

Recommended School Health Services

Staff Roles

Given the strong connection between health and learning, creating conditions for health is central to schools' core mission of student learning. School nurses provide school health services to support the complex physical and mental health issues that are now being addressed in the school setting in order to foster student health and safety while increasing graduation rates. With more children entering school with complex medical needs, schools are challenged to match the available resources and the needs of the students in the development of school health services. These guidelines are intended to help school districts and schools develop and maintain the health services infrastructure that supports student health and reflects state laws, professional licensing and best practices.

SCHOOL LEVEL:

School Nurse (Registered Nurse)

Definition: A school nurse is a registered nurse (RN) who is licensed by the Alaska Board of Nursing under AS 08.68.010, and provides services that meet the health needs of the students (and staff) at the local school level, and/or trains and oversees other staff to do so. The school nurse is responsible for implementing the district school health services program in a way that is best suited to the school population. According to the National Association of School Nurses, the school nurse facilitates positive student responses to normal development; promotes health and safety; intervenes with actual and potential health problems; provides case management; and actively collaborates with others to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self-management, self advocacy and learning. (NASN, 2011)

Suggested responsibilities include:

Intervene with actual and potential health problems

- Conduct the school immunization program (timely notification of parents, data assessment, state reports) mandated by AS 14.30.125 and 4 AAC 06.055;
- Operate the school tuberculosis screening program mandated in 7 AAC 27.213 under: AS 14.30.045, AS 14.30.065, AS 18.05.040, AS 44.29.020;
- Implement mandatory screening programs, submitting required reports, and oversee the physical examination requirement ((i) AS 14.30.070 and (ii) AS 14.30.127);
- Provide prevention and management for communicable diseases;
- Provide direct care for illness/injury, including emergencies, utilizing professional assessment skills, the nursing process, individualized healthcare plans, evidence-based practice standards and established school health protocols;
- Manage and administer medications, including emergency medications;

- Initiate and maintain accurate and confidential student health records, including immunization records, medication administration records, individual student treatment records, and individualized student health plans (including Individualized Healthcare Plans, and Emergency Action Plans);
- Counsel students on physical and emotional issues;

Address individual student needs (Case Management)

- Participate in the process of identifying children with special needs that relate to the student's health condition;
- Collaborate with district personnel to implement health related Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals and services; and
- Develop and implement Individualized Healthcare Plans (IHP) and Emergency Care Plans (ECP) and evaluate outcomes of skilled and direct nursing care and procedures for students with chronic conditions and medically complex students, thus integrating these students safely into the school environment.

Promote health and safety

- Collaborate closely with school administrators, teachers, other school staff and parents to provide leadership to (1) ensure a healthy school environment, (2) assist in meeting the health needs of the general school population and (3) assess and address the health needs of students with identified health conditions;
- Communicate with parents regarding individual student health needs and serve as a liaison between school personnel, the family, health care professionals, and the community, to ensure appropriate planning, referral and follow up for students;
- Participate in planning and provide consultation to school administration for crisis/emergency situations;
- Educate faculty and staff as needed on health related topics; provide adjunct health instruction in the classroom and daily one-on-one education for students about healthy lifestyles;
- Contribute to school communications to parents and the local community regarding health issues;
- Train school staff in bloodborne pathogens, child abuse and neglect, CPR/first aid, general and emergency medication administration, and-specific health conditions of students, as needed;
- Oversee nursing tasks delegated to a licensed practical/vocational nurse, health assistant or trained unlicensed school staff (evaluations required every 90 days by Alaska nursing regulations), recognizing that certain tasks necessitate a registered nurse (development of care plans, provision of health assessments, provision of patient education and counseling) and cannot be delegated;
- Develop and recommend school/school district policies and procedures to promote the health and wellness of students and staff; and
- Participate in professional development to maintain professional nursing skills and knowledge as outlined in Alaska nursing regulations.

Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse

Definition: A Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse (LPN or LVN) is licensed under AS 08.68.010, and may provide direct services to meet the needs of the students (and staff) at the local school level. In Alaska, the Board of Nursing has determined that a LPN/LVN may *not* practice independently in a school setting. The LPN/LVN may implement the district school health program only ***under the clinical supervision*** of the Health Services Coordinator (***RN or a higher level of practitioner***) or School Nurse/RN.

Suggested responsibilities include:

Intervene with actual and potential health problems

- Maintain accurate and confidential student health records, including immunization records, medication administration records, and individual student treatment records;
- Carry out mandatory screening programs and review records for physical examination and immunization compliance, submitting required reports as directed by the School Nurse/RN;
- Provide basic first aid and care for minor injuries and illness according to detailed protocol established by the School Nurse/RN, School Health Services Coordinator, Medical Advisor or other health care professional;
- Administer medications under the supervision of the School Nurse/RN;

Address individual student needs

- Contribute information to the development of the Individualized Healthcare Plan and Emergency Care Plan (IHP/ECP) developed by the School Nurse/RN or other health care professional to meet individual student health needs;
- Provide direct care utilizing school health protocols and implementing the IHPs/ECPs established by the School Nurse/RN, Health Services Coordinator, Medical Advisor or other health care professional; and
- Communicate with parents regarding individual students as directed by the School Nurse/RN.

Promote health and safety

- Collaborate with the school administrator, school counselor, teacher, parents, and other staff under the direction of the supervising School Nurse/RN regarding the health needs of the general population and those students with identified health needs;
- Communicate regularly with the Health Services Coordinator or School Nurse/RN regarding communicable diseases, specific student health needs/concerns, school health and safety issues and hazards, and all non-routine matters; and
- Participate in continuing education and maintain certificates to maintain his/her own nursing skills and knowledge as outlined in Alaska nursing regulations.

Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP)

Definition: An unlicensed school staff member is someone who carries out limited health-related tasks. This role is typically referred to as a Health Assistant, Health Aide, Clinic Aide, Instructional Aide or Special Education Aide. This person may have previous experience in health care, be certified by the state as a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) or Certified Medical Assistant (CMA), have received formal first aid training through the Red Cross or a similar program, or may have gone through a specific orientation and training related to school health such as medication administration, or specific health conditions, such as diabetes. Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) are considered unlicensed assistive personnel when practicing in the school setting because they are authorized only to practice under a licensed physician. In schools without designated school health staff, school office staff and/or teachers will often fill this role. Oversight for this staff role could be provided by a school nurse/RN or another registered nurse, advanced practice registered nurse or physician with an appropriate relationship with the school or school district.

Suggested responsibilities include

Intervene with actual and potential health problems

- Maintain confidential health records (sorting, filing, reviewing for completeness);
- Assist with health screening programs;
- Provide basic first aid and care for minor injuries and illness according to detailed protocol established by the consulting school health staff;
- If trained to do so, take vital signs (temperature, pulse, respiration rate and blood pressure) following established protocol and documenting accurately;
- Communicate findings and student complaints to supervising school health staff for direction;
- Contact parents of students who need to be picked up from school according to established school health services protocols or as directed by the consulting school health staff;
- Contact Emergency Medical Services (EMS) according to established school health services protocols or as directed by the consulting school health staff;
- Send routine health services notices to parents;
- Utilize safe and efficient infection control procedures, under the direction of the consulting school health staff;
- Communicate regularly with the consulting school health staff regarding communicable diseases, health and safety issues and hazards and all non-routine matters;

Address individual student needs

- Follow Individualized Healthcare Plans and Emergency Care Plans (ECPs) developed by consulting school health staff, providing medications and/or treatments after receiving appropriate training by the consulting school health staff to administer;

- May serve as diabetes trained unlicensed school staff after receiving appropriate training by consulting school health staff (see *Diabetes Management: Training Unlicensed School Staff* at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Pages/school/default.aspx>).

