



## POSITION STATEMENT

### Medication Administration in the School Setting

#### **History:**

The safe and effective use of medications for the treatment of illness and disability has enabled many children to attend school. Medications are being administered by school staff as necessary during the school day. The administration of medications to students at school has increased dramatically over the last few years.

#### **Description of Issue:**

Major issues confronting the school nurse regarding the administration of medications include:

- Safe administration of the medications
- Adherence to safe nursing practice, the state nurse practice act, and state laws and regulations
- Ongoing monitoring of therapeutic benefits and side effects of the medications
- Appropriate communication with the student, family, school staff, and health care providers
- Proper documentation
- Wide-spread emergence of “natural” and homeopathic remedies for self-limiting conditions.

#### **Rationale:**

Many students have illnesses or disabilities that can be cured or controlled with medication. It is assumed that medication be administered during the school day only when the interval between doses requires administration in school or the medication is a “when necessary” order. The school nurse, because of educational background and knowledge, is uniquely qualified to monitor and administer medication. In the state of Washington the administration of oral medications may be delegated to unlicensed school staff when they have been properly trained by and are supervised by a licensed professional nurse. While it is recognized that many families have chosen natural and homeopathic remedies over traditional treatment, the school nurse should require that the use of these remedies follow all school policies for medication administration in schools.

**Conclusion:**

It is the position of SNOW that medications in the school setting be administered safely and effectively under the following guidelines:

1. Adherence to school policies, school nurse standards of practice, the state nurse practice act and state laws.
2. The prescribed or over-the-counter (OTC) medication is properly labeled and be contained in the original container.
3. Information on the container must include the name of the medication, student name, dosage, route of administration, and how often the medication is to be given.
4. Written orders for the administration of prescribed and/or OTC medications must be from the licensed health care provider must be present at the school.
5. The parent/guardian must request in writing that the medication be given at school.
6. The school nurse, based on nursing assessment, determines the medication should be given at school.
7. The administration of medication in no way violates nursing standards or standing orders.
8. The school nurse is aware of and has access to current reliable information regarding the safe use of the medication including effects and toxicity, possible drug interactions, and expected outcomes.
9. Medications are stored in a locked cabinet.
10. Procedures should be in place for receiving, administration, and accountability for all medications that are regulated by the Federal Narcotics Act.

School nurses may monitor the self-administration of certain medication (i.e. insulin, epinephrine, inhalers). Written direction for student self-administration of medications must be obtained from the licensed health care provider and written permission obtained from the parent/guardian. Guidelines must be developed for evaluation and monitoring by the school nurse.

Adopted: March 2002