School Based Youth Health Nurses - A Guide for School Staff

The School Based Youth Health Nurse (SBYHN) program is funded and managed by Queensland Health and operates in state secondary schools across Queensland, including Schools of Distance Education.

**What the SBYHN Program provides**
The SBYHN program is a whole school preventative and health promotion program that provides:
- a confidential health service to students and the school community
- health information and assessment to students, teachers and the school community
- intervention and links to other services as required.

**How the SBYHN can support teachers**
The SBYHN can contribute to teachers' planning and development of health focused learning activities by:
- providing advice about health education resources
- providing advice on relevant Queensland Health policy and programs
- contributing to the development of teaching and learning resources
- supporting professional development for teachers on health issues
- informing the school of emerging health issues (both in the school and wider community)
- assisting in the planning and development of relevant educational responses and health focused activities to emerging health issues
- co-presenting with teachers within school programs.

**How the SBYHN can support individual students**
The SBYHN offers individual health consultations to students to provide health information and advice. This may include:
- early detection of actual or potential health problems
- providing information and options regarding relevant services (internal and external to the school) that provide students with further assessment, treatment or support
- providing brief interventions and/or referrals as appropriate.

Some of the main issues for which young people access a SBYHN include mental health concerns such as:
- social and emotional wellbeing
- relationships
- stress
- sexual and reproductive health
- drugs (including tobacco and alcohol)
- growth and development.

School staff or parents who identify that a student would benefit from access to the SBYHN should discuss this with the student and support them in making an appointment.

Where possible and with the young person’s consent, the school may establish a team approach with Education Queensland school support staff to address the health needs of a young person.

**Year 7 secondary school students and their access to the SBYHN program**
From 2015, Year 7 will become the first year of high school in Queensland. To prepare for this move, up to 20 state schools will pilot Year 7 in a secondary environment before 2015. In accordance with the SBYHN Memorandum of Understanding and program management guidelines, this service is accessible by all students in a secondary setting.

The SBYHN will assess if the young person has a sufficient level of maturity and understanding with regard to the issues and the health service proposed to determine whether the young person can consent to the service.
Where the SBYHN assesses that the young person does not have a sufficient level of maturity and understanding to consent to the service, the nurse will seek permission from the young person’s parents.

Schools are encouraged to inform the school community that students may self-refer to the SBYHN without parental consent.

**Whole of school and wider community support**

Within the school, the SBYHN can:

- advocate for young people on issues affecting their health and wellbeing
- work collaboratively within the school community to address health and social issues impacting on young people
- provide health information and support on an individual, group or whole of school basis
- develop (or facilitate the development of) partnerships between the school, parents, relevant agencies, services, organisations and the broader community to meet identified health needs
- provide individual health consultations for parents and members of the school community where relevant and connected to the health and wellbeing of young people.

**Responsibilities which ARE NOT part of the SBYHN role**

Queensland Health employs the SBYHN to maintain a prevention (not treatment) focus. As such, the SBYHN will **not** be responsible for:

- providing routine first aid or first aid training
- providing Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) for Life in Schools training
- administering short term or routine medications or health procedures
- providing training in the management of specialised health conditions, e.g. anaphylaxis, diabetes, epilepsy or asthma
- managing student’s specialised health procedures
- providing intensive, long term counselling.
- supervising classes, groups of students, or individuals, except during health consultations or group health interventions outside of class time

**Other Nursing Services available in Queensland state schools**

Education Queensland employs Registered Nurses (EQRNs) to work in state schools, to assist school personnel to safely manage the health needs of students with verified disabilities and specialised health needs, supporting their participation in an educational program.

**Related Health Procedures**

For information on supporting students’ health and medication needs, refer to the following procedures:

- [First Aid](#)
- [Administration of medications in schools](#)

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