

# THE STATE SCHOOL NURSING SERVICE PRACTICE GUIDE

2025



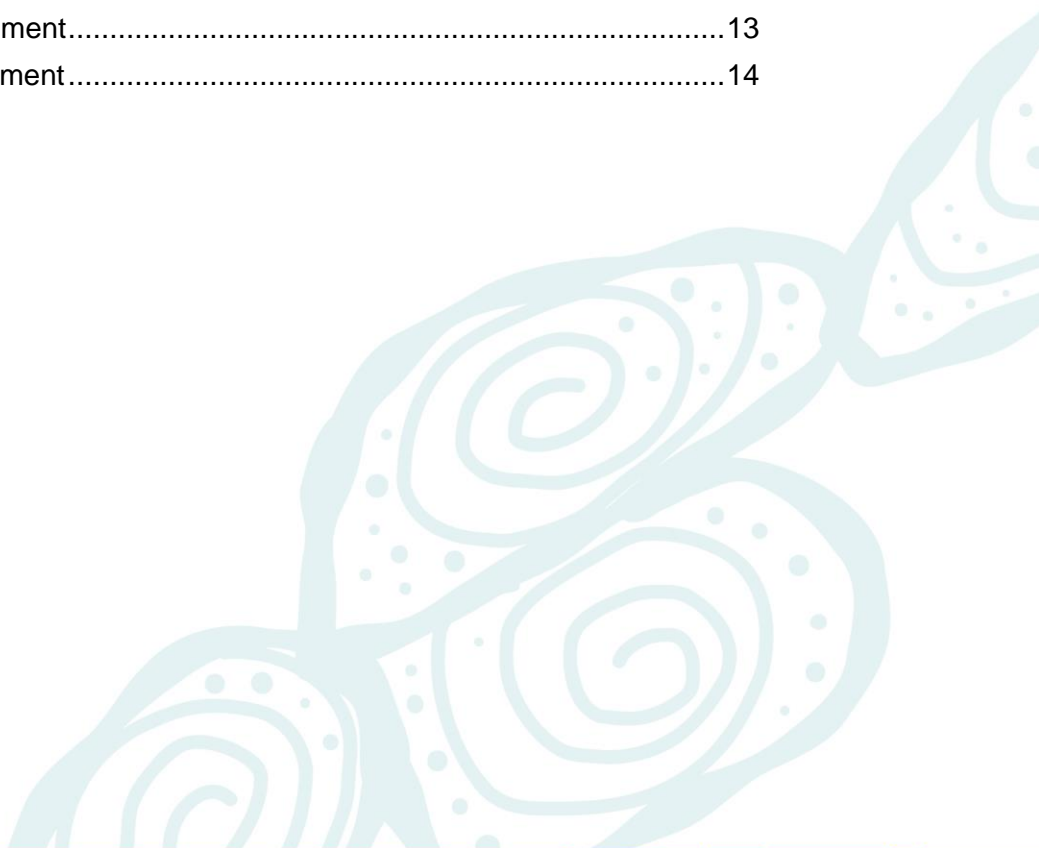
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# Contents

About this document.....	2
Service overview .....	2
Student-centred support.....	4
Human rights .....	4
Evidence-informed practice.....	4
Cultural safety .....	5
Service locations and delivery.....	5
Delivering nursing services.....	6
Service requests.....	6
Consent to service .....	6
Informed consent.....	6
Student capacity to consent .....	8
Refusal or withdrawal of consent.....	8
Prioritisation of service requests .....	9
Decision making for service delivery .....	9
Health planning.....	10
Training delivery .....	11
Use of Clinical Holding.....	11
Record keeping.....	12
Governance.....	13
Professional support and supervision.....	13
Capability development.....	13
Workload management.....	14



# About this document

The Department of Education provides responsive services focused on equity and excellence to support all students to realise their potential.

The state schools registered nursing service assists schools to manage students' health needs through the provision of advice, risk assessment and management, and training. Clinical nurses build the capability of schools to assist students with health support needs to safely access and participate in learning.

This document outlines the specific duties and expectations of State School Registered Nurses (SSRNs) in delivering high-quality nursing services within schools. It clarifies the roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder, enabling everyone to understand the contributions to overall health support of students.

In this document, the term “**nurse**” is equivalent to the clinical nurse role of:

- State schools registered nurse (SSRN),
- Clinical nurse consultant (CNC),
- Clinical nurse consultant-Advisor and
- Senior nurse manager (SNM) employed by the department.

