



## Medications at School

### Introduction

The goal of the school system regarding the administration of medication during school hours is to assist students in maintaining an optimal state of wellness, thus enhancing the educational experience. **These guidelines refer to both prescription and over-the-counter medications.**

The parent/guardian should treat minor illness at home. For example, a student with a cold severe enough to require frequent medication should remain at home.

It is the policy of the Baldwin County Public Schools to administer the student's medication as prescribed by their physician. The local school district encourages parents to give the student their medication at home whenever possible. For example, when a student has medication ordered daily, the medication should be given at home. Medication prescribed three times a day should be given at home – just before leaving for school, upon returning home in the afternoon, and at bedtime. The only exception to this schedule is medication that must be given before or with meals.

The following requirements provide school personnel, parents/guardians, students, and health professionals with the guidance necessary to provide safe and proper assistance with medication in schools.

### Parent's Responsibility

The parent/guardian and physician must sign the Alabama State Department of Education School Medication Prescriber/Parent Authorization form granting permission for a child to receive prescription medication at school.

The parent/guardian must provide the school with medication that is in a correctly labeled prescription bottle container (which includes student's name, prescriber's name, name of medication, strength, dosage, time interval, route, and date of drug's discontinuation when applicable). Medications will only be accepted in the original container. Medications received in a zip lock bag or not in the original container **will not be given** and parents will be contacted to pick up medication.

The parent/guardian must provide the school with a new, signed prescriber/ parent authorization form at the beginning of each school year and/or before any prescription medication can be given at school. This consent form authorizes school personnel to assist students with medication. If the medication order is changed during the school year (e.g., change in dosage), an additional prescriber authorization/order is necessary.

The parent/guardian or the parent designated responsible adult must deliver all medication to the school nurse or other school personnel as designated by the principal. The parent/guardian shall pick up student's unused medication (when the medicine is completed, out of date, or at the end of the school year). The school nurse or designated school personnel will destroy medications not picked up by the parent/guardian in a timely manner.

The parent/guardian shall provide nonprescription medication in an original, unopened, sealed container of the drug, identifying the medication and the entire manufacturer's labeling plus the student's name (written legibly on the container). Please provide medication, such as Tylenol, in smallest container available.

### **School's Responsibility**

The registered school nurse with the assistance of the school principal identifies the appropriate individual who shall ensure the right student gets the right medication, in the right dosage, by the right route, at the right time, for the right reason, and has documented appropriately, accurately, and in a timely manner.

Designated school personnel shall receive school-specific and student specific training from the delegating registered school nurse prior to assisting students with medication in a safe and private setting (i.e., an area free of distractions and disruptions).

The delegating registered school nurse must evaluate and approve all over-the-counter medicines and parent instructions. The delegating registered school nurse will determine if over-the-counter medication is appropriate and whether a physician's order is necessary. In 2004, the Alabama Board of Nursing issued a declaratory ruling stating that "a school nurse may administer over-the-counter medications without a physician's authorization." Therefore, only parent/guardian signed permission is required for assistance with over-the counter medication.

In the event of an allergic reaction or an emergency involving medication, the school will handle the problem as any other medical emergency.

If your child has a chronic illness that requires prescription medications, both the physician and parent/guardian signatures are required on the Alabama State Department of Education School Medication Prescriber/Parent Authorization form.

The school personnel will administer sample medication provided from a physician only if it is in an original, unopened, sealed, properly labeled container and according to written directions from the physician.

School personnel will refuse to administer medication when there is any discrepancy (i.e., label different from instruction or contents, label is unclear, or label is torn). This medication **will not be given** until clarification is obtained.

The school personnel and parent/guardian must count all controlled drugs upon delivery and document the number of tablets or capsules delivered to the school.

Due to the possibility of side effects and allergic reaction, the parent/guardian shall give the first dose of a new medication or a change in dosage (increase or decrease) of current medication at home, with the exception of emergency medications (e.g., Epi Pen injection, Diastat).

### **Student's Responsibility**

Students must not deliver medications to the school.

Students must have a signed order/authorization from a licensed prescriber and signed parent/guardian permission to self-medicate and carry medications on their person (i.e., Epi Pen, asthma inhalers, insulin).

Students who have met the criteria to self-medicate will be able to identify and select the appropriate medication, know the frequency and purpose of the medication ordered, and follow the school's self-administration procedures (e.g., safety and security precautions, proper labeling).

Students will notify their teacher/nurse at the onset of any distress or allergic reaction.

### **Questions and Answers Regarding Medication**

**Q. Why should parents bring student's medication to school?**

A. Baldwin County School System does not want to place any child in a situation where they may be confronted for drugs. Some medications have a street value. When the parents bring the medication, this ensures no other child will tamper with the medication and decreases the potential for abuse.

**Q. Why can't my child keep his/her medication?**

A. To protect all children from taking medication belonging to another child, no child may carry their own medication at school, unless they have been authorized by the physician, parent, and nurse to self-medicate.

**Q. Why can't I write on my child's prescription bottle?**

A. Prescription bottles can get smeared and very difficult to read. It is never a good practice to write on a prescription bottle. This practice is also unsafe and may interfere or obstruct the ability to read the prescriber's original orders listed on the prescription bottle (i.e., student's name, prescriber's name, name of medication, strength, dosage, time interval, route, and date of drug's discontinuation when applicable).

**Q. Why can't the school provide and give medication for minor illness or pain?**

A. Board of Nursing specifically prohibits the nurse from stocking medication.

**Q. What is the policy on herbal medications and food supplements?**

A. Food supplements, natural substances and herbs are not without potential harm, including life-threatening conditions. Herbal products and dietary supplements have not been subject to the scrutiny of the Food and Drug administration (FDA) and in the United States, as in most countries, dosage and purity have not been regulated for these products. School personnel should not give any substance that could be construed as a drug or medication, including natural remedies, herbs, and nutritional supplements, without the explicit order of an authorized prescriber, parent authorization, verification that the product is safe to administer to children in the prescribed dosage, and reasonable information regarding therapeutic and untoward effects. (Schwab & Gelfman, 2001)

**Q. Can siblings share over-the-counter medications?**

A. Siblings can share over-the-counter medications; however, we require a parent/provider authorization form for each child. Certain medications cannot be shared when students are attending field trips.

**Q. What is the policy on products containing aspirin?**

A. Due to the increased incidence of Reyes' Syndrome in children, the school nurse will not give aspirin or products containing aspirin without a physician's order.

More information concerning medications at school can be found at [www.abn.state.al.us](http://www.abn.state.al.us)

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