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The School High Health Needs Fund and regional health schools

The Ministry of Education, Special Education has two initiatives to support your students to continue their education if, because of high health needs, they're unable to go to their usual school or they require support to be able to attend school safely.

1. The School High Health Needs Fund (SHHNF) provides teacher's aide time to support students with serious medical conditions so they can attend school safely.

2. Regional health schools provide teachers from one of the three regional health schools to teach or guide students' learning in hospital or at home if they're unable to go to school because they're sick.

A student can be supported by both. For example, they might get teacher's aide support through the School High Health Needs Fund to support them to return to school after being taught at hospital or at home by a teacher from a regional health school.

The School High Health Needs Fund

Your student might be able to get support from the School High Health Needs Fund if they have a significant health condition and can only be at school safely if there's someone to take care of them or keep a close eye on their medical needs.

The fund pays for a teacher's aide if your student needs this kind of support for six weeks or more.

The fund helps students to become independent in managing their own care but some might require the fund's support throughout their schooling.

The level and type of support will be agreed between you and the parent/s and health professionals. This will be recorded in the student's Individual Care Plan (ICP).

Who can receive this support

Your student needs to meet all of the following four criteria.

1. Your student has a high health need and needs a teacher's aide to help care for them at school.
2. Your student requires a teacher's aide for supervision, help with physical tasks, crisis response

or to ensure they receive the appropriate treatment or intervention.

3. Teacher's aide support is essential for your student to access all areas of the school for them to be able to participate and learn. It's expected this support means they'll be able to maintain or improve both their attendance and their health status.
4. Your student's high health need must be of such intensity, and/or frequency, and/or duration, that a teacher's aide is needed to:
 - ▶ protect their life
 - ▶ prevent severe effects on their physical health
 - ▶ prevent them having an accident or injury
 - ▶ control infection.

Some students might also meet a fifth criteria.

5. They have a health need they're expected to eventually be able to manage themselves. Whether they're eligible under this criteria will depend on the nature of their need, whether they need training in the appropriate procedures to manage their condition, and their developmental level.

Examples

Some examples of the kinds of health conditions that might be supported by School High Health Needs Fund include:

- ▶ a child has seizures and needs to be taken to a quiet area to sleep afterwards while being supervised, needs to be given medication, needs help with toileting and showering after seizures, or someone to supervise them with activities like swimming

- ▶ a child has cancer and suffers severe tiredness, headaches, nausea and vomiting
- ▶ a child has severe allergies, asthma, or eczema and could react to common allergy triggers at school. They need someone with them to make sure they don't come into contact with anything that could trigger an allergic reaction and who can carry out emergency treatment if they do go into anaphylactic shock
- ▶ a child has bone marrow disease and needs someone to be with them so that they don't injure themselves
- ▶ a child is on continuous oxygen connected by tube to an oxygen bottle and needs help by an adult to carry the equipment around the school.

For more detailed examples see the School High Health Needs Fund Guidelines on our website (www.minedu.govt.nz).

How to apply

An educator is responsible for the application process. If you're a class teacher, SENCO, regional health school teacher or Early Intervention teacher of a student about to start school then you will need to complete the application form with help from the parent/caregiver.

You will need to:

1. download the application form from the end of the SHHNF web page: www.minedu.govt.nz/SpecialEducation
2. complete Parts A and B electronically. In Part C complete the educator and parent/caregiver details and the student details in Part D

3. print Parts C and D
4. arrange for your student's medical specialist to fill in Part D and return to you
5. sign Part C after reading all the information in the application
6. arrange for the parent/caregiver to read and sign the completed form (Parts A, B, C and D) and send to: Manager Assurance and Eligibility, Ministry of Education, PO Box 1666, Wellington, 6140.

For more information, email: manager.eligibility@minedu.govt.nz or talk to someone at your local Special Education office. You can also call the Special Education information line on 0800 622 222.

What the School High Health Needs Fund cannot be used for:

- ▶ helping students with their learning needs or for catching up on work missed through being away from school
- ▶ students with a mental health condition that requires management of their behaviour for the safety of themselves and others
- ▶ students with moderate health care needs. Examples of moderate health care needs are:
 - muscle stretches of about half an hour per day as part of a therapy programme
 - monitoring blood sugar or insulin levels two - three times daily
 - helping with dressing/undressing for swimming or Physical Education and Health

- helping with movement between classes and carrying books/bags
- pushing a buggy or wheelchair for Education Outside The Classroom
- managing seizures that occur infrequently or in clusters with long periods with no seizures
- managing safety in the playground during breaks and lunchtime
- providing oxygen or a nebuliser when it isn't needed very often
- making sure a child doesn't become over-tired (eg, for a child with a heart condition)
- helping with toileting by adjusting clothing, monitoring hygiene, wiping bottom, opening a door that is too heavy for the child
- keeping an eye on a child to see they're sitting appropriately
- helping a child with bed-wetting when on school camps
- giving a child their medicine as required by the school's policy
- arranging the safe disposal of continence pads, syringes, catheter tubes etc
- providing health and safety equipment (eg, disposable gloves).

