

# Standards of Practice: School Health Services



## Introduction: Section 1

### Summary

The Vermont Standards of Practice: School Health Services Manual [Manual] addresses Vermont school health services in partnership with PreK-12 education. The Manual is Vermont's guide for school nurses, school administrators, and others who develop, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement activities of school health services. This Introduction discusses the role of the school nurse in supervising the care and outcomes of nursing tasks. Additionally, details about the development, revisions, reviewers, and history of the Manual are listed below.

The Manual aims to comply with State and Federal laws which govern the practice of healthcare provided by or delegated by healthcare professionals licensed in the State of Vermont. The Manual should not be taken as legal advice. Information provided within the Manual is founded in evidence-based nursing and health science, national standards of practice, the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child framework, and the Framework for 21st Century School Nursing Practice (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2014; National Association of School Nurses [NASN], 2016). Guidance and requirements for school health services frequently change. Therefore, the Manual undergoes a continuous process of revision under the auspices of the Vermont Department of Health [VDH] in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Education [AOE]. **School Nurses or Associate School Nurses (SN/ASN) must become competent in the content listed in each of the Manual Sections labeled "Required School Nurse or Associate School Nurse (SN/ASN) Role".**

The Vermont State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices, *Series 2000- Education Quality Standards* (2014) states:

Health services, including health appraisal and counseling, communicable disease control, mental health, and emergency and first aid care, shall be made available in a confidential manner to students in each school. These health services shall be delivered in accordance with the school district's written policies and procedures, which shall be developed in collaboration with parents and community health resources.

### *SN/ASN Supervision of School Health Services and Health Outcomes*

In Vermont, it is required that a Registered Nurse (RN) licensed as a SN or ASN direct, supervise, and delegate nursing care, tasks, and student outcomes provided by a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Licensed or Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (AP) in schools (26 V.S.A. § 1572; The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators, 2019). AP are "individuals who are trained to function in an assistive role to the RN or LPN in the provision of patient care activities as delegated by the licensed nurse. This term includes but it not limited to licensed nursing assistants and unlicensed personnel" ([Vermont Board of Nursing](#), 2018). The school building administrator or superintendent is responsible for the supervision, evaluation, and employment status of the SN/ASN *as an employee* but not as an RN.

### *Orienting LPNs and UAPs in Schools*

It is the role of the SN/ASN to provide direction, orientation, and ongoing training and professional development to LPNs and APs in schools (The Vermont Standards Board for

Professional Educators, 2019; Vermont State Board of Nursing, 2018). The employing school or district is responsible for providing the SN/ASN with adequate time to manage this work. The responsibilities of the organization, employer, or nurse leader are to (Vermont State Board of Nursing, 2020):

- Provide policies and procedures to support the delegation process
- Assure adequate time for effective clinical training
- Maintain and assure access to documentation of assistive personnel competencies
- Provide resources needed to support safe delegation, including adequate staffing and an appropriate skill mix.

#### *Resources for SN/ASN who are orienting LPN/APs*

- Refer to:
  - Each Section of the Standards of Practice: School Health Services Manual; See required SN/ASN role
  - National Association of School Nurses website
  - Vermont State Board of Nursing Scope of Practice and delegation position statements (Vermont State Board of Nursing, 2018; Vermont State Board of Nursing, 2020).
- Contact:
  - Your local School Liaison at the Office of Local Health for questions
  - The State School Nurse Consultant (SSNC), at the Vermont Department of Health.

#### *Revision Process for the Manual*

The School Nurse Advisory Committee reviews sections of the manual annually and recommends revisions to the Commissioner of Health and Secretary of Education. The School Nurse Advisory Committee consists of four Vermont school nurses, the State School Nurse Consultant (SSNC), the Vermont State School Nurses Association (VSSNA) President, the Division Director of Maternal and Child Health at the VDH, and professional representation from the AOE. The Committee welcomes parent and student engagement in the manual revision process. Please contact the SSNC for information and to share recommendations.

Revisions of the sections of the Manual are done on a rotating basis with input from content experts and the medical community to provide feedback and guidance. Content specialists include the Vermont chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians, institutions of higher education, the Vermont State Board of Nursing, the Vermont Medical Society, the VSSNA, the Vermont Principals' Association, the Vermont Superintendents Association, and the Vermont School Boards Association. The VDH, AOE leadership, and legal professionals review the final content to be included in the Manual. Approved revisions of the Manual are posted on the VDH website. Stakeholders receive electronic notification of the updates made to the Manual.

#### *Manual Organization*

Each section of the Manual contains a statement of purpose, authorization or legal references (where applicable), definitions of key terms, guidance for the required and recommended SN/ASN role, resources, and sample templates and documents when available. Reference and resource materials come from legal statutes and evidence-based literature from professional and peer-reviewed sources. Sample templates and documents may be available and adaptable to school settings.

### *Resources*

Resources listed within the Manual are free whenever possible but occasionally require registration. Please notify the SSNC of failed links and the specific section where found.

### *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)*

An MOU was initially signed in 2009 that outlines the joint efforts of VDH and AOE to link and optimize support for school health services. The MOU is updated regularly by the Commissioners of VDH and AOE. The most current MOU is in effect from 2019 to 2023.

### *School Nurse Advisory Committee 2021/2022*

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### **Respectfully Submitted,**

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## REFERENCES

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