

Managing health care needs in preschool guidelines

Preschool specific policy

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Acronyms	Full form
NT	Northern Territory
NQF	National Quality Framework
QECNT	Quality Education and Care Northern Territory

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1. Introduction

Staff must ensure that children are kept safe and healthy at all times while attending preschool and follow the advice provided by parents and medical practitioners in relation to a child's health care needs.

The department's [Health of students policy and supporting guidelines and procedures](#)¹ are designed to assist schools in meeting the health care needs of students across all year levels.

These Managing medical conditions in preschool guidelines are designed to support preschools to adhere to the department's Health of Students Policy and supporting guidelines and procedures¹, and maintain regulatory compliance with the [National Law](#)² and [National Regulations](#)³. The relevant legislative requirements are outlined under section 7.1 of these guidelines.

These guidelines aim to help preschools establish practices to manage children's health care needs and minimise risk.

Preschools do not need to develop their own medical conditions policy.

2. Terminology

Department of Education (department) policy, guidelines and procedures often use different terminology to that used in the National Regulations³. For example: the National Regulations³ refer to a medical management plan for a child, which is the same as the [Student health care plan](#)⁴ referred to in department policy and [Preschool health care plan](#)⁵ referred to in these guidelines.

When using department documents it is important to remember that when the intent is the same as the National Law² and National Regulations³, such terms are interchangeable.

3. Definitions

Approved provider is a person or legal entity who holds a provider approval under the [National Quality Framework](#)⁶ (NQF). Provider approval is a prerequisite for operating an approved education and care service. The Department is the approved provider of all Northern Territory (NT) Government preschools. Responsibility for this role has been delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Directors School Improvement and Leadership.

Communications plan ensures effective and ongoing communication between parents, management and staff in relation to managing the health care needs of a child.

Health care team is the team that drafts and manages the preschool health care plan. The team must include the Principal (or delegate) and parent, and may include: medical practitioner, Health Promoting School Nurse, First Aid Officer, teacher, or member from a specialised agency representing a specific condition such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or anaphylaxis. It is recommended that the preschool teacher in charge (or other suitable preschool staff member) form part of the health care team in the development of a preschool health care plan.

¹ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-of-students>

² <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EDUCATION-AND-CARE-SERVICES-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>

³ <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

⁴ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-of-students>

⁵ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/preschool-specific-policy>

⁶ <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework>

National Quality Framework⁶ is a unified national regulatory system agreed to by all Australian governments, through the Council of Australian Governments, to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in early childhood education and care services, including preschools.

Nominated supervisor is a person nominated by the approved provider responsible for the day-to-day management of an education and care service. In a NT Government preschool, this is the school principal.

Preschool health care plan ensures that staff are aware of how to manage a child's medical condition, health care need or allergy and are able to respond to the emergence of any symptoms.

Prescribed matters are regulatory requirements outlined in the National Law² and National Regulations³.

Quality Education and Care NT (QECNT) is the regulatory authority for early childhood education and care in the Northern Territory.

Responsible person in day-to-day charge is a person who is delegated by the approved provider or nominated supervisor and has accepted this responsibility in writing - see [Responsible person in preschools procedure](#)⁵. They must meet the following minimum requirements to be appointed to the role:

- must be 18 years of age or older
- have adequate knowledge and understanding of the provision of education and care to children
- have a history of compliance with relevant laws outlined under regulation 117B(2)(a) of the National Regulations³
- have an ability to effectively supervise and manage an education and care service.

Risk minimisation plan is developed for each child with a medical condition, health care need or allergy to identify risks and establish strategies to address those risks. The risk minimisation plan is incorporated into the [Preschool health care plan template](#)⁵.

Serious incidents are defined in regulation 12 of the National Regulations³ and includes the following:

- the death of a child
 - while being educated and cared for by an education and care service, or
 - following an incident while being educated and cared for by a service
- any incident involving serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child while being educated and cared for by an education and care service
 - which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner, or
 - for which the child attended, or should have reasonably attended, a hospital
- any incident where the attendance of emergency services at the education and care service premises was sought, or should have reasonably been sought.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Early Childhood Education and Care is responsible:

- for reviewing the department's policies and procedures relating to early childhood education and care to ensure the ongoing compliance of preschools with the National Law² and National Regulations³. The division incorporates the NT regulatory authority, QECNT.

