Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

Administration of Medication Policy for MACS Schools

Purpose

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) schools are required to ensure the care, welfare, and safety of children who require medication administered during school days or activities.

When required to administer medication to students, MACS schools will follow the Administration of Medication Policy and accompanying procedures.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- principals, staff, including casual relief staff and volunteers in MACS schools
- all students who require medication to be administered at school or during school activities
- parents/guardians/carers of students who require medication to be administered during the school day or during school activities.

It does not apply to:

- the provision of medication for anaphylaxis which is provided for in the Anaphylaxis Policy for MACS Schools.
- specialised procedures which may be required for complex medical care needs.

Principles

The following principles underpin this policy:

- MACS schools are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students in the school environment.
- MACS staff work with parents/guardians/carers to ensure, as far as reasonable, that the needs and safety of children requiring medication in the school environment be considered.
- MACS staff maintain and safeguard the privacy, confidentiality, and wellbeing of students in line with the Privacy Policy and Collection Notice.

Policy

MACS schools have a duty of care to ensure that reasonable care is taken and appropriate processes are in place when administering all medications in the school environment and during school related activities.

MACS school principals require that parents/guardians/carers notify the school when medication is required to be taken during school hours or during school related activities, at the time of student enrolment at the school.

Parents/guardians/carers are required to provide the school with current medical information as it becomes available.

Authority to administer medication at schools

Parents/guardians/carers can make requests for the school to administer medication to students. MACS schools will first explore with parents/guardians/carers whether the medication can be administered outside the school environment rather than have staff administer the medication at school.

MACS schools require written advice about the administration of all medication within the school environment and during school activities (over the counter or prescription) through a Medication Authority Form (MAF). The MAF must be signed by the parent/guardian/carer, and where required as outlined below, also by an authorised Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) registered health/medical practitioner.

The principal or nominated staff member must approve all ongoing and regular administration of medication (over the counter or prescription) by the school. In most cases, medication must not be administered to a child being educated and cared for unless the administration is authorised by an authorised AHPRA registered health/medical/health practitioner.

In circumstances where this advice cannot be provided, the principal or nominated staff member may proceed on the authority of parent/guardian/carer signature in the absence of authority from an authorised AHPRA health/medical practitioner. This would only occur in rare circumstances, for example, short term (1–2 days) administration of over-the-counter medication at school or on off-site activities such as camps. No other school staff, including school nurses, can provide authorisation for the administration of medication.

The enrolment record kept for each child must include details of any person who is authorised to consent to medical treatment or consent for the administration of medication to the child.

Medication administration in school environments and during school activities

Parents/guardians/carers have a responsibility to provide all medication in the original container with the original label including the name of the student, information on the dosage, storage requirements, method, and time to be administered.

The principal or nominated staff member is responsible for ensuring that the correct student receives their correct medication at the correct dosage, method, frequency, and time of day. No medication is to be administered beyond the instructions on the original packaging unless written recommendation is provided by an authorised AHPRA registered health/medical practitioner. The principal or nominated staff member may determine that medical advice is necessary if clarification is required.

All prescribed and over the counter medication must be provided by the student's parent/guardian/carer in its original packaging. The principal or nominated staff member is to maintain a log of all medication administered in the school environment.

Staff who are responsible for the supervision of a student who is to receive medication at a given time are to be informed that the student is to be released to obtain their medication and release the student from class to obtain their medication.

The principal or nominated staff member ensures that all medicine administered is noted in a medication log or equivalent official medications register. The medication log should be completed by the person administering the medication to the student at the given time. Good practice is to have two staff members supervising the administration of medication and checking the information noted on the medication log and ensuring that all staff are aware of the school processes for the storage and administration of medication.

A student with a signed MAF can self-administer medication at school with principal approval. The principal or nominated staff member will consult with parents/guardians/carers (or adult or independent students) and, where appropriate, relevant authorised AHPRA registered health/medical practitioners to determine circumstances where a student may self-administer medication at school. This arrangement should be indicated on the MAF. Students with an asthma or anaphylaxis action plan can carry their medication without a MAF.

Medication storage

Parents/guardians/carers are responsible for providing medication that is within its expiry date and replacing medication, if necessary, that has expired. Medication that is within its expiry date will be stored safely and securely and in accordance with relevant storage instructions.

