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The School High Health Needs Fund and regional health schools

The Ministry of Education, Special Education can support your child to continue their education if they're unable to go to school because they're very sick or if they have a serious medical condition and need support to be able to attend school safely.

There are two types of support available:

- 1. the School High Health Needs Fund (SHHNF)** provides teacher's aide support for your child so they can attend school safely
- 2. regional health schools** provide teachers to teach your

child in hospital or at home if they're unable to go to school because they're sick.

These services are funded by the Government and are free.

Your child might 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.

Staff from Special Education and the regional health school will work with you to plan the support your child needs.

The School High Health Needs Fund

Your child 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 child needs this kind of support for six weeks or more.

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

The exact details of the support your child receives will be written down in an Individual Care Plan (see *Individual Care Plans*).

Can my child get this support?

To get teacher's aide support through the fund, your child will need to meet *all* of the following four criteria.

1. Your child has a high health need and needs a teacher's aide to help care for them at school.
2. Your child needs a teacher's aide to help supervise and keep an eye on them, to help with physical tasks or to act quickly if there's a problem so that your child gets the right treatment or the right action is taken.
3. It is essential for your child to have a teacher's aide to help them get to the areas of the

school where they need to go and to enable them to continue going to school; it is expected this support will mean they're able to maintain or improve both their attendance at school and their health.

4. Your child needs a teacher's aide because their health need is 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.

Your child might also meet a fifth criteria.

5. They have a health problem that they're expected to eventually be able to manage themselves without the support of a teacher's aide. Whether they meet this criteria will depend on the nature of their need, if they need training to manage their condition, and their developmental level.

Examples

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

- ▶ your 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
- ▶ your child has cancer and suffers severe tiredness, headaches, nausea and vomiting
- ▶ your 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
- ▶ your child has bone marrow disease and needs someone to be with them so that they don't injure themselves
- ▶ your 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).

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

- ▶ helping children with their learning needs or for catching up on work missed through being away from school
- ▶ children with a mental health condition that requires management of their behaviour for the safety of themselves and others
- ▶ children with moderate health care needs. Examples of moderate 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 your child doesn't become over-tired (eg, if your child has a heart condition)



How to apply

Talk with your child's early childhood education centre or school about applying for the fund.

If your child is at an early childhood education centre and receiving early intervention support, someone on your child's Early Intervention team will take responsibility for applying.

If your child is at school it will be someone from the school who will do this. This might be your child's teacher, the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO), if your school has one, or a teacher at a regional health school. This person is known as the 'applicant'.

This person will ask you for information to complete the application form. They will need to get up-to-date medical information from your child's medical specialist.

- helping with toileting by adjusting clothing, monitoring hygiene, wiping bottom, opening a door that is too heavy for your child
- keeping an eye on your child to see they're sitting appropriately
- helping your child with bed-wetting when on school camps
- giving your child their medicine as required by their school's policy
- arranging the safe disposal of continence pads, syringes, catheter tubes etc
- providing health and safety equipment eg, disposable gloves.

How funding decisions are made

Staff in Special Education will decide if your child is able to receive support from the fund. These people are known as 'verifiers'.

How they decide

A verifier will look at your child's application and make their decision. All the verifiers then discuss their decisions until they agree whether your child meets the criteria for support.

If the verifiers don't have enough information, they will ask for more details. They might ask for an opinion from an independent paediatrician, who isn't already working with your child.

You will be told in writing whether your child will get support through the fund.

Timeframes

It will usually take about three weeks until you find out if your child meets the criteria to receive support.

Individual Care Plans

An Individual Care Plan is a written plan that you and your child's teachers will write together using information provided by your child's medical specialists.

Your child's Individual Care Plan will contain information about

your child's health needs and have the contact numbers for everyone who works with your child. It will include details about:

- ▶ how a teacher's aide will supervise and care for your child
- ▶ how the school will make sure the care your child gets continues to meet their needs during the year
- ▶ the process that will be used to work out if there's any change in the care and supervision your child needs.

