Government of **Western Australia**
Child and Adolescent Health Service

Community Health Nursing in Primary Schools

Who are community health nurses in schools?

Community health nurses in schools play a vital role in linking the important areas of education and health. Often referred to as school health nurses, they are registered nurses employed by the Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS).

School health nurses work together with the Department of Education, parents, care givers, schools and other organisations to support and promote the health and wellbeing of students from Kindy all the way through to Year 12.

What does a school health nurse do?

School health nurses (Primary School – for children in Kindy to Year 6).

School health nurses in primary schools are based at Child and Adolescent Community Health (CACH) locations, and visit local schools.

School health nurses offer a free health check (School Entry Health Assessment) for all children in the year that they start school, helping them begin their educational journey healthy, safe and happy. Once enrolled, your child's school will give you a School Entry Health Assessment form together with information about the health check.

School health nurses:

- deliver the School Entry Health Assessment with the aim of identifying any health and/or developmental issues. This includes:
  - checking your child's vision, hearing, teeth, growth, general health and development
  - providing feedback and support to families and schools after assessment, including advice and information on referrals
  - connecting families and schools with services in the community
- promote parenting programs and transition to secondary school information
- helping with health care plans for students with identified or chronic health needs.

Learn more about Starting School and the School Entry Health Assessment at cahs.health.wa.gov.au.

Working with schools

At the request of teachers, and if time allows, a school health nurse may provide advice and support for some areas of curriculum delivery. However, the teacher is responsible for session planning and overall content and will always be present in the classroom when the nurse is involved.

Principals are responsible for development of first aid procedures including emergency responses. A school health nurse can assist within a range of skills, knowledge and availability.

When to see a school health nurse?

The school health nurse is available to talk to about anything and supports children, staff, parents and caregivers across a wide range of physical and mental health issues and concerns including:

- mental health and wellbeing issues (stress, anxiety and depression)
- physical health (ongoing illness, sleeping and eating issues, physical activity, body changes)
- friendships and families (bullying, fitting in, feeling alone).

In upper Primary School/transitioning to Secondary School:

- relationships (respectful relationships, assertive communication, sexual health, LGBTQIA+ support)
- drinking, smoking, vaping and other drug use (influencing pressure, risk taking).

Learn more about School Health Nursing Services in Primary School at cahs.health.wa.gov.au.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Like all health professionals, school health nurses keep information confidential (private). They generally will not share information without the student's consent (permission). However, school health nurses have a responsibility to report concerns including if a young person is:

- thinking about hurting themself
- someone is hurting them
- they want to hurt someone else.

In special cases, such as where a young person is living with a condition that impacts on their capacity to consent, the nurse needs consent from the young person's legal guardian (usually a parent) to share information.

Aboriginal Health Team

The Aboriginal Health Team (AHT) provides services to Aboriginal families with children from birth to 5 years, across the metropolitan area.

If you have a child in Kindy or Pre-primary, they can assist you with additional support through services specifically designed for Aboriginal families. These services focus on supporting healthy growth and development in children.

The AHTs have a dedicated Ear Health Team that work with school health nurses to offer targeted ear screening to Aboriginal children in primary schools. Children who need further assessment can be seen by an Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) doctor.

Refugee Health Team

The Refugee Health Team supports newly arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants to connect with community and specialist health care services. They provide services across the Perth metropolitan area.

The team of nurses help families to identify health concerns and refers them to other health services for continuing care. Find out more about the Refugee Health Team at cahs.health.wa.gov.au.

Language Services

School health nurses can use interpreters and/or translators to share information in preferred languages when needed. This may include:

- organising in-language or Auslan interpreters for over the phone, in-person or online appointments
- resources to support parents and carers understand different health topics.

Kids Health Matters provides trusted advice on common child and adolescent health concerns from leading WA child health experts.

Find out more at cahs.health.wa.gov.au/ChildHealthResources or scan the QR code.

Bedwetting Program

CACH's Bedwetting Program (also known as Nocturnal Enuresis), is a child-centred program delivered by a team of nurses across the Perth metropolitan area. Your child needs to be referred by your family doctor or other appropriate medical practitioner.

The program is offered to all children and adolescents who meet the following criteria:

- aged 5½ to 18 years
- adequate family/carer support to engage with the program
- daytime urine and bowel continence (control)
- no ongoing issues relating to constipation or other comorbidities (medical conditions)
- a bedwetting pattern of more than twice weekly

Find out more about the Bedwetting Program at cahs.health.wa.gov.au.

How to contact a school health nurse

You can contact your child's school health nurse through their school at any time of the year, via the school office. If your child has moved schools, please ask the school (or school health nurse) to contact your previous school health nurse if your child has any ongoing health or developmental concerns.

More information on school health nurses

Visit School Health at cahs.health.wa.gov.au.

Urgent advice

CAMHS Crisis Connect 1800 048 636
www.cahs.health.wa.gov.au/CAMHSCrisisConnect
Free 24/7 urgent mental health support, advice and assessment for children and young people.

Kids Helpline 1800 551 800
www.kidshelpline.com.au
Free confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.

Health Direct 1800 022 222
www.healthdirect.gov.au
Free 24/7 health advice.

Raising Children Network
www.raisingchildren.net.au
Australian parenting advice website.

Ngala Parenting Line | Ngala (08) 9368 9368
www.ngala.com.au/parenting-line
Free support service for WA parents and caregivers of children aged 0 to 18.

Documents can be made available in alternative formats on request for people with a disability. Speak with your School Health Nurse to access these.
This publication is provided for general education and information purposes. Contact a qualified healthcare professional for any medical advice needed.
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