This guideline does **not** relate to school purchased or Queensland Health employed nurses, and or private providers (nursing).

The term “**parent**” is equivalent to appointed carer or guardian.

## Service overview

The State Schools Nursing Service assists school teams to develop their capability and confidence in making reasonable adjustments and meeting their duty of care for students with health support needs.

Departmental nurses work collaboratively with the principal, school staff, students, parents and treating health professionals to enable students with health needs to safely access and participate at school.

State Schools Registered Nurses support the principal to exercise their non-delegable duty of care to student with health needs by providing:

- support for student health needs (new enrolment or new diagnosis)
- health risk assessment
- assistance with complex medical information or support requests
- student health/action plan development and implementation
- developing staff capability to safely perform or supervise student health procedures
- advice with ongoing health concerns and or troubleshooting
- refresher training to maintain school staff capability and competence
- additional risk assessment and planning for camps and excursions.

#### **The State schools nurse**



- works collaboratively to support a student with health needs to safely access and participate at school.
- assists with risk assessment
- develops health plans and provides training for school staff to support student health needs
- builds school staff capability in performing health procedures
- assists with troubleshooting health procedures and support
- provides ongoing support and refresher training as requested.

#### **The State schools nurse does not**



- directly administer student health procedures
- manage, monitor or administer medications to students
- provide first aid as the school's designated officer
- administer vaccinations
- provide preventative health services aligned with the role of the School Based Youth Health Nurse program.
- provide health advice or counselling to school staff.

## Student-centred support

The State Schools Nursing Service uses a student-centred support approach when working with students and families to plan for and manage a student's health support needs at school. Nurses include the student and their parents in all decisions about health support at school.

## Human rights

All departmental staff are required to ensure that decisions and actions are compatible with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld).

Nurses consider the Act when:

- Responding to requests for nursing services
- Obtaining consent
- Seeking consent to share student health information
- Promoting student /parent involvement in decision-making
- Providing evidence-informed support and staff training
- Managing student information and confidential student health documents.

## Evidence-informed practice

Nurses use research evidence in an integrative way taking into consideration their level of clinical experience and professional judgement, the student's/ parent's preferences and values, and the context in which the interventions or adjustments are implemented.

This approach uses diverse evidence sources, includes broad stakeholder consultation, and leverages available nursing expertise to inform confident decisions about student support and safe inclusion at school.

## Cultural safety

The department's greatest strength is the diversity of its staff, students and school communities. Departmental staff embrace diversity by creating welcoming, inclusive, and accessible educational settings. This includes providing high quality culturally responsive education.

Cultural capability is the understanding of different cultures and integrating this knowledge into processes, practices, and attitudes to produce better outcomes. Culturally responsive health supports are developed through cultural capability.

By understanding the factors that affect health and embracing practices that respect diversity, nurses can avoid bias, racism, and discrimination. This helps them effectively handle cross-cultural situations, leading to improved outcomes for students and schools. Such an approach ensures that their clinical decisions foster an inclusive school environment that prioritises the safety and security of students and their families.

Further information is available on OnePortal - [Cultural Capability](#) and professional nursing boards or association websites.

## Service locations and delivery

Nursing services are offered in state schools from prep to year 12, early childhood development programs, and in State Delivered Kindergartens.

Nursing services may be provided in-person or virtually. Decisions about the best method of service delivery are based on several factors, with student and staff safety the foremost consideration.

In exceptional circumstances, if the nurse is unable to meet a family at school or a safe public place, a home visit may be required. The regional clinical nurse consultant and the principal of the school where the student is enrolled approve the home visit, in line with the [Conducting home visits procedure](#) and following review of the required risk assessment.



# Delivering nursing services

## Service requests

To request nursing services for individual student health support, the principal or nominated delegate must complete the [State Schools Nursing Service Student Request for Service form](#). The principal assists the student (if able) and the student's parent in understanding the service that will be provided and the consent they are signing in the consent section of the form. The principal must authorise the request by signing it before submitting.

A service request form is not required for schools to schedule general training not specific to an individual student (e.g. asthma and anaphylaxis training).

## Consent to service

Informed consent to a service requires a discussion between the parent and/or student and principal (or delegate) about the benefits of the nursing service for the student and possible alternatives if consent is not provided. Informed consent takes into account the family circumstances, beliefs and priorities.

