

A Parent's Guide to the Lowell Health Department School Health Unit

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The School Nurse is a liaison between home and school regarding health concerns and to serve as a health resource to you and your child. The School Nurse completes state mandated screenings and provides nursing care for illnesses or accidents. The School Nurse promotes wellness, and assists in maintaining a healthy, safe environment for students and staff. Please contact your School Nurse with any health concerns or questions.

Medical Emergency Form:

A Medical Emergency Form must be completed and returned to the School Nurse. This form gives information on how to reach parents in case of emergency and provides updated health information on your child from year to year. Notify the School Nurse of any changes in emergency contact information or state of health during the school year. In the event of the need for medical transport, every attempt will be made to send a copy of this form. **Remember, in the event of an accident or illness, the school must be able to reach the parent or another person who will assume responsibility for the student.**

Health Emergencies:

Please notify the School Nurse of any medical condition which may precipitate an emergency situation for your child (e.g. allergic reaction to food, insect bites or medication, asthma, diabetes, seizures). The School Nurse will work with you in developing a care plan to meet your child's health care needs.

Illness:

Children **must remain home** if they have any of the following:

- A contagious illness like chickenpox, flu, or strep throat, until the doctor or public health department official says it is safe to return or the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- A rash or skin condition not diagnosed by a doctor
- A fever that causes chills, sweating or muscle aches
- Temperature over 100.4 in the past 24 hours
- Vomiting / diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Live head lice
- Notification by the school nurse/ health department that immunizations are not up to date. (Exclusion notice)

Post Illness School Attendance Guidelines:

Children must be fever free without medication and symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. According to health department guidelines, a child with a diagnosis of strep throat, impetigo or conjunctivitis, is required to be on medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

Immunization/Lab Test Requirements:

School Immunization Law, Chapter 76, Section 15 of the General Laws of the State of Massachusetts requires that all immunizations must be up to date for children to attend school according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations. Massachusetts General Law allows for the school district to exclude any child from school whose immunizations are not up to date.

****New in 2017: Polio #4 must be given after the 4th Birthday****

- A certified record of immunization from your child's physician is required for entry into school
- All immunization records must be provided in English and include all dates in full.
- Immunizations are reviewed by the School Nurse. In the event of missing or incorrect information, your prompt attention in addressing the error/omission is imperative to assure compliance with state law.
- Preschool Entry Requirements:
4 Dtap/DTP, 3 Polio, 3 Hepatitis B, 1 MMR, 4 doses Hib, 1 dose Varicella or physician documented case of chickenpox, 1 lead test
- Kindergarten Entry Requirements:
5 Dtap/DTP, 4 Polio, 3 Hepatitis B, 2 MMR, 2 Varicella or physician documented case of chickenpox, 1 lead Test

- Grade 1-6 Entry Requirements: 5 Dtap/DTP, 4 Polio, 3 Hepatitis B; 2 MMR, 2 Varicella, or physician documented case of chickenpox for any grade.
- Grade 7-12 Entry Requirements: Childhood series *and* 1 Tdap, 2 MMR and 2 Varicella or physician documented case of chickenpox.

Medication Policies:

Medications (both prescription and over the counter) should not be taken during school hours, if it is possible to achieve the medication regime at home. Medication to be taken three (3) times a day can be given at home before school, after school and at bedtime.

A prescriber's order is required for ALL prescription and non-prescription (over the counter) medications.

To insure your child's safety, all medications are to be delivered to school:

- In a *pharmacy-labeled container*
Ask the pharmacy to provide separate bottles for home and school
- By a parent/guardian adult, **NEVER WITH THE CHILD**

MEDICATION WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED IN THE PHARMACY LABELLED CONTAINER.

IN THE EVENT OF A DELAYED SCHOOL OPENING, MEDICATION SCHEDULED FOR THE REGULAR START TIME WILL NOT BE ADMINISTERED.

All medications which must be taken during school hours, either long or short term, require the following forms to be on file in the school health office before any medication can be administered at school:

- A current medication order, signed and dated by the prescribing physician
- A signed and completed Parent consent and medication administration plan
- Current photo of student for identification purposes
- Medication will be counted by the nurse in the presence of the parent/guardian/responsible adult and signed on the medication log.

According to the Nurse Practice Act and Health Department Policy, nurses are not allowed to take orders from a non- licensed person (parent or guardian). This applies to all prescription or over the counter medication.

Medication Pickup:

Parents/guardian may retrieve medications from the School Nurse and signed for in the medication log. All unused, discontinued or outdated medications must be picked up by a parent/guardian at the end of the school year or it will be discarded.

Physical Exam Requirements:

Within 1 year prior to school entry or within 30 days after school entry. Physical exams are required for grades Pre K, K, 4, 7, and 10.

Head Lice:

In accordance with the NO LICE POLICY Children must be treated, lice free and checked by the School Nurse before being readmitted to school. Prevention is the key to controlling this pesky problem. Please inspect your child's hair frequently and call the school nurse if you have any questions.

Mandated Screening Programs:

Vision, Hearing, Postural & BMI screenings will take place throughout the school year.

If you do not want your child to participate in vision, hearing, postural or BMI screening please notify the nurse in writing.

Vision and Hearing: Vision: year of school entry, PreK-5, grade 7 and 9. **Hearing:** year of school entry, K-3, grade 7 and 9.

Parents/guardians will be notified of any problems that necessitate a medical follow up.

Postural Screening: The State of Massachusetts mandates that all students in grades 5 through 9 be screened for scoliosis. Parents/guardians will be notified of any problems that necessitate a medical follow up.

Heights and Weights: Students are screened in grades 1, 4, 7 and 10 to calculate BMI.

Information is kept confidential.

SBIRT: (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment) In March, 2016, the Massachusetts Legislature enacted an Act relative to substance use, treatment, education and prevention (STEP Act) which outlines the requirements for public schools in the Commonwealth to engage in substance use screening and education. This screening occurs in grades 7 and 9 in the Lowell Public Schools.

Information with an opt out letter will be sent to parents/guardians prior to SBIRT screening.