
Administrating Paracetamol in the School Setting

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Introduction and Purpose

This guidance recommends that school to keep its own stock of Paracetamol tablets/suspension. This reduces the risk of pupils carrying medicines and avoids confusion over what may and may not be administered. If it is the school's policy not to stock Paracetamol, there must be a clear and safe arrangement for parents to supply them to the school for the child.

DfE, 2017, recommends that children should manage and carry their own medication in school if competent to do so. However this is an advisory statement which schools can consider as part of a holistic risk assessment for the school and its pupils. Many schools prefer for children not to carry Paracetamol at school and keep it stored appropriately.

When not to administer Paracetamol

- Following a head injury
- Where a child is already on some other medication
- Where a child has taken Paracetamol or paracetamol-containing medicine within the last 4 hours, or if the child has taken 4 doses within the previous 24 hours
- If the child is allergic
- Consent from the child's parent/guardian has not been obtained both verbally and in writing (for children under 16)

Aspirin or preparations containing aspirin must never be given

Aspirin should NOT be given to children under 16 years old as its use is associated with Reye's syndrome (a severe neurological disorder).

Any frequently recurring need to give Paracetamol must be reported directly to the parents. This guidance advises that school should only administer Paracetamol three times in a term to an individual child. If a child requests more than this, parents should be advised to seek medical assessment, unless parents have specifically requested it because of a medical condition for a limited period of time.

Paracetamol must be stored securely as all other medicines are stored, and should not be kept in first aid boxes.

Only one member of staff at any one time should be responsible for giving medicines, to avoid the risk of giving a double dose. They must be relieved from other duties while preparing or giving the medicine, to reduce the likelihood of error.

Before giving the child Paracetamol

1. The child is first encouraged to get some fresh air/have a drink/something to eat/take a walk/sit in the shade/lie down (as appropriate) and Paracetamol is only considered if these actions do not work.
2. There must be written parental consent, with verbal consent from the parent or carer on the day.
3. Only standard Paracetamol may be administered. Combination drugs, which contain other drugs besides Paracetamol, must not be administered.

Administering Paracetamol

1. **Children can only be given one dose of Paracetamol during the school day for the indication of pain:** If this does not relieve the pain, contact the parent or the emergency contact.
2. The member of staff responsible for giving medicines must witness the child taking the Paracetamol, and make a record of it. The school must write to the parent on the day, stating the time and the amount of the dose.
3. The child should be made aware that Paracetamol should only be taken when absolutely necessary.

Dosage

Age of Child	Dosage of Paracetamol
Child 6 months–1 year	120mg every 4–6hours; maximum 4 doses per day
Child 2–3 years	180mg every 4–6hours; maximum 4 doses per day
Child 4–5 years	240mg every 4–6hours; maximum 4 doses per day
Child 6–7 years	240–250mg every 4–6hours; maximum 4 doses per day
Child 8–9 years	360-375mg every 4 -6 hours; maximum 4 doses per day
Child 10–11 years	480–500mg every 4–6hours; maximum 4 doses per day
Child 12–15 years	480–750mg every 4–6hours; maximum 4 doses per day
Child 16–17 years	0.5–1g every 4–6hours; maximum 4 doses per day

Record Keeping

When a child is given any medicine, a written record of must be kept.

The record must include:

- The name of the child
- Child's date of birth
- The name of the medicine
- The strength of the medicine
- The dose given, and the form
- The time and date of administration
- Name and signature of the person giving the medicine to the child.

After giving the child Paracetamol

- Send the child back to class with a note informing the teacher.
- If the child improves – send a note home in the book bag at home time to inform parents.
- If the child does not improve or gets worse – call parents to collect the child.

Paracetamol administration checklist

Child's name/Date of birth	
What are the child's symptoms?	
Does the child have any known illnesses or medical conditions? If yes please state what it is.	
Is the child allergic to anything? What?	
Has the child had any medicines today? If yes what?	
Offer fresh air/have a drink/something to eat/take a walk/sit in the shade/lie down	(Please circle)
Is this a frequently recurring need? (more than 3 times in a term) If so contact parents?	
Written consent from parent?	Yes/No
Verbal consent from parent today?	Yes/No
Note sent home informing parents?	Yes/No
Administration recorded in log	Yes/No
Child improved/same/worse?	(please circle)
Child back to class/sent home?	(please circle)

Staff Name (print)..... Date.....

Staff signature.....

References

Department for Education and Skills (2005), *Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings*. DfES Publications: London

Joint formulary committee, 2018. *British National Formulary for Children 2016/2017*. London: BMJ Group and Pharmaceutical Press

Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (2017 – updated), Department for Education, (accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions>, 3 June 2018)

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