

Field Trip Considerations

Students on field trips are entitled to the same health services, including medication administration, to which they are entitled while attending school. Students must have an order from a Pa. health care professional with prescriptive authority and parent/guardian permission for all medications and treatments administered to them. The school may ask a parent to accompany their student on a field trip to provide the necessary care, but it cannot require the parent to do so. Schools are requested to consider the following when determining health care needs of students and staffing to meet those needs on field trips.

No waiver of liability permitted

The school may not request that a parent/guardian sign a waiver of liability releasing the district from any liability in relation to the administration of medications.

- In 1988, a complaint was filed with the Federal Office of Civil Rights (OCR), tasked with enforcing the provisions of the IDEA, against the Berlin Brothers Valley School District because the district required a parent to sign a waiver of liability in connection with medication administration. The OCR determined that parents cannot be required to sign away a federal right.

Parental designee

When a parent/guardian is unable to accompany his or her student, the parent may designate a responsible adult to accompany the student with the following restrictions:

- The parent must provide the supplies and training if the parent delegates treatments or medication administration to a responsible adult. The school nurse may not provide training, supplies, or medications, and must not be involved in the delegation process per the Pennsylvania Nurse Practice Act.
- The parent may not delegate responsibility for administering treatments or medications to any school staff member, school-designated trip chaperone or secondary student.
- The parent may not prescribe or alter treatments or medication administration orders for the school nurse or other licensed professional unless the parent is a Pa. licensed prescriber.

Self-administration of medication by students

The only medications a student may self-carry and self-administer are an asthma rescue inhaler, insulin, glucagon and an epinephrine auto-injector. The student must have a provider's written order and parent/guardian permission to both self-carry AND to self-administer the medication. The student must demonstrate to the school nurse that the student is responsible to safely self-carry and/or safely self-administer the medication.

Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)/paramedics

EMTs and paramedics functioning as a school employee/volunteer are not under emergency medical services (EMS) medical command and, therefore, may not be utilized to administer treatments or medications to students who are under school jurisdiction.

Licensed volunteers

The licensed volunteer's assigned duties must be within their professional scope of practice. The volunteer's license must be active and in good standing. Pa. license verifications may be found at <http://www.licensepa.state.pa.us/>. The Pa. licensed prescriber order must be written to permit a licensed volunteer to administer the medications or perform the treatments.

The licensed volunteer should be provided with plans of care, as well as the order for the students for whom the volunteer is providing health services.

Additionally, the licensed volunteer should have the necessary training/competency to perform the treatments the student requires. For example, a licensed volunteer should attend a field trip with a student with an insulin pump only if the licensed volunteer has been trained on that pump. First aid and CPR certification is recommended. The licensed volunteer should be knowledgeable on school policies and procedures.

Non-licensed volunteers and school staff

The only medications a non-licensed person may administer are an asthma rescue inhaler, epinephrine auto-injector, insulin, glucagon and Narcan (naloxone). If the school chooses to allow non-licensed persons to administer any of the aforementioned medications, it must be incorporated into school policy. The non-licensed person must demonstrate to the nurse he or she is trained and capable of administering the medications.

All persons, including students, have a right to privacy of health care information. Licensed nurses are bound, as a condition of licensure, to maintain confidentiality of personal health information. The school should consider having the non-licensed volunteer sign a confidentiality agreement.

Additional considerations concerning volunteers

- Has the school verified that each volunteer has a child abuse clearance? (If a parent is attending the field trip to solely care for their own child then child abuse clearance is not required.)
- Has the school verified that each volunteer who spends more than 10 hours a week in direct contact with students has had a TB test?

A doctor may only delegate treatment or medication administration to health care practitioners and technicians as per Pa. Code Chapter 18 Subchapter G. Medical doctor delegation of medical services, § 18.402. Delegation, found at <http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/049/chapter18/subchapGtoc.html>.

Out-of-state field trips

For an out-of-state field trip, the school should ensure the nurse and/or licensed volunteer is permitted to practice in the state under their Pa. license. Contact information for the Boards of Nursing can be located at <https://www.ncsbn.org/contact-bon.htm>.

Out-of-country field trips

For an out-of-country field trip, the school should contact that country's consulate to ensure the nurse and/or licensed volunteer is permitted to practice in the country under their Pa. license. The United States Department of State may be of assistance in reaching a consulate at <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/index.htm> or <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/221422.pdf>.