

Community Health Administration

Frequently Asked Questions about the District of Columbia School Health Nursing Program

The following questions and answers are designed to provide information on school nursing services, school health suite facility standards, and how to apply for school nursing services.

Does the Government of the District of Columbia provide school nursing services?

DC ST § 38-621 provides for 20 hours of nursing services in District of Columbia elementary and secondary public and public charter schools. School nursing services are sponsored by the DC Department of Health (DOH) and provided under a contract with Children's National Medical Center (CNMC)/Children's School Services (CSS).

In FY 2006, the Committee on Health of the DC Council requested DOH and CNMC to begin transitioning nursing coverage to 40 hours a week in DCPS by supplementing 20 hours of registered nursing services with 20 hours of coverage by Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). DOH has now phased in full-time coverage at DCPS and public charter schools with nurses supported by the department.

What are the professional requirements for a school nurse?

At a minimum, a current registered nursing license in the District of Columbia is required for this position.

What are the core health services provided by school nurses?

School nurses perform services which include:

1. Assessment and triage of sick and injured children
2. Providing emergency care as needed
3. Administering medications
4. Performing health assessments
5. Care of medically fragile students
6. Providing health services to children with special health care needs
7. Providing counseling on various health issues
8. BMI Screening
9. Vision Screening
10. Hearing Screening

What are the facility requirements for a school nurse suite?

The nurse suite design must facilitate federal privacy requirements under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 which protects the privacy of student records, including health information. The District of Columbia Department of Health and Children's School Services (a division of Children's National Medical Center) have established the following assessment tool to assist public schools in determining the facility standards to which school nurse suites must adhere:

Are schools required to provide parking for the school nurse?

Yes, schools are required to provide assigned parking on the school grounds. School buildings that don't have grounds must provide assigned parking within 1 block of the school.

How can my public charter school obtain a school nurse?

If your local education agency (LEA) would like the District of Columbia School Health Nursing Program (DCSHNP) to provide a school nurse, please send a letter of request to:

Charlissa Quick, BSN, RN, MSA
School Health Division Chief
Community Health Administration
District of Columbia Department of Health
899 North Capitol Street, NE, 3rd Floor
Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 442-9123
charlissa.quick@dc.gov

Subsequent to the receipt of your letter, representatives of the DCSHNP will contact you within two (2) business days to acknowledge receipt of your request. DCSHNP staff will then coordinate an initial site visit with a Nurse Manager from the vendor within seven (7) business days. This team will meet with you and provide technical assistance to ensure that the nurse suite you are planning will enable the nurse to perform the required functions in accordance with professional school nursing standards. Within five (5) business days, you will either receive a letter confirming that the space identified has been approved to receive nursing services, or that you have been denied with recommendations and instructions for a follow-up site visit.

Health Suite Assessment Tool

Provision of health services must include health suites with adequate staff, supplies, equipment, technology and privacy to ensure effective and efficient assessment and triage of sick and injured students, provision of care, and evaluation of increasingly complex health needs. School health facilities, personnel, space, structure and equipment must adequately provide for privacy, and include consideration of projected school enrollment, health status of the student population, necessary supplies and equipment, services required, confidentiality and safety.

HEALTH SUITE CRITERIA

Criteria	Met	Not Met	N A	Comments
1. Health suite should be located in a quiet area, easily accessible to all areas of the building, including the administrative offices.				
2. There should be at least one (1) bathroom that conforms to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines to include ADA accessible water sources within the bathroom for washing hands and facilitating special needs.				
3. Health suite should be accessible for the disabled, with doors leading to main office, outer hallway and/or outside for access to emergency medical services and transportation.				
4. Health suite is a non-shared space used <i>only</i> for health-related services and provides for the privacy of students' health information.				
5. Health suite contains incandescent and natural lighting adequate for viewing rashes, injuries, etc.				
6. Adjustable overhead lighting in rest area.				
7. Provision of emergency lighting in case of a power outage.				
8. At least one (1) outside window that may be opened for natural lighting and ventilation.				
9. At least one electrical outlet every six (6) feet, with surge protection distributed throughout the health suite including in the bathroom.				

10. Adequate plumbing to ensure hot and cold running water for the assessment and treatment area.				
11. Water source outside of the bathroom to allow for administration of medication, washing hands and providing first aid with sink(s) equipped with gooseneck faucets, wrist or foot control device, liquid soap, and a paper towel dispenser.				
12. Lockable wall and base cabinets for the storage of medications, supplies and equipment. (Avoid storage of medications in cabinets with glass doors since they provide visual access and minimal security.)				
13. Base cabinets with cleanable counter tops to provide treatment areas.				
14. Floor to ceiling closet for storage of large equipment.				
15. Lockable refrigerator of adequate size for storing medications and snacks for special needs students.				
16. A tile or seamless anti-microbial resinous floor which facilitates disinfection of soiled areas				
17. Easily cleanable hard walls.				
18. Heating and air conditioning controls that are separate from the rest of the building.				
19. Access to fresh air and exhaust fans to provide adequate ventilation.				
Health office configuration that allows for specific, separate areas to provide optimal functionality:				
20. A waiting and triage area with four chairs for approximately every 300 students enrolled at the school.				
21. An assessment and treatment area where injuries are cared for; include an exam table, sink with eye wash attached, countertop, supply cabinet, and access to a refrigerator and icemaker.				
22. A medication area, including locked cabinet, sink, and access to refrigerator.				

<p>23. Private nurse's office for administrative work, counseling, and meetings to include: windows to provide visual access to cot and waiting areas for monitoring students; blinds or one-way glass to provide privacy; a standard office desk; computer; printer; fax; telephone; file cabinets; guest chairs.</p>				
<p>24. Rest area with one cot for every 300 students.</p>				
<p>25. Isolation area with cot and chair for students with potentially infectious problems or who need privacy.</p>				
<p>26. Bathroom that is wheelchair accessible, with grab bar next to toilet, good lighting and ventilation, sink, storage, and floor drains</p>				

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