

**TITLE: CARE OF STUDENTS WITH SEVERE OR LIFE-THREATENING
MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

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1.0 OBJECTIVE

To ensure the safety of students with severe or life threatening medical conditions in Ottawa-Carleton District School Board schools in compliance with Sabrina's Law, Ryan's Law and all other relevant legislation.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Anaphylaxis** means a severe, allergic reaction, usually to foods, insect bites, medications, latex products and, rarely, vigorous exercise that, if untreated, can lead to sudden death.
- 2.2 **Asthma** means an inflammatory condition of the bronchial airways which causes the normal function of the airways to become excessive and over-reactive and lead to airway obstruction, chest tightness, coughing and wheezing.
- 2.3 **Asthma inhaler (puffer)** means a hand-held portable device that delivers medication to the lungs. Available types include a dry powder tube inhaler, a powder disk inhaler and a single-dose powder disk inhaler.
- 2.4 **Autoinjector** means a medical device designed to deliver a single dose of a particular (typically life-saving) drug.
- 2.5 **Board** means the Board of Trustees of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.6 **Diabetes Mellitus** also known as Type 1 or Juvenile Diabetes means a condition which results from the inability of the pancreas to produce insulin. If left untreated or improperly managed, the high and low levels of blood glucose associated with diabetes can result in a variety of complications including death.
- 2.7 **District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.8 **Epilepsy** means a chronic neurological disorder which causes sudden bursts of electrical activity in the brain. This electrical activity produces seizures which vary from one person to another in frequency and form.

- 2.9 **Heart condition** means a condition, or group of conditions, affecting the structure and functions of the heart.
- 2.10 **In loco parentis** is a legal term, means in the place of a parent or with a parent's rights, duties and responsibilities.
- 2.11 **Pacemaker** means a heart device that overrides slow or abnormal heart beats, and ensures adequate function for activities of daily living. Without treatment, a slow heart beat can lead to weakness, confusion, dizziness, fainting, shortness of breath and death.
- 2.12 **Plan of Care** is/are document(s) that contain individualized information on a student with a severe or life-threatening condition(s) which informs the school about care requirements.
- 2.13 **Ryan's Law** requires all school boards in the province to develop and maintain policies and procedures to protect students who have asthma and sets the age of 16 as the age of consent.
- 2.14 **Sabrina's Law** ensures all school boards have policies or procedures in place to address anaphylaxis in schools.
- 2.15 **Severe or life-threatening conditions** include, but are not limited to, anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and heart condition(s).

3.0 POLICY

Guiding Principles

- 3.1 The Board supports students with severe or life-threatening medical conditions and makes every effort to ensure they are able to fully access school in a safe, accepting and healthy learning environment by:
- a) empowering students as confident and capable learners to reach their full potential for self-management of medical conditions;
 - b) ensuring that a process is in place to manage a Plan of Care for every student with a life-threatening medical condition;
 - c) working with community health partners, including Ottawa Public Health (OPH), Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) and other agencies, to promote awareness and safety for students;
 - d) treating each student with equity and dignity as provided under the law; and
 - e) protecting the confidentiality of students' medical records and information.

4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

- 4.1 Annually, principals shall communicate information with staff, parents and students about how students with life-threatening medical conditions are supported at school.

- 4.2 Every school principal shall ensure a Plan of Care is in place for every student with severe or life-threatening medical condition(s).
- 4.3 Each school shall develop a communications plan to ensure the effective dissemination of information about Plans of Care with parents, students and employees, as appropriate and authorized by the parents.

Reducing Risk - General

- 4.4 The District shall attempt to minimize and control allergens and/or triggers in the schools through the education of staff, students and parents/guardians and effective management of the physical space.

Reducing Risk - Anaphylaxis

- 4.5 Each school shall implement the OCDSB General Guidelines for Creating Safe and Healthy Schools for Anaphylactic Students in accordance with Sabrina's Law, 2005 and OCDSB Procedure PR.548.SCO in an effort to minimize potentially fatal allergic reactions.
- 4.6 Every reasonable attempt will be made to ensure that all students formally identified to the OCDSB by competent medical authority as being at severe life threatening anaphylactic or other risks, as a result of the ingestion of certain foods are:
 - a) supervised during all regular nutrition breaks by an adult who has received annual training in the following:
 - (i) anaphylactic allergies and their potential severity;
 - (ii) recognition of the symptoms of anaphylaxis;
 - (iii) administration of auto injector (and the need for a second injection);
 - (iv) recognition of the potential symptoms and/or warning signs of a student in medical distress;
 - (v) the post-incident review plan;
 - b) not provided by OCDSB staff, any food for which express prior parental/guardian permission has not been granted; and
 - c) included at regular nutrition breaks unless the parent/guardian advises otherwise.