Informed consent means that the student/parent:

- receive and understand information about nursing services
- make informed decisions, including declining and or withdrawing consent at anytime
- have their decisions respected.

Informed consent and collaboration builds trust, prevents harm, and protects against any adverse outcomes.

It is important to consider that the person providing consent to service must have sufficient capacity to enable their understanding of what they are consenting to, and the consequences of consenting or refusing consent.

Consent must also be voluntary (given freely without coercion), informed, specific and current. The person being asked to provide their consent must understand:

- the purpose of nursing services
- the limits/parameters of that service
- the duration or limits of that consent

It is suggested that for:

- primary age students: the parent signs the consent form
- high school age students:
  - both the parent and the student may sign the consent form
  - over 18 years
  - students with capacity, as determined by the principal in collaboration with key school staff and the nurse, may sign the consent form.

When departmental nurses receive a completed request for service, the nurse will confirm the person providing consent understands the purpose and parameters of the service.

The request for nursing services form provides a limited consent and additional consent may be required in writing before the nurse requests, uses, records or discloses student information or materials with a third party (non-department). For example, in a two-way conversation with the student's treating health practitioner/team.

For such purposes the nurse will explain to the student (is able) and or parent the exact purpose of the [Consent form to share student personal information with third parties](#).



## Student capacity to consent

Young people (under 18) may have sufficient understanding and maturity to make decisions about health support and nursing service involvement.

Students can provide consent when they are able to:

- understand what is proposed
- understand the short and long-term consequences of their decisions, and
- express their own wishes.

Deciding if a student has the capacity to consent to health support at school is determined on a case-by-case basis by the principal in collaboration with the student, parent/care, key school staff (e.g., guidance officer, social worker) and the departmental nurse.

The following factors are considered:

- age, attitude, emotional development, and maturity of the student
- student's ability to understand the consequences of their decisions
- student's communication skills
- student's social circumstances and social history
- impact of the student's health condition
- complexity and risk of the proposed service
- consequences if the student does not receive a service (including the school's ability to manage risk if a service is not provided).

If it is determined the student has sufficient capacity to provide consent for the service, then the student may provide written consent.

## Refusal or withdrawal of consent

Valid consent is necessary for departmental nurses to access and respond to requests for nursing support and to hold maintain essential student health information. Parents/ students understanding the implications of their choices may refuse or withdraw their consent for nursing services.

In these cases, the principal will continue to collaborate with the parent or student and their health care providers to enable appropriate health support, as per [Managing students' health support needs at school procedure](#).

## Prioritisation of service requests

Responding to requests for nursing services and prioritising service delivery involves an ongoing collaborative process with students, their parents and the school.

Nurses may use a prioritisation table (Appendix 1) to assist them to determine the potential risks and urgency of service requests. This process relies on the nurses' clinical reasoning, professional judgment and information available to the nurse at the time.

All decisions related to service delivery are documented in OneSchool. This documentation assists the school to understand the reasoning behind each decision and plan accordingly. The decisions are typically based on the following factors:

- The level of risk to students and staff
- The stability of the student's health need (e.g., infrequent seizures)
- The availability of other health professionals to support planning or provide training (e.g., local diabetes educators)
- The presence of appropriately trained staff able to perform the required health support procedures competently
- Availability of additional nursing support including borderless nursing services.

## Decision-making for service delivery

After reviewing a request for nursing services, nurses must use their professional judgment to determine whether a specific activity or service is within their scope of professional practice. If it does not, they should consult

with the regional clinical nurse consultant, and or refer the matter to appropriately qualified nurses. This may involve departmental nurses or members of the student's treating health team.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board Australia (NMBA) [Decision-Making Framework](#) provides a consistent approach for making decisions regarding nursing practices, activities and delegations.

To ensure safe and competent care, the department supports nurses to access relevant professional development opportunities.

Under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Qld 2009)*, nurses must not be directed, pressured, or compelled by an employer to engage in any practice that falls short of, or is in breach of, any professional standard, guidelines or code of conduct, ethics, or practice for their profession. (NMBA 2022).

## Health planning

Nurses gather relevant health information as part of the initial nursing assessment. This information is used to inform and develop individual or emergency health plans, to train staff in performing the student's health procedures, and to inform any reasonable adjustments required to meet students' health support needs at school.

