



Section L:

Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings

We value your feedback! Please click this [feedback link](#) to leave your comments on the Special Education Plan. All feedback must be received by February 28, 2027.

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the board's specialized health support services to the ministry and the public

Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings

The provision of health support services to students in school settings is governed by the Ministry of Education [Policy/Program Memorandum 81 \(The Provision of Health Support Services in Schools\)](#) and [Policy/Program Memorandum 161 Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions \(Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Diabetes, and/or Epilepsy in School\)](#). These policy documents outline the shared responsibility for the provision of health support services amongst the Ministries of Education, Health, and Children, Community and Social Services:

“Supporting students with health/medical conditions in schools is complex and a whole-school approach is needed where education and community partners, including health care professionals, have important roles to play in promoting student health and safety and in fostering and maintaining healthy and safe environments in which students can learn” (PPM 161).

The safety and well-being of all students is a shared responsibility of the Board, staff, schools, families, students, health care providers and third-party health care providers. Providing health, medical, and/or disability supports empowers students as confident and capable learners to reach their full potential for self-management of their health, medical conditions and/or disabilities.

The Board collaborates with parents to support a safe environment for their children while at school and during school-related activities. An Individual Plan of Care outlines the management of known conditions and is created for students who are at known risk



for specific medical emergencies and who require daily routine management that may occur at school. An Individual Plan of Care will be referenced in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), where applicable, and in accordance with page E13 of the Ministry of Education Policy and Resource Guide [Special Education in Ontario – Kindergarten to Grade 12](#).

Partnerships

The TDSB continues to partner with the Toronto Region Core Service Group, which includes Surrey Place Centre as the lead agency with overall responsibility for implementing the model, Community Living Toronto, Family Service Toronto, Youth Link, and Toronto Central Ontario Health at Home - School Health Support Services. Following extensive consultation, the Core Service Group developed the [MCCSS Guidelines](#).

Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings - Policy/Program Memorandum No. 81 (PPM 81)

The Ontario Ministry of Education's [Policy/Program Memorandum No. 81: Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings](#) addresses the delivery of services that extend beyond educational services and are not included in the normal preventive health programs already provided by boards of health to students within the school context. Responsibility for the direct provision of these services at the local level is shared by school boards, Ontario Health at Home (OHaH) - School Health Support Services Program of the Ministry of Health, and agencies operating under the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

TDSB establishes its policies for the provision of these support services under [PO92 Student Health Support](#), and the corresponding procedures, including [PR536 Medication](#), [PR563 Anaphylaxis](#), [PR 607 Diabetes Management](#) and [PR714 Asthma Management](#). For more information, please see [PPM 161 Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions \(anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and/or epilepsy\) in Schools](#). These policies define administrative procedures, personnel roles, and routine safeguards. The TDSB works in collaboration with local boards of health and local Home Care Program administrators.

The procedures for the administration of medication provide:

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1. That such procedures be applied only to those services, requested by the parents and prescribed by a physician and/or nurse practitioner, which must be provided during school hours
 2. That a request for the service and the authorization to provide such service be made in writing through [Form 536A – Administration of Prescribed Medication](#) by the parents and the physician, specifying the name of medication, the medical condition, the method of administration including the dosage and time of administration, the frequency, the dates for which the authorization applies, the impact of a missed dose, and the possible side effects, if any
 3. That the storage and safekeeping requirements for any labelled medication be stated
 4. That a record of administration be maintained which includes the student's name, date of birth, school name, date, name of medication, time of provision, dosage given, name of person designated to administer medication, special instructions for administering medication, and any instructions/comments regarding administration
 5. That the telephone numbers of the parents and physician be readily accessible in the school
 6. That the medication be administered in a manner which allows for sensitivity and privacy, and which encourages the student to take an appropriate level of responsibility for their medication

School boards are responsible for the administration of medication where such medication has been prescribed for use during school hours and where students require assistance with its administration. For students with disabilities, school boards provide such services as lifting and positioning, assistance with mobility, feeding and toileting, general maintenance exercises, and strategies to support access to programming. Boards are also responsible for necessary speech remediation, correction, and rehabilitation programs.

At the request of a school board, the OHaH, School Health Support Services Program of the Ministry of Health, is responsible for assessing student needs, and for providing such services as injection of medication, sterile intermittent catheterization, manual expression of the bladder, stoma care, postural drainage, deep tracheal suctioning, and tube feeding. Schools are responsible for submitting referrals, with signatures from parent(s), on an annual basis to OHaH where nursing supports are required - even if the services are simply being renewed.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is responsible for intensive clinical occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech pathology treatment. The



Ministry may also assist school boards with the training and direction of school board staff when such training is not available through existing internal TDSB staff. In addition, the Ministry is responsible for overseeing the provision of health support services in children's residential care and treatment facilities.

Clarification of PPM 81 Re: Catheterization and Suctioning

Following the implementation of [PPM 81, Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings](#), a Memorandum to Regional Directors of Education differentiated between procedures that may be performed by the student, parents, or other trained personnel, and procedures requiring the services of a qualified healthcare professional. The following points of clarification were made in the Memorandum:

- Clean intermittent catheterization and shallow surface suctioning, where the student's medical condition is stable and predictable, are recognized as part of a student's routine toileting and hygiene needs will be the responsibility of the school board through delegation and training from OHaH and family, as appropriate
- School board administrators are encouraged to meet with the local OHaH Program Care Coordinators to review, and where necessary, make any appropriate modification to current practices - at minimum, annually

In response to PPM 81 and to provide further clarity around responsibilities, TDSB Operational Procedure [PR 580 – Clean Intermittent Catheterization and Suctioning, Lifting, Positioning, Physical Management and Activities of Daily Living](#) was established. The current TDSB Model for Provision of Specialized Health Support Services follows in the chart.

Catheterization

Indwelling care of an indwelling catheter is usually performed by the parents and is not required in the school setting.

School board personnel should make arrangements with parents with respect to emergency needs.

Suctioning

Where a student is admitted to a treatment program operated and/or funded by the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Community and Social Services and attends an educational program offered by the TDSB in the treatment facility, it is expected that the present policies under PPM 81 will continue.

Model for Provision of Specialized Health Support Services

Support Service	Administered by	Provided by	Training and Direction	Consultation
Oral Medication	Pupil as authorized	Pupil	Attending Physician	Local Board of Health
	Parents as authorized	Parents	Attending Physician	Local Board of Health
	Aide or other personnel	School Board	School Board/ Physician/ Parent	Local Board of Health
Injection of Medication	Pupil as authorized	Pupil	Attending Physician	Local Board of Health
	Parents	Parents	Attending Physician	Local Board of Health
	Health Professional	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health	School Board
Catheterization (sterile intermittent and non-routine), Manual expression of bladder/ stoma, drainage/ suctioning, Tube feeding	Health Professional	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health	School Board
Lifting and Positioning, Assistance with Mobility, Feeding, Toileting	Aide or other personnel	School Board	School Board and/or Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health
Therapies: Physiotherapy/	Qualified therapist	Ministry of Children,	Ministry of Children,	Ministry of Health and/or



Support Service	Administered by	Provided by	Training and Direction	Consultation
Occupational: Intensive clinical (treatment)		Community, and Social Services	Community and Social Services	Children, Community, and Social Services
General maintenance exercises	Aide	School Board	School Board	School Board and/or Ministry of Health
Speech pathology (treatment of moderate - severe articulation, stuttering and Voice disorders)	Speech Pathologists	Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services	School Board and/or Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	School Board and/or Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
All Services in Children's Residential Care/ Treatment Facilities	Aides/Health Professional	Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	Ministry of Health

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