MACS schools should take reasonable steps to store the medication securely and according to the medication's instructions (e.g. requires refrigeration). The principal or nominated staff member maintains a storage log of all medication stored for students in the school environment, including for camps and external events. When determining a secure location, it must be located away from the first aid kit and in an area only responsible staff can access.

Medication use in first aid or emergencies

Medication such as aspirin and paracetamol will not be stored or administered for first aid purposes as these medications may mask symptoms of serious conditions.

In the case of an emergency, authorisation may be given by an authorised AHPRA registered health/medical practitioner or an emergency service to administer medication.

If an error occurs in the administration of medication by a staff member or in self-administration by a student, staff are to administer first aid, call the Poisons Information Line (13 11 26) and act on their advice. The principal or nominated staff member must notify the parents/guardians/carers of the error and what has been done following the error. The principal or nominated staff member must also contact the regional office to advise the regional general manager of the incident and complete an Incident Report. Following the incident, schools are to review their first aid and medical management procedures, as appropriate.

Communication about this policy

The principal is responsible for ensuring that a communication plan is developed to provide information to relevant school staff, students and parents/guardians/carers about medication administration and the school's administration of medication policy. The principal is responsible for communicating the policy to the school community on their school's websites and through their school's established communication pathways (e.g., newsletters, communication apps, etc.).

Procedures

Please refer to Administration of Medication Procedures for further guidance on implementation of this policy.

Roles and reporting responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Principal	Authorise the administration of medication to students with appropriate documentation (medical management plans and/or medication authority form depending on the duration and frequency of medication administration in school environment)	
Principal	Maintain a register of the medication administered to students	
Principal	Maintain a medication storage log	
Principal	Ensure that school staff are aware of the school processes for the storage and administration of medication to students	
Principal	Ensure that medical advice is obtained if uncertainty about the administration of medication exists	

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Principal	Report incidents of medication administration errors in the school environment	Report incident to Regional General Manager (RGM)

Definitions

Administration of medication

The direct application of a medication by a medically appropriate route (e.g., injection, inhalation, ingestion, application, or other means) to the body of the individual by an individual legally authorised to do so.

Authorised AHPRA registered health/medical Practitioner

A practitioner registered under Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and relevant state/national board for their medical/health profession who may authorise administration including registered medical practitioners, dentists, nurse practitioner (within scope), authorised optometrists and authorised podiatrists.

General/condition specific medical management plan

Information provided by the parent/guardian/carer of a student with a diagnosed health care need or relevant medical condition. The plan should contain details of the current diagnosis, current medication, response required from the school in relation to ongoing care and support and the emergence of symptoms. The Medical Management Plan must be endorsed by the treating registered medical/health practitioner providing the advice, relevant authorisation for mediation, and be dated.

Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese Schools Ltd (MACS)

MACS is a reference to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd, and/or its subsidiaries, MACSS and MACSEYE, as the context requires.

MACS school or school

A school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by MACS, directly or through Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools (MACSS), as the context requires. References to schools or MACS schools also includes school boarding premises operated by MACS schools.

Procedure

A step-by-step or detailed instruction for the implementation of MACS policy that is mandatory across MACS and its subsidiaries, as the context requires.

School environment

Means any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the school
- online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by MACS or a MACS school for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

School staff

Means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a contracted service provider engaged by MACS (whether a body corporate and whether any other person is an intermediary) engaged to perform child-related work for a MACS school
- a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with MACS (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Student

Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends a MACS school.

Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

School Administration of Medication Procedures
Medication Authority Form

Related MACS policies and documents

Anaphylaxis Policy for MACS Schools
Excursions, Camps and Travel Policy for MACS Schools
First Aid Policy for MACS Schools
Incidents and Injuries Report Form
Medical Management Policy for MACS Schools
General Medical Management Plan
Student Health Support Plan

Legislation and standards

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic.)

Policy information

Responsible director	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Policy owner	General Manager, Learning Diversity
Approving authority	Executive Director
Assigned board committee	Child Safety and Risk Management
Approval date	18 April 2024
Risk Rating	High
Review by	April 2025
Publication	CEVN, Gabriel

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	Care, Safety and Welfare of Students
Supporting documents	See list of supporting documents and related policies above
Superseded documents	Administration of Medication to Students Policy for MACS Schools – v1.0 – 2023
New policy	