



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 Schools*

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*Chronic Illness Alliance*  
[www.chronicillness.org.au](http://www.chronicillness.org.au)

# STUDENT HEALTH SUPPORT PLANS

## Recommended Approach for Schools in Supporting Students with Health Conditions

### Department of Education and Early Childhood Development policy:

'The Department acknowledges that early intervention is critical, especially in relation to a student with an identified healthcare need. It is essential that upon enrolment or when a health care need is identified, the school has clear plans and processes in place to support the student's health care need.'

(Schools Reference Guide 4.5 The Department's policy on student health support:  
<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/schadmin/environment/4-5.pdf>)

### ***Step-by-step guide to preparing a Student Health Support Plan***

1. Prior to enrolling the student or following their medical diagnosis, tell the student and their parents/carer about the school's policy for supporting students with health care needs.
2. Ask the student and their family to provide accurate information about the student's routine health and personal care support needs, including emergency care if needed.
3. Arrange a student support group meeting with the student, their family, and any relevant support people in the school that the student feels comfortable having present. Ensure that the student and their family participate in the discussion and contribute to all decisions made.
4. Encourage young students, including primary-aged students, to engage in the meeting process. It is important that they have the opportunity to speak, and to learn about the process in preparation for future years when they will play a more active role.
5. At the meeting
  - Complete a Student Health Support Plan (refer to 4.5.3.1 of the Schools Reference Guide). When completing the form, ask how the student's illness might limit their participation in the everyday school environment. In consultation with the student and their family, plan strategies to overcome these limitations.
  - Modify the student's learning programs to allow for absences due to medical appointments, illness, hospital stays, etc.
  - Discuss any upcoming events and excursions. Anticipate what additional preparations will be needed, and plan accordingly.
  - Find out if the student is unable to comply with any existing school rules or procedures, and devise strategies to compensate.
  - Establish an agreed communication strategy that specifies who in the school will be told about the student's illness, what they should be told, and how they should be told.
  - Arrange for regular reviews of the Student Health Support Plan, and ensure that a strategy is in place for ongoing open communication between the student, the family and the school.
6. If the school has several students with chronic illnesses, ask them if they would like to be part of a chronic illness peer support group.
7. Work with the student to identify a person within the school who will be their key support person that they can approach any time for support.

This Recommended Approach for Schools guide is intentionally brief. It highlights only the key elements of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's policy on students with health care needs. It does not attempt to replace or replicate the policy. To read the full policy, use the link in the shaded box above.

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# STUDENT HEALTH SUPPORT PLANS

Generally speaking, students with chronic illnesses should be treated in the same way as other students in the school. However, their illness may mean that they have to do some things differently from their classmates.

Finding a happy balance for the student is important, as is asking the student how their illness affects their participation and enjoyment in school life.

Being creative in finding solutions to problems is also important - small changes can make a big difference. 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](http://www.chronicillness.org.au/invisible/healthplan3.htm) ]

Specific information about Acquired Brain Injury, Asthma, Cancer, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Cystic Fibrosis, Diabetes, Epilepsy, Haemophilia, Hepatitis C, Slow Transit Constipation and Thyroid conditions can be found on the Chronic Illness Alliance's Invisible Illness website  
[www.chronicillness.org.au/invisible](http://www.chronicillness.org.au/invisible).