

APPENDIX E. Manage medical emergencies

A medical emergency is a sudden or unexpected threat to health which requires an urgent assessment and alleviation of symptoms.

In a medical emergency, the principal:

- organises medical attention for the student
- makes appropriate transport arrangements if required
- informs parents as soon as possible of actions taken
- promptly records all actions taken
- completes an online incident notification report if required
- arranges a review of the event and support for staff/students if required.

In an emergency, all school staff owe a duty of care for the safety and welfare of students. In the absence of staff with relevant first aid training, available staff should administer first aid within their level of experience until medical assistance can be provided.

Role of the community health nurse

As part of their duty of care and within the scope of their skills, the community health nurse should assist in a medical emergency at school if they are present at the time of an incident or utilised as a secondary consultation where there is concern about the nature of the injury or where incidents are recurrent.

Refer to Understand school health services (staff only) for further information about services delivered by community health nurses.

Parent consent

The absence of parental consent does not prevent a principal seeking medical attention in an emergency.

Transporting students in a medical emergency

When arranging transport in a medical emergency, the principal:

- considers the nature of the emergency and local circumstances such as the availability of an ambulance service
- in a serious medical emergency, uses an ambulance service if it is available within a reasonable timeframe. If an ambulance is not available, the principal:
 - seeks advice from the ambulance or medical service prior to providing transport in a private vehicle
 - subject to agreement from the ambulance or medical service, transports the student to a health service or medical practitioner
 - whenever possible, arranges for at least 2 people to travel with the student, one to drive and the other(s) to monitor the health of the student. In accordance with Department of Health policy, community health nurses are not permitted to travel in a car transporting students in a medical emergency.

Meeting the cost of the ambulance service

The Student Health Care Summary (staff only) which is completed by all parents at enrolment indicates that parents are expected to meet the cost of an ambulance in an emergency.

Cancellation of an ambulance call out by parents

In an emergency, a school may call an ambulance for a student at risk, but when parents are contacted, they may request cancellation of the ambulance and advise that they will transport the student. The school has a duty of care for the student and arrangements for transport by ambulance should proceed. An ambulance should not be cancelled until parents arrive and the student is handed into their care.

For information relating to the use of private vehicles on Department business, refer to Find information about insurance (staff only).

Students who frequently require an emergency response

To assist in providing an overview of key health information to ambulance or hospital staff, the principal may use the Emergency Response Plan for a Student with Special Needs (staff only) for students with health conditions which frequently require an emergency response.

For further information refer to:

- Duty of Care for Public School Students policy
- Incident Management on Department of Education Sites policy
- Risk and Business Continuity Management policy.