Reducing Risk - Asthma

- 4.7 Each school shall develop and implement strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to known common asthma triggers in classrooms and common school areas.
- 4.8 Each school shall develop strategies based on the directives established in PR.548.SCO for students with asthma, and in accordance with Ryan's Law.

Reducing Risk - Diabetes

- 4.9 Each school shall implement the OCDSB Guidelines for Creating Safe and Healthy Schools for Students with Diabetes, and OCDSB Procedure PR.632.SCO in order to provide for the needs of students with diabetes.

Review and Training

- 4.10 Annually, principals shall review this policy and related guidelines and procedures, with the staff (including occasional teachers), the school council and the parents/guardians of students to ensure effective implementation strategies are in place.

- 4.11 The District shall annually provide anaphylaxis training to all school staff.
- 4.12 The District shall provide regular training on how to recognize asthma symptoms and manage asthma exacerbations for all employees and others who are in direct contact with students on a regular basis.

Administration of Medication

- 4.13 Recognizing that staff usually does not have medical training, the District will handle each situation individually in order to minimize risk in transportation, storage, and administration of medication.
- 4.14 The District requires staff to administer medication to students when it has been prescribed for use during school hours and approved school activities, as follows:
 - a) to administer oral medication provided a current consent form, signed by the student's physician, and by the parent or guardian for students under 18 years of age, or by the student if 18 years of age or over, is on file before any medication is administered by staff or taken by a student under staff supervision;
 - b) in an anaphylactic emergency, to administer an epinephrine auto-injector;
 - c) to administer asthma medication to a student or to supervise a student while he or she takes medication in response to an asthma exacerbation, if the school has the consent of the parent or guardian or pupil, as appropriate; and
 - d) to administer asthma medication in the event of a sudden unexpected or severe asthma exacerbation even without preauthorization.
- 4.15 In order to best support the possible emergency medical needs of a student with asthma, students will be allowed to carry their asthma inhalers/medication with them if they have their parent/guardian's permission to do so if they are under 16. Students over 16 are not required to have their parent/guardian's permission to carry their inhalers/medication with them.
- 4.16 In any emergency situation and in the absence of a signed consent form, staff shall proceed "in loco parentis" in administering prescribed medication in order to reduce risk to the student, in accordance with procedure PR.547.SCO Providing Emergency Medical Care for Students.
- 4.17 The District shall ensure resources are in place to support the safe storage and disposal of medication and medical supplies in schools, as required.
- 4.18 In the event that a student is deemed through medical evidence to be incapable of attending classes, arrangements will be made so that the student may continue studying through another appropriate means, as determined by the student if 18 years of age or older, or the parents/guardians, and representatives of the District.
- 4.19 The Director of Education/Secretary of the Board is authorized to issue such procedures, guidelines and other materials as may be necessary to implement this policy.

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Ontario Human Rights Code

Ryan's Law 2015 Government of Ontario

Sabrina's Law 2005 Government of Ontario

Ministry of Education and Training Memorandum No. 81: Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings

Ministry of Education and Training Memorandum No. 161: Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions (Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Diabetes, and/or Epilepsy)

Guidelines for the Care of Students Living with Diabetes at Schools, Canadian Diabetes Association, 2014

OCDSB General Guidelines for Creating Safe and Healthy Schools for Anaphylactic Students, 2013

OCDSB Guidelines for Creating Safe and Healthy Schools for Students with Diabetes

Ministry of Education training resources:

<http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/SafeHealthySchools/medical-conditions/Prevalent-Medical-Conditions.html>

Board Policy P.093.SCO: Confidential Communication between Students and Staff

Board Policy P.070.SES: Home Instruction

Board Procedure PR.547.SCO: Providing Emergency Medical Care for Students

Board Procedure PR.548.SCO: Care of Students with Severe, Life-threatening Medical Conditions

Board Procedure PR.608.SCO: Confidential Communication Between Students and Staff

Board Procedure PR.632.SCO: Diabetes Management in Schools