Promote health and safety

- Collect health history information, medication authorizations and other communication from parents/guardians and/or healthcare providers;
- Communicate with other staff members the information they need to know to respond to emergent health care needs under direction of the consulting school health staff;

DISTRICT LEVEL:

District School Nurse

Definition: A district school nurse is a registered nurse (RN) who is licensed by the Alaska Board of Nursing under AS 08.68.010, and provides and coordinates direct services that meet the health needs of the students (and staff) at the local school level, and/or trains and oversees other staff to do so. The district nurse staff role may include some of the responsibilities of the school health services coordinator (see below) such as: developing nursing programs and policies related to health and safety, collaborating with district level administrators and departments to integrate and implement policies and practices with the priorities of the district, organizing the school health services program goals and managing resources for achieving them.

School Health Services Coordinator

Definition: A school health services coordinator is a licensed health care professional (registered nurse (RN) or advanced practice registered nurse (APRN)) who is responsible for managing and coordinating all school district health services policies, activities and resources, including program administration, implementation and evaluation. This healthcare professional should have experience in school health, community health, pediatric/adolescent health care, and/or nursing administration.

Suggested responsibilities include:

- Identify, analyze, and apply current nursing and medical research findings to plan and provide health care delivery for all students;
- Determine the goals and priorities of the health services program in conjunction with nursing and other staff, within the goals and strategic plan established by the district;
- Assist in or establish organization and determine the priority for allocation of resources to achieve the school health program goals;
- Develop programs and recommend policies related to health and safety, and provide expert advice to district administration and other departments regarding policies, procedures, nursing and healthcare standards on matters impacting students, staff and the community;

- Collaborate with district level administrators to integrate and implement health policies, and practices with the priorities of the district;
- Coordinate departmental and district staff development, orientation, training and certification as related to health needs of students;
- Be a permanent member of the district's school wellness committee;
- Communicate with parents and the community on topics concerning student health and safety, acting as the district liaison to parents in health matters;
- Serve as a member of the district health education curriculum committee, and other district committees related to health and safety issues of students and staff, such as crisis intervention planning teams, staff wellness programs, and exposure control committees;
- Prepare and monitor department budgets to include projected needs and secure funding for special projects to accomplish the goals of Health Services in a cost effective manner;
- Assist with hiring appropriate district and school staff by establishing criteria for education and experience, as well as departmental and school staffing needs;
- Network with internal and external stakeholders, and represent the district in discussion and collaborative programs related to student and staff health issues;
- Assist in or conduct performance appraisals for school health staff;
- Assess, improve, and evaluate school health priorities and practices for the district; and
- Serve as the district's media spokesperson on health-related issues.
- Participate in professional development to maintain his/her own professional nursing skills and knowledge as outlined in Alaska nursing regulations.

School District Medical Advisor

Definition: A School District Medical Advisor is a physician currently licensed under AS 08.62.010 who provides consultative or contracted services to the school district through the health services coordinator and/or other administrative personnel on coordinated school health matters.

Suggested responsibilities include:

- Participate in establishing goals and priorities for the school health program;
- Serve as a member of the district's school wellness committee, exposure control committee and other committees related to health and safety issues for students and staff;
- Serve as a subject matter expert to the administration regarding policies and procedures on student and employee health, including but not limited to: management of serious physical and emotional problems, communicable disease control, health screenings, environmental hazards, first aid, automated external defibrillator protocols, accident prevention, and emergency care;

- Advocate for the school health program and promote discussion and collaboration with community agencies and organizations, such as medical, dental and other health professional societies, health departments, and consumer groups;
- Serve as a consultant to coordinate health services with other district departments such as special education, athletics, physical education, food service and health education;
- Participate in planning for professional growth for school nurses and other school personnel as needed;
- Promote communication between the school district and primary care physicians, medical specialists and health care facilities regarding treatment plans for students and employees;
- Upon request, review outside proposals for health-related activities within the district such as research, service and educational activities; and
- Develop, review, revise and oversee implementation of standing orders required for epinephrine administration, Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs), and other health services needs related to district policies and procedures.