Senior Directors, School Improvement and Leadership are responsible:

- for ensuring principals adhere to the requirements of departmental policies as outlined in these guidelines.

Principals hold the responsibilities of the nominated supervisor and are therefore responsible for:

- ensuring their preschool operates in accordance with the National Law², National Regulations³ and departmental policies as outlined in these guidelines.
- ensuring that a responsible person in day-to-day charge is present at the preschool at all times, usually the preschool teacher, if that educator agrees to this in writing.

Preschool teachers and educators are responsible for:

- providing a preschool program in accordance with the requirements of the National Law² and National Regulations³
- ensuring that children with a medical condition, health care need or allergy have an active preschool health care plan⁵ that is communicated and implemented.

Parents are responsible for:

- informing the preschool that their child has a medical condition, health care need or allergy
- providing relevant medical documentation, equipment and medication
- providing input into the preschool health care plan
- updating the preschool in the event of changed circumstances.

Health care team is responsible for

- developing and managing each preschool health care plan they have been assigned to.

5. Guidelines

The National Regulations³ set out the requirements that a preschool must have in place to manage medical conditions, health care needs and allergies of attending children. The following information provides guidance to preschools on how to implement the department's Health of students policy and supporting guidelines and procedures¹ and maintain compliance with regulatory requirements.

5.1. Preschool health care needs communications plan

Preschools must have a communications plan, which meets all of the prescribed matters under the National Regulations³. The Preschool health care needs communications plan⁵ has been developed to assist preschools in meeting this requirement.

The communication plan will detail responsibilities of the school and preschool staff, volunteers and parents in relation to caring for children with a medical condition, health care need or allergy. This includes how communication will occur to ensure that:

- Before a child starts at the preschool, or when parents notify that their child has a medical condition, health care need or allergy, parents will be provided with:
 - the Health of students policy¹
 - Managing health care needs in preschool guidelines⁵

- informed that they must develop a Preschool health care plan⁵ for their child with the school health care team.
- Parents of a child who requires medication prescribed by a medical practitioner, are made aware that their child cannot attend preschool without their medication.
- Parents are informed of how they can communicate any changes to the health care needs of their child.
- All preschool and school staff, volunteers and parents are provided with information about the requirements of these guidelines and the department's Health of students policy¹.
- All preschool and school staff and volunteers in the preschool:
 - are able to identify a child with a medical condition
 - know where the child's health care plan⁵ and medication are located
 - are aware of their privacy obligations and only use children's health care information for the purpose of the health, safety and wellbeing of the child
 - know who the First Aid Officer is and how to contact them.
- All parents are to be notified of any known allergens that pose a risk to a child at the preschool and/or school and the strategies in place for minimising the risk.

Section B of the preschool health care plan⁵ can be used to detail any specific communication requirements for the child and their family.

5.2. Health care plan

A completed health care plan⁵ is required for each child with a medical condition, health care need or allergy, before the child commences at the preschool, or when the child's needs become known.

The health care team must seek information from the parents, and if relevant other persons, about the child's specific health care needs and develop a preschool health care plan⁵ ensuring the child's needs are clearly understood and there is agreement on how to manage:

- risks associated with the child's medical condition, health care need or allergy (section 5.3 risk minimisation plan refers)
- an event or symptoms of the condition arising
- communications regarding the child's ongoing needs.

A copy of the child's preschool health care plan is to be:

- stored on the student file
- given to the parent
- noted in the Student Administration Management System (SAMS)
- kept on the preschool premises in a location that maintains the confidentiality of the information, however is easily accessible by staff responsible for the child's education and care.

Parents are responsible for informing the preschool of any changes to their child's health care needs and should be regularly reminded to do so, as per the Preschool health care needs communications plan⁵.

The Preschool health care plan template⁵ has been developed to meet all the prescribed matters under the National Regulations³ and is to be used for all preschool children requiring a plan.

