

# Ministry of Education Policy Statement

## *Supporting Students with Potentially Life-Threatening Medical Conditions (e.g., allergies, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) in Saskatchewan Schools*

### **Authority:**

#### Legal documents

- *The Education Act, 1995*, sections 85, 86, 87, 142, 175, 190, 192, 232
- *The Emergency Medical Aid Act, 1978*

### **Intent:**

In accordance with the authority listed above, the Government of Saskatchewan promotes a comprehensive and holistic approach to student health, safety and well-being.

This policy does not deviate from or call into question any other legislative authorities, including but not limited to: *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; *The Teachers' Federation Act, 2006* and *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

The Ministry of Education believes that all children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to the rights defined by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2018*.

The intent of this policy is to require school divisions and the Conseil des écoles francsaskoises (CEF) to review, update or develop administrative procedure(s) related to the management of potentially life-threatening medical conditions in schools following the expectations outlined in this policy statement. When reviewing, updating or developing administrative procedure(s), school divisions are to consider:

- the four components of the *Comprehensive School Community Health* approach (i.e., High-Quality Teaching and Learning, Healthy Physical and Social Environments, Family and Community Engagement, and Effective Policy), as they can assist and be applied by schools to take a holistic approach in supporting students living with potentially life-threatening medical condition(s); and,
- the need for students to be provided with the supports that enable them to develop and attain competencies and independence, as outlined in *Actualizing a Needs-Based Model* (2023).

The ministry recognizes that all students have the right to a safe, healthy and inclusive school environment, where the daily and emergent health and safety needs of students are met. Schools have a duty to promote well-being and accommodate the health and safety needs of students living with potentially life-threatening medical condition(s), as determined by a qualified health practitioner such as a nurse practitioner, physician or allergist.

Potentially life-threatening medical conditions may include medical conditions such as allergies, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and/or other medical conditions that require daily or ongoing management with the potential to result in a medical incident or life threatening emergency.

### **Policy Statement:**

The Ministry of Education requires school divisions and the CÉF to develop, update and implement operational administrative procedures related to dealing with students with potentially life-threatening medical conditions in schools.

All administrative procedures related to this item must:

- outline the ways in which school divisions are to act in specific circumstances related to the management of students' potentially life-threatening medical conditions, including detailing which staff positions will be responsible for handling, administering, securely storing and disposing of medications. This includes outlining the roles and responsibilities of the:
  - school board;
  - le conseil scolaire;
  - school division;
  - le CÉF;
  - school community (e.g., health professionals and community partners);
  - school principal/designate;
  - school staff, including permanent, part-time, temporary and substitute positions;
  - parents/guardians; and,
  - individuals with potentially life-threatening medical conditions;
- describe how school divisions will provide professional development by qualified professionals and/or parents/guardians who have been trained by qualified professionals for staff to handle specific circumstances related to the management of students' potentially life-threatening medical conditions; and,
- maintain records and transition plans for students living with a potentially life-threatening medical condition(s) including accurate, up-to-date individual care plans that include how to respond to a medical incident or life-threatening emergency.

In addition to the above requirements, the Ministry of Education recommends, but does not require, that the administrative procedures will address some of the following best practices, including:

- defining relevant terms and providing an overview of signs and symptoms, potential triggers and the urgent need to respond appropriately during the school day and school-related activities;
- developing and/or updating administrative procedures in consultation with students (if appropriate), parents/guardians, school staff, community organizations, public health professionals, union representatives and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation;

- describing methods for ongoing communication within the school community, inclusive of parents/guardians and students, to create awareness and support for individuals with a potentially life-threatening medical condition(s) who may be at risk; and,
- describing methods of communication (e.g., school division template, phone call, email) between schools/school divisions when a student transfers from one school to another (i.e., the individual care plan is made available to the new school in a timely fashion).

### Resources:

Key resources have been identified to assist school divisions and the CEF to develop or renew their administrative procedures:

- *Actualizing a Needs-Based Model* (2023)
- *Adaptive Dimension* (2023)
- *Anaphylaxis in Schools & Other Settings 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Revised* (2016)
- *Asthma Management in Schools* (2010)
- *Child Care Regulations, 2015*
- *Comprehensive School Community Health* (2014)
- *Diabetes Canada: Guidelines for the Care of Students Living with Diabetes at School* (n.d.)
- *Managing Life-Threatening Conditions: Guidelines for Saskatchewan School Divisions* (2015)
- *Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Policies 1.9 (Child and Youth Well-Being)*
- *Registrar's Handbook for School Administrators*
- *When Every Second Matters Recommendations: Special Investigation Report* (2018)