

# HIGHVIEW COLLEGE EPILEPSY MANAGEMENT PLAN



**Person Responsible – Director of Pastoral Care**

## **Rationale**

**Epilepsy** is a tendency to have recurrent seizures and is the most common serious neurological condition. With effective medication management and a healthy lifestyle, many students with epilepsy lead active lives. However, due to the seizures themselves, or the effects of anti-epileptic medication, students with epilepsy may experience difficulties medically and educationally. Some students could require additional support from school staff to manage their epilepsy and improve their educational progress and achievement.

## **Aims**

To provide increased levels of support for the medical and educational needs of students with epilepsy, or those who suffer with seizures, by following their individual Health Support Plan.

To raise awareness of epilepsy. Teachers and school staff will receive current health information and training to assist students with epilepsy so that they can participate in school life to the fullest.

## **Implementation**

It is essential that all students with epilepsy have a current individual management plan (General Medical Advice Form – Epilepsy) while they are at school. This form will contain the information staff require to provide routine and emergency care for the student and also include an up-to-date photo of the student.

Development of this plan involves consultation between students, parents(s)/or guardians, the student's health practitioner and relevant school staff.

All staff will receive regular medical information about the student and also be involved in training sessions to improve their understanding of epilepsy.

The College First Aid Staff will have training specific to epilepsy management.

## **Additional information**

**APPENDIX 1: What is epilepsy?**

**APPENDIX 2: Seizure Types**

**APPENDIX 3: Strategies to support students with epilepsy:**

**APPENDIX 4: Impact on School**

**APPENDIX 5: Roles and Responsibilities**

Developed by Aileen Thomas – 2013  
Updated by Marion Martin - 2016

## APPENDIX 1: WHAT IS EPILEPSY?

**Seizures** are caused by a sudden burst of excess electrical activity in the brain resulting in a temporary disruption in the normal messages passing between brain cells. The kind of seizure and the parts of the body affected by it relates to the part of the brain in which the irregular electrical activity has occurred. Seizures can involve loss of consciousness, a range of unusual movements, odd feelings and sensations or changed behaviour.

## APPENDIX 2: SEIZURE TYPES

The term generalised seizures is used where the whole of the brain is affected and partial or focal seizures used to describe seizures where only part of the brain is affected. The most common seizures for school aged children are listed below.

<b>Generalised Seizures</b>	Tonic-clonic	A convulsive seizure involving loss of consciousness; body stiffens, followed by jerking of limbs, confused state afterwards; often incontinent.
	Absence	Momentary loss of consciousness; person appears to daydream or be distracted; can happen frequently.
	Myoclonic	Muscles in whole or part of body jerk briefly; can be single, uncontrolled movement; usually in the morning.
	Atonic	Loss of muscle tone; person falls to the ground
<b>Partial (focal) Seizure</b>	Complex partial	Involves impaired awareness which means they don't know where they are or what is happening. May display unusual behaviours e.g. swallowing, scratching, wandering etc.; can be mistaken for misbehaviour.

## APPENDIX 3: STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH EPILEPSY

- Help students to remember to take their anti-epileptic medication
- Discuss any known triggers for seizures with parents and avoid when possible
- First aid procedures for the student's seizure type should be known by all staff.

### When a student has a seizure staff should:

- remain calm as other students tend to mirror the teacher's reaction
- notify the office and first aid staff as soon as possible
- measure the time between seizures
- protect the student having the seizure by:
  - for a convulsive seizure, placing something soft under their head, loosening any tight clothing or restraints and removing hard objects that may cause injury, then laying the student on their side as soon as it is safe to do so
  - not restraining the student, stopping the jerking or putting anything in their mouth
  - administering emergency medication, if prescribed, according to the Individual Management Plan
  - talking to the student to make sure they have regained full consciousness
  - staying with them until the seizure is over to provide reassurance

### Office first aid staff will access and call an ambulance

- For any seizure, if you do not know the student or there is no Student Health Support Plan
- If the seizure continues for more than 5 minutes, or if another seizure begins
- When a serious injury has occurred, or if it occurs in water

See the seizure as a learning experience for other students to:

- acquire accurate information
- develop appropriate attitudes
- gain understanding, not pity.

**After the seizure** the student may need time to recover and rest in a quiet corner. The Individual Management Plan should provide details about what to do following a seizure, particularly how long to supervise the student after the seizure ends.

Subject to medical advice, participation in **sporting and physical activities** should be encouraged. Swimming lessons should be also encouraged, but need careful planning and supervision.

The Co-ordinator should regularly communicate with the student's parents about the student's successes, development, changes and any health and education concerns.

## APPENDIX 4: IMPACT ON SCHOOL

Students with epilepsy may experience difficulties with:

- memory and learning
- concentration and attention
- mood swings
- social isolation
- depression and/or anxiety
- fatigue due to:
  - some anti-epileptic medication
- night time seizures
- day time seizures
- poor sleep patterns caused by abnormal brain activity
- processing of information
- changes in behaviour
- absences from school due to seizures, medical appointments, treatment and/or family concerns

## APPENDIX 5: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Deputy Principal – Pastoral Care has the overall responsibility for implementing strategies and processes for ensuring a safe and supportive environment for students.

### **The Deputy Principal – Pastoral Care is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training about epilepsy
- Ensuring that the Epilepsy Management Policy is followed by all staff members.

### **All staff and teachers are responsible for:**

- Understanding the Epilepsy Management Policy and following it
- Being aware of the Individual Management Plans for all students with epilepsy
- Notifying the College First Aid Office Staff immediately if a student has a seizure
- Helping to keep all students calm in the event of a seizure
- Following instructions given by the first aid staff
- Respecting the privacy of students and their medical information
- Providing accurate information about epilepsy to all students
- Increasing their own understanding of epilepsy and seizures.

### **The Pastoral Care Co-ordinators are responsible for:**

- Ensuring details of medical conditions are included on SEQTA and that staff are familiar with them
- Contacting parents/carers to inform them of an epileptic seizure and medical concerns, or asking the College First Aid Officer/Office Staff to notify parents in an emergency
- Informing the parent/carer about appropriate help and support which is available
- Monitoring the student's progress following a medical incident.

### **Students are responsible for:**

- Taking appropriate medication as stated in their Individual Management Plan
- Ensuring that medication is always at school
- Going to the office, or notifying supervising staff, if they suspect or are aware of indicators of a seizure
- Notifying their home group teacher or coordinator if they have any concerns

### **Parents will be encouraged to:**

- Provide an Individual Management Plan that is up-to-date with medications at least once a year or after a seizure
- Provide an up-to-date student photo each year
- Notify the First Aid Officer if there are any changes to medication or student details
- Ensure that medication is provided as set out on the Medication Distribution Form.