.

Sick or injured children need, want and should be with their parent, if possible. Parents who are at work during school hours are asked to leave work to care for their child or to make arrangements for someone else to care for them at home. Children who are sent home from school with vomiting, fever or diarrhea should be free of these symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.

An emergency form is sent home before the beginning of each school year printed with your child’s information. Please review this form, make any necessary corrections or additions, sign the form and return it to school with your child on the first day of school. Remember that emergency actions depend on correct and complete information. Please contact the school immediately with any change in this emergency information.
What if my child has a headache at school?

Your child will have his/her temperature checked and be allowed to rest. Medication is not routinely administered at the kindergarten through third grade level, but nursing discretion will be used on a case-by-case basis with parental consent. At fourth grade level and above, your child can be given acetaminophen or ibuprofen if parental permission has been given on the signed yearly Student Emergency form. Acetaminophen and ibuprofen may be administered according to the standing orders of the school physician.

What would happen if my child sustained an injury at school?

Immediate first aid would be provided to your child. If after evaluation, the injury is determined to be of a serious nature, parents would be notified. If indicated, the emergency medical system would be activated and your child transported to the hospital.

My child was injured at home last evening and I’m not sure if he needs to see a doctor. Can the nurse evaluate him at school?

The school can not assume responsibility for injuries that did not occur at school. Parents are asked to refrain from asking school personnel to treat such injuries.

I want my child to use sunscreen at school.

You can send sunscreen to school with your child. Your child is to apply it himself/herself. Sunscreen is not to be shared. If your child is found sharing the sunscreen with other children, the sunscreen will be taken away and you will be asked to pick it up from school.
We hope that this booklet has been helpful in answering some of your questions. For any special needs or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the nurse at your child’s school. Good home-school communication promotes positive learning opportunities for students. Your cooperation is necessary to provide your children with a healthy environment where they can have a positive learning experience.

**Nursing Service Staff**

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Ann Pruskowski, R.N., C.S.N.

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