

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE

School Nursing is a specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well-being, academic success, and lifelong achievement of students. To that end, school nurses facilitate positive student responses to normal development; promote health and safety; intervene with actual and potential health problems; provide case management services; and actively collaborate with others to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self-management services, and actively collaborate with others to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self-management, self-advocacy, and learning. (National Association of School Nurses, 1999)

The National Association of School Nurses has identified seven core roles of the school nurse. As reference, the roles are:

1. Provision of direct health care to students and staff
 - Provides care to students and staff who need emergency care due to injury or who present with an acute illness
 - Within the nurse's scope of practice and state laws, trains and delegates to unlicensed school personnel medication administration and/or the delivery of health services as ordered by a licensed health care provider. Delegation to others involves initial assessment, training, competency validation, supervision and evaluation by the school nurse.
 - Assists faculty and staff in monitoring chronic medical conditions
 - Coordinate care and student emergency action plans related to diabetes, seizures, asthma, allergies and use of emergency medications i.e. Epi-Pen, Glucagon and Diastat
 - Obtain parental consent for health services
 - Develop an Individual Health Plan (IHP) for children with chronic disease
2. Provides leadership for the provision of health services
 - Assures that school district policies and procedures adhere to legal and regulatory statutes and ethical standards of nursing practice
 - Serve on advisory committees/consultation for health accommodations necessary to support student individual education care plans, (i.e. 504 & IEP).
 - Assist with the development of school emergency response plan for emergencies and disasters and the training of staff to respond appropriately within applicable state laws
 - Develop plans/implement plans, and evaluate response to interventions
3. Provides screening and referral for health conditions
 - Address potential health problems that are barriers to learning or symptoms of underlying medical conditions by coordinating and assisting with mandated screenings, i.e., vision, hearing and scoliosis;
 - Initiates referrals according to state and school policies
4. Promotes a healthy school environment
 - Provide staff educational in-services (but not limited to), i.e. CPR training and OSHA bloodborne pathogen and infection control updates
 - Monitors immunizations and reports communicable diseases as required by law
 - Review immunization records for compliance to state laws and school policies
 - Assess the physical environment of the school to improve health and safety, including the assessment of playground, indoor air quality evaluation or review patterns of illness or injury to determine source of concern
 - Assist in evaluation of school emotional environment to decrease potential bullying and violence and/or an environment that is not conducive to optimal mental health and learning

5. Promotes health

- Provides health education information directly to individual students, groups of students, or classes or by providing guidance and consultation about health education curriculum;
- Promotes health awareness activities such as fairs for staff and families; consultation with other school staff, i.e. food service personnel or physical education teachers, regarding healthy lifestyles and staff wellness programs
- Serves as a member of the coordinated school health team that promotes the health and well-being of school members through collaborative efforts

6. Serves in a leadership role for health policies and programs

- Provides leadership in the development and evaluation of school health policies, programs and the promotion of a health school environment through the collaboration with coordinated school health programs, crises/disaster management teams and school health advisory councils
- Oversees the collection of health data and submission of health reports to LHD for immunization and KDE for school health services.

7. Serves as a liaison between school personnel, family, community and health care providers.

- Provides case management through by communicating with the family through telephone calls, written communication and home visits as needed
- Serves as a representative of the school community and communicates with community health providers and community health agencies and partnerships to promote the health of the community

The role of the school nurse will vary depending on individual needs of local school districts to facilitate the educational process by removal or modification of health related barriers to student learning. When school districts and local health departments contract for school health services, the contract should spell out the expectations of each party's duties. Local health departments may be able to bill preventable health services such as, but not limited to school physicals, well-child assessment, dental screenings, administration of immunizations, and staff wellness assessment

Links:

National Association of School Nurses – [http:// www.nasn.org](http://www.nasn.org)

Kentucky Board of Nursing – <http://www.kbn.ky.gov>

Kentucky Department of Education – <http://www.education.ky.gov>