



**Wiltshire Safeguarding
Children Board**

Minimum Expectations for Privately Employed School Nurses

Local Authority and Independent Schools and Academies are increasingly employing their own school nurses to carry out traditional functions and in a number of cases additional responsibilities i.e. child protection and pastoral roles.

In recent years Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board has commissioned or contributed to a number of Serious Case Reviews where privately employed school nurses have featured. Within these SCR's it has become evident that the role and responsibilities of privately employed school nurses has been varied and confused, not least by other agencies who have not necessarily been aware that the school nurse was privately employed or the different roles and responsibilities they have been assigned. Schools have also not always been clear on the registration, qualification and training requirements when they employ school nurses.

Equally expectations regarding communication between privately employed school nurses and those employed within community health and other health professionals i.e. GP's have not been clear, which has meant that safeguarding information has not been shared and children have therefore been left without appropriate service or protection.

Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board has set out the roles, responsibilities and minimum requirements for school nurses below to assist schools in considering what needs to be in place where they are employing school nurses privately. If you do not directly employ a school nurse your school will be supported by the Community Health School Nurses, whose roles, qualifications and registration requirements are outlined below, for information.

Community Health School Nurses

School nurses working within community health services are qualified nurses with specialist training for children, young people and families. The school nursing team consists of Specialist Community Public Health Practitioners (who have completed public health nursing training at degree or masters level in addition to their core nursing training), school nurses, and school health assistants and all schools have a named school nurse and attached team.

They work with local communities, families and individual children and communicate very closely with other health services to co-ordinate care and support for all young people. They focus on spotting signs of difficulties early and intervening to make sure young people get the best possible start in life.

School nurses lead on the Healthy Child Programme (5-19) and support school-aged children to achieve the best possible health outcomes.

Community Health School nurses work with all young people in all schools across Wiltshire. Each school will have a school nurse team working with them, with a lead school nurse, and all schools have the contact details of their team. They work term time only although there is cover during holidays for safeguarding and child protection conferences.

They run drop-in sessions in all secondary schools and individual schools have the details of how these sessions work there.

Registration Requirements

All health professionals have to be registered with the appropriate professional council - for nurses this is the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). These professional councils set regulatory standards on conduct, performance and ethics.

Nurses must:

- Make the care of people their first concern, treating them as individuals and respecting their dignity.
- Work with others to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of those in their care, their families and carers, and the wider community
- Provide a high standard of practice and care at all times
- Be open and honest, act with integrity and uphold the reputation of the profession.
- Keep clear and accurate records,
- Keep skills and knowledge up to date,
- Work with others to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of those in their care
- Maintain clear professional boundaries

Revalidation to ensure 'fitness to practice' is now an annual process. To maintain fitness to practice nurses need to provide evidence that they are meeting these professional standards. To maintain 'fitness to practice' nurses must also take part in appropriate learning and practice activities that maintain and develop competence and performance, and access professional and clinical supervision.

Schools can go to <http://www.nmc-uk.org/Search-the-register/> to check whether a nurse has an effective registration with no restrictions and cautions, with registration fees having been paid and that their registration is up to date.

Individuals who are not NMC registered must not call themselves or be called 'nurses'.

Competencies

School nurses, whether privately employed or otherwise, are required to work to Level 3 competencies as set out in the Intercollegiate Document plus additional specific competencies due to their specialist role. Employers need to consider these and whether their school nurses are able to evidence and work to the competencies.

Communication between Community and privately employed School Nurses and other health professionals

Community and privately employed school nurses have different and complimentary roles with pupils and it will be important to ensure effective communication, especially where children are subject to multi-agency plans or are looked after. Schools should consider with their school nurses how they will communicate/liaise with community school nurses so as to ensure children and young people are appropriately supported and information shared with other agencies in a timely and sensitive manner.

Employers should also clarify with their school nurse who they are able to contact with regards to a child or young person that does not require parental consent, as they are not employed within a health agency.

Additional Responsibilities

Where School Nurses are given additional responsibilities i.e. Designated Safeguarding Lead they and the school must give due consideration to the requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE Sept 2016) to ensure they are able to fulfil this role.

Where taking on such additional responsibilities the school nurse should clarify within multi-agency discussions and meetings i.e. Child Protection Conferences their different and distinct responsibilities.

Published: December 2014

Reviewed: October 2016