When developing health plans for a school setting, the nurse will use evidence-informed resources, research and best practice, while also drawing on the expertise of experienced school nurses. Nurses work collaboratively with the student, parents, health team, and school staff to refine health plans and enable safe positive outcome for the student.

Current health information is vital to student wellbeing and safety at school. When information changes a review of a health plan or procedure may be required. Nurses use professional judgement to set review dates for health plans, based on a range of factors including but not limited to:

- the health condition, its expected course and duration;
- the stability of the health condition;
- student age and growth
- reviews of their health condition and or treatment.

## Training delivery

The department has developed a range of online health support courses that are accessible through the QLearn platform. These courses offer school staff with an overview of various health conditions and the reasonable adjustments required to enable student access and safe participation in school activities.

The online courses provide foundational knowledge of specific health conditions and procedures. In addition, departmental nurses conduct in-person training for practical components of a health procedure. This hands-on training allows for questions, demonstrations, practice, and capability assessment which are essential for safety and competency in performing necessary health procedures.

After staff complete the online and practical components of the course as instructed by the nurses, completion data is recorded on the staff training reporting site. This site is accessible to school principals and leaders and plays a vital role in workforce planning and student safety and inclusion.

## Use of Clinical Holding

Clinical holding may be necessary as a planned strategy for administering essential health support and emergency medication. This approach aims to provide essential healthcare and is only utilised in rare circumstances.

Clinical holding is a restrictive practice that limits a student's rights or freedom of movement. When considering the use of a clinical hold in a student's health management at school, the nurse notifies the clinical nurse consultant and together with the school team and other relevant health professionals determine the safest and least restrictive options.

The nurse collaborates with the principal and key stakeholders to conduct an assessment for student safety and well-being, when developing an agreed clinical holding plan.

School staff involved in clinical holding receive training from the nurse. Staff members follow the agreed plan that outlines the reasons for the clinical hold, when it should or should not occur, and the duration of the hold.

State school registered nurses participate in training in clinical holding techniques and the development of clinical holding plans.

## Record keeping

Personal information about students, staff, parents, carers, and members of the public must be protected from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, or loss.

Nurses are responsible for managing students' personal information in accordance with relevant legislation, regulations, and industry best practices. Documents related to student health and safety are typically classified as sensitive or protected. Access to these documents should be restricted to authorised individuals based on their classification.

Nurses record the services provided to students in Specialist Support Records (SSR) in OneSchool. The [Guidelines on the use of specialist support records in OneSchool](#) provide nurses with information on appropriate and consistent use of SSR.

# Governance

Effective governance of departmental nurses' professional practice enables the quality, safety, and efficacy of nursing services provided to students and schools. The Department's [Nurses' Clinical Governance Framework](#) outlines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in providing safe, high-quality health supports for students.

## Professional support and supervision

Departmental state schools registered nurses are typically based at schools, with the principal of the base school serving as their line manager. Supervision is delivered collaboratively by a regionally based Clinical nurse consultant, the designated line manager of the nurse, and the centrally located Senior nurse manager.

The senior nurse manager provides line management and professional supervision of clinical nurse consultant positions, and Disability Inclusion and Student Services (DISS) provides management and policy direction for the statewide nursing services.

Access to appropriate professional supervision is essential for nurses to engage in critical reflection, meet their professional development needs, and address their competencies, accountability, and role requirements. The Nurses' Clinical Supervision Guidelines outline the purpose, model, frequency, and responsibilities related to the effective support and supervision for nurses.

## Capability development

Recruiting suitably qualified nurses, providing ongoing professional support, and offering access to professional development opportunities all contribute to a high-quality nursing service.

Nurses are required to engage in regular professional development in order to maintain their registration with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA).



Nurses collaborate with their professional supervisors to identify and prioritise their learning needs through the [performance and development process](#).

Nurses receive an annual professional development allowance as part of their salary. Professional learning opportunities specific to departmental requirements or priorities are available. This includes access to peer-reviewed literature, which helps nurses maintain high-standards of practice.

## Workload management

Nurses work with their professional supervisor to prioritise and manage their workloads.

[The Nurses' Workload Management Guide](#) offers a range of strategies and templates designed to help nurses effectively manage their workloads at local, regional, and statewide levels. The guide includes tools for workload reporting, along with templates and guidelines for addressing concerns.

By adopting an organised and effective approach to delivering nursing services in schools, the department enhances the quality of support provided to both students and schools.