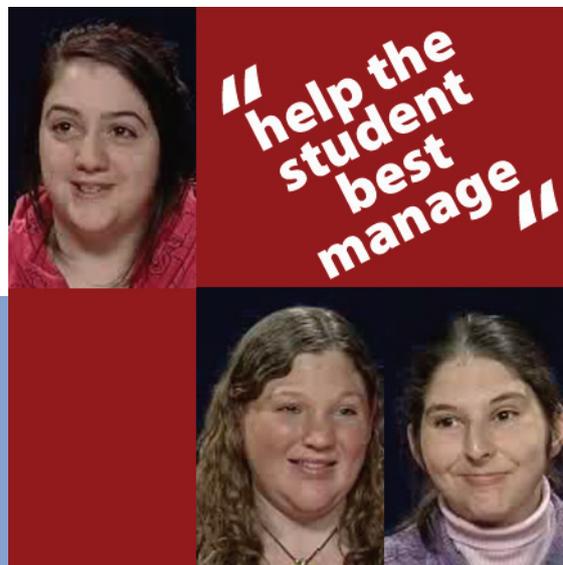




Chronic
Illness
Alliance

Invisible Illness

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



Student Health Support Plans: Recommended Approach for students

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Chronic Illness Alliance
www.chronicillness.org.au

STUDENT HEALTH SUPPORT PLANS

Recommended Approach for Students with a Chronic Illness

This guide is intended to help you talk to your school about how to overcome any problems you might experience as a result of your illness.

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]

If you have a chronic illness, it is really important that you:

Manage your health as best you can, so you can participate in all aspects of school life as much as possible.

Tell the school that you have an illness, and tell them about it and how it affects you. If your health changes, tell them about the change, and how it may affect you. The school may ask you to get a letter from your doctor that explains some or all of this information. Your parents/carer can also help you with this information.

Some of the things the school may need to know include

- what medication you take, and when you take it
- any special dietary requirements you have
- what they and you should do in a medical emergency.

If you haven't done so already, ask your principal to arrange a meeting with you and your family to talk about a Student Health Support Plan. The aim of a Health Support Plan is to make sure that the school understands your special health and learning needs, so it can help you in a way that you feel comfortable with. It's a really good process for you to be involved in, so don't be shy: speak up and tell the school how they can make life easier for you.

When the meeting is being arranged, tell the school if there is anybody from the school that you would like to be involved. For example, you might have a specific teacher or counsellor that you would like to be present. It's also important that your parents or a trusted adult from outside the school be involved, so they can support you and help you negotiate a Health Support Plan that works for you.

At the meeting

Help the school complete the Student Health Support Plan. Speak up if you have any suggestions about how the school could help you. Don't forget they have called this meeting because they want to help you.

Tell them about any things you can't do, and tell them what sort of things you're likely to need help with. This is your chance to explain why you need to do some things differently from other students, and what changes would enable you do them.

Tell the school what they can do to help you keep up with your class work or homework when you're away from school.

Tell the school about any events, subjects or rules that you may find difficult as a result of your illness, and how they could be modified.

You might want other teachers and students to know about your illness, or you might not. The school might want to tell certain staff members, usually for your health and safety. Tell the school who you want to be told about your illness, what they should be told, and how they should be told. Getting this right can make a big difference to how you feel at school.

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STUDENT HEALTH SUPPORT PLANS

Before you leave the meeting, make sure you, your family and the school arrange to meet again regularly to discuss how your Student Health Support Plan is going.

Victorian Government schools are required 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).
