

## Prescribing - Nurseries, schools and OTC Medications

### **Non-prescription (OTC) medication does not need a GP signature/authorisation in order for the school/nursery/ childminder to give it.**

It has been brought to the attention of the Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups (BHR CCGs) Area Prescribing sub-Committees (APC) that the revised 'The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework', which governs the standards of institutions looking after and educating children, includes a paragraph under specific legal requirements - medicines, that states: 'Medicines should only be taken to a setting when this is essential and settings should only accept medicines that have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist.' We are aware that in some areas this is resulting in parents making unnecessary appointments to seek a prescription for an OTC medicine, just so it can be taken in nurseries or schools.

BHR CCGs APC having received endorsement from the Barking & Havering Local Medical Committee (LMC) and Londonwide (Redbridge) LMC wishes to remind GPs that the MHRA licenses medicines and classifies them when appropriate as OTC (P or GSL). This is to enable access to those medicines without recourse to a GP. It is appropriate for OTC medicines to be given by parents, as they consider necessary, in the home or nursery environment. It is a misuse of GP time to take up an appointment just to acquire a prescription for a medicine, wholly to satisfy the needs of a nursery/school. The Department of Children, Schools and Families have been requested to make an amendment to this paragraph in the Statutory Framework to stay consistent with current national standards for day care and childminding, whereby non-prescription medication can be administered where there is parents' prior written consent. Should any practice find that this continues to be a problem in their area a template letter (Appendix 1) has been produced which can be sent to the Nursery/School.

The [Statutory Framework for the EYFS \(Early Years Foundation Stage\)](#) outlines the policy for **administering medicines to children in nurseries/preschools 0-5 years**

*“The provider must promote the good health of children attending the setting. They must have a procedure, discussed with parents and/or carers, for responding to children who are ill or infectious, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action if children are ill.*

*Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, for administering medicines. It must include systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medicines, and for keeping this information up-to-date.*

*Training must be provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines must not usually be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist (medicines containing aspirin should only be given if prescribed by a doctor).*

*Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription) must only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. Providers must keep a written record each time a medicine is administered to a child, and inform the child's parents and/or carers on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable".*

**Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England:** [Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions - December 2015](#)

- *"No child under 16 should be given prescription or non-prescription medicines without their parent's written consent – except in exceptional circumstances where the medicine has been prescribed to the child without the knowledge of the parents. In such cases, every effort should be made to encourage the child or young person to involve their parents while respecting their right to confidentiality. Schools should set out the circumstances in which non-prescription medicines may be administered*
- *A child under 16 should never be given medicine containing aspirin unless prescribed by a doctor. Medication, e.g. for pain relief, should never be administered without first checking maximum dosages and when the previous dose was taken. Parents should be informed".*

This website is also a useful resource: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

## ***Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups***

### Appendix 1

With acknowledgement to Wessex Local Medical Committee

Becketts House  
2-14 Ilford Hill  
Ilford  
Essex  
IG1 2QX  
Tel 0203.182 3133

Ref.GK/DB/35/2017

Dear Head Teacher,

### **Re: Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medicines for Children**

I understand that the parents of ..... have recently been asked by your school to provide a prescription for over the counter medication as you will not administer such medication unless they are prescribed by a GP. The GP, Dr ..... is unable to oblige with this request.

GPs would not normally prescribe simple OTC medications for any patient, including children, and a doctor's prescription should not therefore be required before administering such medicines to a child.

MHRA licenses all medicines and classifies them as OTC when it considers it safe and appropriate that they may be used without a prescription.

It is appropriate therefore for OTC medicines to be given, or authorised, by parents when they consider it necessary. This may be in a home or nursery or school environment.

Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups (BHR CCGs) Area Prescribing sub-Committees (APC) would therefore consider it a misuse of GP time to provide an appointment for a child with the sole purpose of acquiring a prescription for an OTC medicine, to satisfy the ruling of a nursery or school.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – effective April 2017 identifies current national standards for day care and childminding from birth to five, whereby non-prescription medication can be administered if the parent has given prior written consent for the administration of any medication.

The **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017** may be accessed at:

[http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/EYFS\\_STATUTORY\\_FRAMEWORK\\_2017.pdf](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf)

For ease of reference it states (page 27):

Prescription medicines must not be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist (medicines containing aspirin should only be given if prescribed by a doctor).

Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription) must only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. Providers must keep a written record each time a medicine is administered to a child, and inform the child's parents and/or carers on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

The **Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions - December 2015** statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools & proprietors of academies in England may be accessed at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/484418/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/484418/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf)

It states (page 20):

*No child under 16 should be given prescription or non-prescription medicines without their parent's written consent – except in exceptional circumstances where the medicine has been prescribed to the child without the knowledge of the parents. In such cases, every effort should be made to encourage the child or young person to involve their parents while respecting their right to confidentiality. Schools should set out the circumstances in which non-prescription medicines may be administered*

*A child under 16 should never be given medicine containing aspirin unless prescribed by a doctor. Medication, e.g. for pain relief, should never be administered without first checking maximum dosages and when the previous dose was taken. Parents should be informed*

I hope this clarifies the situation with regard to the unnecessary request for a doctor's prescription for OTC (ie non prescription) medicines.

Yours faithfully,

*Gurkirit Kalkat*

Dr G Kalkat  
Chair, Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups Area  
Prescribing sub-Committees

Chief Officer: Conor Burke  
Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups

Chairs:  
Dr Waseem Mohi, Barking and Dagenham Clinical Commissioning Group  
Dr Atul Aggarwal, Havering Clinical Commissioning Group  
Dr Anil Mehta, Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group

