**Supporting school first aiders in their decision making – a guide for Headteachers/Governors in special schools served by Solent Special School Nursing team**

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This guidance is aimed to assist Head Teachers and School Governors when reviewing the content of school first aid/managing children with health needs policies to ensure that where possible they contain processes and practices as commissioned and provided to the schools by Solent NHS Trust. References are current as of July 2022; it is acknowledged that government guidance, resources and links will be updated periodically, and resources should be checked regularly for accuracy.

*Roles and responsibilities; general principles regarding management of first aid and illness within special schools*

We would advise ensuring that the First Aid/Managing Children with Health Needs Policies captures the following statements similar to those as suggested below. This will reassure school staff and provide clarity.

* The school will provide interim care and first aid for pupils that are unwell or injured (including decisions regarding Covid-19).
* Most presentations should be managed by school staff without the need to consult elsewhere and schools will follow DfE guidance regarding the provision of first aid and emergencies in education settings (1, 2).
* Accordingly, the school will ensure they have appropriate numbers of staff trained to meet common adult and child first aid presentations, to include basic life support.
* The Special School Nursing (SSN) team will support school staff in the management of life-threatening emergencies and serious/complex illness or injury *when on site* in schools.
* The emergency red bag is available to school staff to use the automated external defibrillator (AED) when the school nurse is not present on site, all other contents are to be used by the SSN team according to individual competence.
* It is acknowledged that there will be occasions when school first aider may seek to request additional support from the SSN team who will act in accordance with their individual scope of practice. This will primarily involve signposting to appropriate onward providers.
* The SSN team and school will work collaboratively, the SSN team empowering school staff to make and act upon their decisions, whilst each party remaining responsible for their own actions or omissions.
* It is best practice that school first aiders/senior school staff contact parents/caregivers *at the earliest opportunity* to report episodes of illness/injury. If further review from onward providers is advised, the school first aider/senior school staff should call parents/caregivers and advise them to take this specific action (e.g., 111/own GP/Pharmacy) *in the first instance*, unless deemed more urgent or parent/caregiver unobtainable. Ultimate responsibility for the decision to act on this advice remains with the parent/caregiver. Any safeguarding concerns should be reported and acted upon utilising agreed local procedures within the school environment.

*Notes for headteachers and governors on ‘scope of practice’ and how the SSN team will support school first aiders in their decision making.*

Each registered nurse is accountable for their own actions and omissions (or those actions and omissions delegated to non-registrants such as healthcare support workers or school staff). It is important that registered nurses work within the limits of their own competence (or delegate according to that individual’s own competence). The Nursing & Midwifery Council makes this very clear (3). This will vary between individuals based on their experience and training. **General first aid training is not included in nurse training; however, Basic Life Support is – when on site the SSN team will support SEN schools in emergencies.**

In practical terms, this simply means it is important that they do not take on any additional responsibilities that they have not been trained to do, and that they ‘actively signpost’ onwards at the earliest opportunity to appropriate support through onward providers. The SSN team do not necessarily need to make this referral themselves. Indeed, in terms of empowering school staff to manage a similar event when the team are not there, it’s better for them to simply support school staff (e.g., for school staff to make a phone call in the presence of the SSN team who will advise on what to say). It is best practice for school staff to contact parent/caregivers and pass on this specific advice, respecting that those with parental responsibility shall make any final decision on action.

Whilst the SSN team are not specifically commissioned to provide first aid services and *should not be asked to do so by schools*, it is recognised that there will be occasions when the school first aider may seek to request additional support from the SSN team. This will be for helping school staff to navigate the complexities of an unfamiliar healthcare system or when a student/staff member is seriously unwell. The SSN team will support, predominately by ‘actively signposting’ the first aider onto the most appropriate onward provider (e.g., 111, own GP, pharmacist etc). This maintains the individual’s scope of practice whilst acting as a resource to the school (see flowchart).

*Flow chart to guide response to injury/illness with SSN support*

The following page contains a flowchart that could be added to a first aid policy as an appendix to provide clarity on how the SSN team will support SEN schools in managing emergencies and serious/complex scenarios. This should also reassure headteachers and governors of the value of the SSN team as a resource to the school.



