



Chronic
Illness
Alliance



Invisible Illness

—an online resource about children and young people with chronic conditions for school communities



***Student Health Support
Plans: Recommended Approach
for Parents and Carers***
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Chronic Illness Alliance
www.chronicillness.org.au

STUDENT HEALTH SUPPORT PLANS

Recommended Approach for Parents and Carers of a Student with a Chronic Health Condition

As a parent or carer, it is important that you work in partnership with your child's school to optimise your child's wellbeing, health, learning and enjoyment of school.

If you haven't done so already, listen to Sarah's, James', Vassie's, Eliza's, Jemma's and Tamara's stories about how their schools supported them.

[by going to www.chronicillness.org.au/invisible/healthplan3.htm]

Your level of involvement will depend on your child's age, maturity and level of independence. Young primary-aged children should be encouraged to engage in the meeting process. It is important that they are given the opportunity to speak about their needs, and to learn about the process in preparation for future years when they will play a more active role. As students move into more senior years, they may assume more responsibility for discussing their needs. However, parents/carers will still have a vital role to play.

You can best support your child by:

- Providing the school with accurate and up-to-date information about your child, including
 - what medication they take, and when they take it
 - what dietary requirements they have
 - what the school and your child should do in a medical emergency.

The school may ask you to provide some or all of this information in the form of a letter from your doctor.

- If not already arranged by the school, you or your child should ask for a meeting with the school to devise a Student Health Support Plan. The Plan is a form that outlines how the school will support the student's health care needs. It focuses on the medical management of their illness. However, you will also have the opportunity to discuss your child's learning needs and any problems that your child may have as a result of their illness, and to work out a plan to overcome or minimise the impact of these problems while your child is at school.
- If your child is in primary school, keep in regular contact with the school to ensure that your child's needs are being met, and to ensure that the school is aware of any changes in their health.

At the meeting:

- Discuss any strategies that you think will ensure that your child keeps up with their schoolwork, and ensure that their special needs are met.
- Tell the school about any events, subjects, rules or procedures that your child may have difficulty participating in or complying with due to their illness. Also, tell the school how they might be modified to allow your child to participate or comply.
- Before the meeting, encourage your child to talk to you about which staff and students they want to be told about their illness, what they should be told, and how they should be told. At the meeting, ensure that a plan for this is discussed, because some students find disclosure a very distressing aspect of their illness.
- Before leaving the meeting, make arrangements to meet regularly with the school to review your child's Student Health Support Plan. This may require updated medical advice each time, at least annually.

Victorian Government schools are required by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to meet with students and their families to complete a Health Plan. Non-government and independent schools have similar policies. If your school is unsure about Student Health Support Plans, tell them about the Chronic Illness Alliance's Invisible Illness website (www.chronicillness.org.au/invisible).