Your child's Individual Care Plan will be used to look at the times in the school day when your child needs teacher's aide support.

The plan will be reviewed every year to make sure it continues to match your child's needs.

If there's a significant change in your child's needs, you can ask your school to have your child's Care Plan updated. You will need to provide details of what's changed for your child. You should also let Special Education staff know.



“My hopes and dreams for Patrick are the same as for my other children – that he reaches his full potential and he’s happy and well balanced. I don’t ever want to limit him to what I think he might be able to do. I want to keep dreaming big.”

Jenny

Questions you might have about the fund

Q: How often will my child’s support from the fund be reviewed?

A: The verifiers will review funding for your child once a year.

Q: Who manages the funding?

A: The money for children funded by SHHNF does not necessarily go directly to their school but is held by a fund holder. In some districts Special Education is the fund holder. In other districts, schools with a number of students on SHHNF are the fund holder for their school and others nearby.

These schools hold the funding for children receiving SHHNF and organise and pay for specialist services themselves. They buy these services either from Special Education or from specialists working in the community.

The fund holder makes sure the money is used fairly and pays schools their teachers’ aide and Consumables Grant money each term.

Q: How is my child’s teacher’s aide support decided?

A: The team working on your child’s Individual Care Plan will work out what teacher’s aide support your child needs. They will then make a request to the fund holder who will consider the request alongside others in your district and taking into account the available budget.

The support your child receives can be reviewed if your child’s needs change. Your fund holder will need to see an updated Individual Care Plan.

Your child’s teacher’s aide support might change each year and you might not get the exact amount your team requested. After discussing this with your school and lead worker you can ask for a review of the decision. Every region or district will have a review process. If your child changes schools their support needs will also be reviewed.

Q: What if my child is on the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme or gets other support?

A: Your child might be supported by the SHHNF at the same time as receiving support from any other special education funding scheme except ORS. Children who meet the criteria for ORS, and who have high health needs, will have all their care and supervision funded by ORS.

Q: What if my child’s high health need was caused by an accident?

A: If your child needs ongoing care at school because they have been injured in an accident, they will receive support through the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC).



Regional health schools

The aim of health schools is to make sure your child continues their education when they're too sick to go to their usual school.

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

No matter where you live in New Zealand, including rural areas, health school teachers might visit your child at home or in hospital. They will work with your child, your family/whānau and your child's school. Your child will remain on the roll of their usual school while receiving support from a health school.

Can my child get this support?

Teachers from the health schools can teach your child 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 child 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.

Your child 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 ORS.

Accessing the service

To get support from the health school, the health school will need to get a medical certificate from a medical practitioner specialising in the condition, saying what the condition is, how it's being treated and, most importantly, how the condition and treatment is stopping your child attending school.

Anyone can make a referral to a regional health school. To refer your child, contact the regional health school nearest to you. To find out more, talk to your child's teacher or principal. If your child is in hospital, talk to one of their nurses or the health school teacher.

How regional health schools work

Health schools have teachers based all around New Zealand. They're able to visit your child and, after discussing their learning with your child's usual teacher, can teach your child and guide their learning. The teachers might visit every day or just once or twice a week, depending on your child's age and education needs.

The focus for health school teachers is on the school curriculum – what should be taught to all children – rather than on your child's health or social needs.

Every child admitted to a health school will have an *Individual Education Plan* or IEP. Your child's IEP will be based on their learning needs, their regular school programme and the New Zealand Curriculum.

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

Contact us

If you're unclear about any part of our service or have questions about the support your child receives, please ask. Start by talking with those who work most closely with your child. You can also 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 on our website: www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/YourChild/SupportForYourChild/ExtraSupport.

If you're deaf or have a hearing impairment, you can also contact Special Education through the New Zealand Relay Service on 0800 4 711 711 or go to www.nzrelay.co.nz.

Your feedback is important. By letting us know what's going well – and what we can do better – we can improve what we do to support all children with special education needs.

Contact details for the people supporting my child:

My local Special Education office:



New Zealand Government

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