

Kirkdale House
7 Kirkdale Road
London E11 1HP

Tel: 020 3688 2604
020 3688 2628

Mr David Kilgallon
Director of Learning and Systems Leadership
London Borough of Waltham Forest

By email only
13 July 2017

Dear Mr Kilgallon,

RE: Over The Counter Medicines (OTC) position statement for schools

The management of OTC medicines in schools has been raised by colleagues in North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) to our Medicines Optimisation Committee. OTC medicines are medicines that can be bought without the need of a prescription from a GP. These medicines will be in packages that are clearly labelled with the name of the medication, dose and instructions on how to take the medication.

Generally parents/carers are happy to buy these medicines for their child to use when in school. Recently many parents have been asked to only supply medicines for use in the school if it is labelled with the child's name. The only way this can be done for an OTC medication is by a GP providing a prescription, which would then be dispensed by a community pharmacy, who would label the item. GPs do not generally prescribe OTCs and if they are asked to this will result in an increase in the workload for our local GPs which is not sustainable.

Nurses working in schools (particularly special schools) advising on or administering OTC medication have requested a position statement on what is considered best practice. NELFT have proposed the following:

1. Schools should have their own medicines policy, incorporating guidance on the management of OTC medication.
2. Parents should hand in their child's OTC medicine in the original pack to the school. The OTC package is clearly labelled with the name of the medication, dose and instructions on how to take the medication.

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3. This OTC medicine could then be labelled with the:
 - child's name
 - date of receipt in school
 - initials of responsible person receiving and checking the expiry date of the medication in the school
4. A consent letter would need to be obtained from the parent(s), stating that they are happy for the school to administer the named medicine - regular or 'prn' (when necessary).
5. Where the medicine is to be given 'prn', the school must contact the parent(s) to establish what dose was last given to the child (e.g. paracetamol) and then communicate back any doses given in school.


This position was accepted by the CCG Medicines Optimisation Committee in May 2017, with a recommendation that this was shared with the Local Education Authority for implementation in schools across the borough. By adopting this position, schools will be clear how to manage OTC medicines and parents will be assured that their children will receive the medication as intended. It should be noted that this position statement does not apply to medicines that are prescribed by a GP for an individual child. In this case, the medication will be labelled by the community pharmacist in accordance with the prescription written by the GP.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely



Terry Huff
Chief Officer
Waltham Forest CCG



Dr Ravi Gupta
GP Clinical Director
Waltham Forest CCG