*Further information and resources available to school first aiders when SSN team off site*

**Pharmacy First Scheme** – The IOW has successfully run a scheme whereby patients registered with an IOW GP can be seen and treatment provided without the need to see GP by simply presenting at their local pharmacy. A list of conditions that are included within the ‘Pharmacy First’ service is available here:

<https://www.hampshiresouthamptonandisleofwightccg.nhs.uk/reports/679-pharmacy-first-formulary/file>

**Pharmacies across Hampshire** will also be able to support and give advice for common minor illnesses and can directly refer onwards to GP’s or urgent care if needed (e.g., aches and pains, sore throat, coughs, colds, flu, earache, cystitis, skin rashes, teething, red eye etc).

More information can be found on:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/prescriptions-and-pharmacies/pharmacies/how-your-pharmacy-can-help/>

**Own GP** – most minor injuries and illness can be resolved by the student/staff members own GP. The way GP services are provided has changed dramatically since Covid-19. Face to face appointments are not always needed, so GP’s will run a “duty list” or “same day service” alongside advanced clinical practitioners with a telephone triage system - initially ask for a telephone call back or alternatively an online consultation (via the GP practice own website) will result in a clinician response within 48hrs. For more information regarding GP services in the region see link below:

<https://www.hampshiresouthamptonandisleofwightccg.nhs.uk/your-health/your-gp-practice-services>

**111/urgent treatment centre/walk in centres –** whilst most centres do not need prior appointment, it is often best to advise *to call 111 first* as this may prevent the need to attend and the call handler maybe able to arrange a call-back from the patient’s own GP (who will have better access to health records). Use the following links for more information about local services:

* [Andover Minor Injuries Clinic](https://www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/az-departments-and-specialties/andover-minor-injuries-clinic?q=%2Four-services%2Faz-departments-and-specialties%2Fandover-minor-injuries-clinic), Andover War Memorial Hospital – **to book an appointment please call 111**
* [Gosport War Memorial Hospital Minor Injuries Unit](https://www.porthosp.nhs.uk/departments-and-services/gosport-minor-injuries-unit/96458).
* **Haslemere minor injuries unit (Surrey)** link below: https://www.nhs.uk/Services/clinics/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=96322
* [Isle of Wight Urgent Treatment Centre, St Mary’s Hospital](https://www.iow.nhs.uk/our-services/urgent-treatment-centre.htm) – please note **this is not a walk in service, please call 111 to make an appointment**.
* [Lymington Urgent Treatment Centre](https://www.phlgroup.co.uk/our-services/primary-care/lymington-urgent-treatment-centre/), Lymington Hospital.
* [Petersfield Urgent Treatment Centre](https://www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/our-services/a-z-list-of-services/urgent-treatment-centres)
* [Practice Plus Group Urgent Treatment Centre](https://www.portsmouthsurgicalcentre.co.uk/utc/), St Mary’s, Portsmouth.
* [Southampton Urgent Treatment Centre](https://www.southamptonutc.nhs.uk/), the Royal South Hants Hospital.

**111 (online)** is a useful alternative option, particularly if 111 lines are busy (for non-urgent advice) and provides the same services as calling 111 including clinician call back - to access click on the link:

<https://111.nhs.uk/>

**NHS website** (conditions A-Z) - With demand on NHS services ever increasing, more information on advice and support (including self-help strategies) can be found on the NHS website – link below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>

**Patient website -** oftenused by GPs to send self-help advice and support to patients, as well as more detailed information on conditions. A really good resource for anybody in need of further information, see link below:

<https://patient.info/>

**Wessex healthier together –** finally, our very own locally managed and nationally recognised CYP resource, with lots of useful information that’s easily accessible in the link below:

<https://what0-18.nhs.uk/>

*References and further links*

1. Department for Education (2022) *Guidance: First aid in schools, early years and further education*. (available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/first-aid-in-schools/first-aid-in-schools-early-years-and-further-education> accessed 5/4/22)
2. Department of Education (2022)*.* *Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children’s social care settings* (available at:<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings> accessed 05/07/22)
3. Nursing and Midwifery Council (2015) The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates. (available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-code.pdf> accessed 29/03/22)