

Dated:

Dear Head Teacher

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medicines for Children

Somerset LMC exists by statute to advise and support GPs. 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 it is prescribed by a GP. The GP, Dr is unable to oblige with this request.

GPs do not normally prescribe OTC medications for any patient, including children, and a doctor's prescription is not required before administering such medicines to a child. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency 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 at home or at nursery or school. Somerset LMC considers an appointment for a child with the sole purpose of acquiring a prescription for an OTC medicine to satisfy a nursery or school to be a misuse of GP time.

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 – 3rd April 2017** may be accessed at:

http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf

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

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 about this unnecessary request for a prescription for an OTC medicine.

Yours faithfully

Dr Barry Moyse
Medical Director

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