5.3. Risk minimisation plan

The risk minimisation plan for each child is included in the Preschool health care plan template⁵ and must be completed.

The preschool must develop a risk minimisation plan for each child with a medical condition, health care need or allergy, in consultation with the parents of the child, outlining:

- potential risks to the child's health and wellbeing
- actions and strategies that are in place to reduce and prepare for identified risks
- who is responsible for implementing each action and strategy.

The National Regulations³ requires the preschool to consult with parents on how to minimise risks to their child to ensure that:

- the child's medical condition, specific health care need or allergy is assessed and minimised
- if relevant, practices and procedures are put in place relation to safe handling, preparation, consumption and service of food are developed and implemented
- if relevant, practices and procedures are in place to ensure that other parents are notified of any known allergens that pose a risk to a child and strategies for minimising the risk
- all staff and volunteers can identify the child, access the child's health care plan and the location of the child's medication
- practices are in place to ensure the child does not attend the preschool without prescribed medication.

5.4. Medication record and notification requirements

5.4.1. Medication record

As prescribed under regulation 92 of the National Regulations³, the preschool must ensure it records when medication is administered to a child. To ensure preschools meets all the prescribed requirements, it is recommended they use the template medication record located on the [Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/)⁷ website.

Medication records must be stored in a confidential and safe location that can be accessed if required, for a period of three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the preschool. The exception to this is, if the record relates to an incident, illness, injury or trauma suffered by a child either while being educated and cared for by the preschool or following an incident at the preschool, in which case the record must be kept until the child is aged 25 years.

5.4.2. Notification requirements

In the event that a child being educated and cared for by the preschool has a serious incident, the preschool must notify QECNT within 24 hours or as soon as the incident becomes known. The preschool

⁷ <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

must also notify the child's parent as as soon as practicable after the incident as required by regulation 176 of the National Regulations³.

The preschool must complete the department's online [Work Health and Safety \(WHS\) Incident Report Form](#)⁸ and record that the above notifications have been made. The completed incident form must be printed and placed on the student's file so that it is readily accessible for inspection by a QECNT Authorised Officer upon request.

Further information regarding incidents, illness, injury or trauma suffered by a child is outlined under the department's [Recording and reporting student injuries guidelines and procedures](#)⁹, including the department's notification requirements in accordance with the [Work Health and Safety \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act 2011 \(NT\)](#)¹⁰.

6. Supporting documents

- [Preschool health care needs communications plan template](#)⁵
- [Preschool health care plan template](#)⁵

7. Related legislation, policy and procedures

7.1. Legislation

Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (NT)² is the legislation that adopts the National Law in the NT.

[The Schedule to the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)¹¹ sets out the National Law.

- Section 175 Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents

Education and Care Services National Regulations³

- Regulation 12 Serious incidents
- Regulation 85 Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
- Regulation 86 Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
- Regulation 87 Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
- Regulation 90 Medical conditions policy
- Regulation 91 Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
- Regulation 92 Medication record
- Regulation 93 Administration of medication
- Regulation 162 Health information to be kept in enrolment record

⁸ <http://ed.ntschoools.net/audit/team/incidents/SitePages/onlineform.aspx>

⁹ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/recording-and-reporting-student-injuries>

¹⁰ <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/WORK-HEALTH-AND-SAFETY-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>

¹¹ <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/012>

- Regulation 168 (2)(d) policies and procedures dealing with medical conditions in children
- Regulation 176 Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
- Regulation 181 Confidentiality of records to be kept by approved provider
- Regulation 183 Storage of records and other documents

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (NT)¹⁰

7.2. Department of Education policy, guidelines and procedures

Go to the department's [School policies website](#)¹² to access the following policies:

- Health of students policy including Administration of Medications¹
- Preschool specific policy⁵
- [Recording and reporting of student injuries procedure and guidelines](#)¹³

7.3. National Quality Standard

[Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety](#)¹⁴ Element 2.1.2. Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented

¹² <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies>

¹³ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/recording-and-reporting-student-injuries>

¹⁴ <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-2-childrens-health-and-safety>