Who decides if a student receives the service

Special Education verifiers decide if your student qualifies for the SHHNF and for other resources, such as the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS).

Each verifier independently considers the application and makes a decision. All the verifiers then discuss their decisions and reach a consensus about whether your student meets the criteria. If the verifiers don't have enough information they will request more detail from you. They might seek an opinion from a paediatrician.

You and the parent/caregiver will be told the outcome in writing. This will usually take about three weeks.

Managing the funding

Fund holders are responsible for the money that's provided to schools each term to pay for the support your student will get from the teacher's aide. Special Education is the fund holder for the School High Health Needs Fund. Some schools are also accredited to become fund holders for groups of schools.

The fund holder or accredited school is responsible for making sure the student has an Individual Care Plan (ICP) that is updated each year or sooner if the student's level of need changes significantly. The ICP should detail the:

1. care and supervision tasks of the teacher's aide
2. monitoring system that ensures care remains appropriate to the student's needs
3. evaluation process to determine the student's ongoing level of need for care and supervision.

Reviewing your student's support

The verifiers will review funding for your student once a year. Verifiers can ask to see the current ICP and a recent medical report to decide if your student continues to meet the criteria.

If there's a significant change in your student's level of need while they're receiving this support then you can submit a new application at any time, providing details about what has changed for them.

How teacher's aide support is decided

The team working on your student's ICP will work out what teacher's aide support your student needs. They will then make a request to the fund holder who will consider the request alongside others in your district, taking into account the available budget.

The support your student receives can be reviewed if your student's needs change. Your fund holder will need to see an updated ICP.

Your student's teacher's aide support might change each year and they might not get the exact amount of support their team requested. Anyone in the team can ask for a review of the decision. Every region or district has a review process.

ORS and other support

Your student can be supported by the SHHNF at the same time as receiving support through any other Special Education funding scheme except ORS. Students who meet the criteria for ORS, and who have high health needs, will have all their care and supervision funded by ORS.

High health needs caused by an accident

If your student needs ongoing care at school because they've been injured in an accident then they will receive support through the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC).

Regional health schools

The aim of health schools is to make sure children can continue their education when they're so sick they can't go to their usual school.

There are three regional health schools – in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. They teach children from Years 0 to 13.

No matter where your student lives in New Zealand, including rural areas, health school teachers work in the hospital and the home. They work with your student, their family/whānau and you – their teacher and staff at their usual school. The student remains on the roll of their usual school.

How regional health schools work

Health schools have teachers based all around New Zealand who can teach your student and guide their learning. They will visit your student and discuss their learning needs with you, the student and their family/whānau. The health school teachers might visit every day or just once or twice a week, depending on your student's age and education needs.

The focus for health school teachers is on the school curriculum rather than on health or social needs. Every child admitted to a health school has an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Who can go to a health school

Students might be able to get support if they:

- ▶ are sick – it might be a physical illness or related to mental health – and cannot go to their usual school for long periods of time, or
- ▶ are in a health-funded mental health programme, or
- ▶ need support as they return to their usual school after a long time away caused by illness.

To be considered for support from a regional health school your student needs to:

- ▶ be unable to attend school for 10 or more days in a row because of illness, an ongoing medical condition or accident – they might be in hospital or at home, or
- ▶ have been in hospital six times or more in one year, or

- ▶ have been, or is likely to be, unable to go to school for more than 40 days in one year because of illness, or
- ▶ be recuperating or rehabilitating at home after being unwell, or
- ▶ have support to return to school after being unwell.

Accessing the service

To be admitted to the health school, the health school needs to receive a medical certificate from a medical practitioner specialising in the condition, saying what the condition is, how it is being treated and, most importantly, how the condition and treatment is stopping your student attending school.

Your student is able to get health school support on top of any other special education support they already get through their school or Special Education, including support from the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS).

For more information about each health school and the criteria for applying:

- ▶ the Northern Health School is based in Auckland and serves the northern part of the North Island: www.nhs.school.nz
- ▶ the Central Regional Health School is based in Wellington and serves the lower half of the North Island: www.centralregionalhealth.school.nz
- ▶ the Southern Regional Health School is based in Christchurch and serves the South Island: www.srhs.school.nz

For more information

If you're unclear about any part of our service or have questions about the help your student receives, please talk with staff at your local Special Education office, or call the Special Education information line on **0800 622 222**.

You can get more detailed special education information, including *A Quick Guide to extra support*, under the educator section of our website: www.minedu.govt.nz, or on Te Kete Ipurangi a website that provides educational material for teachers and schools: www.tki.org.nz.