

An overview of Federal and State Government policies for the management of students with epilepsy

By Epilepsy Australia (May, 2020)

Australian Government

Under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* schools are obliged to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. **For further information visit:** Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005>

Australian Capital Territory

The Education Directorate (EDU) has a commitment to the inclusion of all students in public education. Students living with epilepsy will receive support as identified in their individualised *Known Medical Condition Response Epilepsy Plan* available from the EDU and completed in conjunction with the family. Students with complex or invasive health care needs including epilepsy, requiring an emergency response administration of medication, may be referred to ACT Healthcare Access at School (HAAS). HAAS provides nurse-led care to students with complex or invasive health care needs while they are at any ACT public school. Staff must be trained to support the individualised needs of the student. **For further information visit:** Education ACT www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/872226/HAAS-Healthcare-Access-at-School-FAQs.pdf (572KB)

New South Wales

The New South Wales Department of Education requires that individual healthcare planning is undertaken for all students living with epilepsy, including developing and implementing an individual health care plan. This ensures all students have the opportunity to participate in education regardless of their health support needs. While a student's health support rests primarily with the parent, school staff have a duty to keep students safe while they are at school or are involved in school activities. A First Aid Seizure Management Plan (Epilepsy Management Plan) should be completed by the student's doctor and form part of the individual health care plan. All staff should be trained to recognise seizures and know what to do if one occurs in the playground or classroom. **For further information visit:** NSW Department of Education www.education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/health-and-physical-care/health-care-procedures/conditions/epilepsy

Northern Territory

The Northern Territory Department of Education policies and procedures for administration of medication and support to a student with a health condition provide advice for schools, students, parents and the wider school community on the provision of education services and decision-making processes across the Northern Territory as it relates to health care support. Schools can also create their own policies in addition to the departmental policies. Documents required include a health care plan and actions to support student engagement in school life including: a student's health care plan form and action plan, an Epilepsy Management Plan, and Emergency Medication

Management Plan, seizure first aid poster and seizure record. Teachers are required to be trained in supporting the student living with epilepsy and in the administration of medication as per the student's health care and epilepsy management plans. **For further information visit:** Northern Territory Department of Education www.education.nt.gov.au

Queensland

The Queensland Department of Education's *Managing students' health support needs at school* outlines the measures state schools must take to support students with health support needs at school, so that all students can safely participate in all aspects of school life. Principals have a non-delegable duty-of-care to students enrolled at and attending their school, which includes enabling students with health support needs to maintain their wellbeing and engage in learning safely. This requires consideration at the student and school level. A range of personnel and parents/carers have a role in providing a safe environment for students. School staff, parents/carers and health professionals collaborate to manage identified health risks. Schools provide support for students, taking into account what is safe and reasonable in an individual case. This procedure is relevant for students who require support beyond basic first aid or basic administration of medication. Students' support is documented on Individual health plans and/or Emergency health plans (health plans), which guide school staff to perform a health support procedure that is required at school. Schools manage and implement health plans, which are developed and updated by health professionals. State schools have a responsibility to ensure necessary school staff are trained on health topics as appropriate for conditions such as epilepsy. **For further information visit:** Queensland Department of Education <http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Managing-students-health-support-needs-at-school.aspx>

South Australia

The South Australia Department of Education and Child Development supports the importance of health care planning for students. Health care plans specify the arrangements and staff training necessary to help children with health conditions attend school or preschool. Epilepsy is recognised as a specific health care need requiring a clear support plan and training for school staff. All staff should be trained to recognise seizures and know what to do if one occurs while a student living with epilepsy is in their care. **For further information visit:** South Australia Department of Education and Child Development www.decd.sa.gov.au/supporting-students/health-e-safety-and-wellbeing/health-care-plans

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Department of Education has a clear policy and position on support for students living with epilepsy. The requirements of schools can be found in the Health and Wellbeing document *Specific Health Issues Procedures*. This document must be read in conjunction with the *Student Health and Administration of Medication Procedure* and the Department of Education's *Health Care and Safety Policy*. Principals must ensure that any student with a medical condition has documentation completed and updated, including Medical Management Plan, authorisation by the parent/s for the administration of all medication, authorisation by a doctor, dispensing pharmacist or nurse for the administration of all prescribed medication and *Administration of Student Medication Record*, which must include a record when medication is administered to a student on each and every occasion. **For further information visit:**

Tasmania Department of Education www.education.tas.gov.au/students/school-and-colleges/health-and-wellbeing

Victoria

The Victorian Department of Education and Training has a clearly articulated *Epilepsy and Seizure Policy*, which ensures schools support students diagnosed with epilepsy and students having a non-epileptic seizure event appropriately. The policy requires schools to implement strategies to assist students with epilepsy according to their specific needs, including: ensuring appropriate epilepsy management plans and, if necessary, emergency medication management plans, are in place for students with epilepsy; ensuring staff with a direct teaching role, or other staff who have a duty of care, receive appropriate training in Understanding and Managing Epilepsy and, where indicated, Administration of Emergency Medication Parts 1 & 2; have in place a Student Health Support Plan developed by the school in consultation with the parents/carers; and must also provide appropriate emergency first aid response and post-seizure support when a student has a non-epileptic seizure event. **For further information visit:** Victorian Department of Education and Training www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/epilepsy.aspx

Western Australia

The Western Australia Department of Education lists epilepsy as a seizure disorder on the standardised list of medical conditions requiring health support for a student living with the condition. The policy requires that appropriate support is provided for students with special health needs. The *Emergency Response Plan* for Student with Special Need provides an overview of the health care needs and emergency response requirements for students with multiple health care needs who are frequently admitted to hospital during school hours. Where a student is unable to self-administer prescribed medication as is the case in the emergency administration of medication in the event of seizure, school staff, who in their role support a student living with epilepsy, should be trained to recognise seizures and know what to do if one occurs while the student is in their care. The requirements for administration must be documented in the *Administration of Medication* form. **For further information visit:** Western Australia Department of Education www.det.wa.edu.au/studentssupport/behaviourandwellbeing