

Guidance: Handling and Disposing of Controlled Medication in Schools



OKLAHOMA
STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

Students are often required to take medication during the school day. It is the parents or guardian's responsibility to supply the school with the medication and to pick up any unused medication either at the end of the school year, when the student's healthcare provider discontinues the medication or when the student withdraws from the school.

It is not uncommon for controlled prescription medications to be administered in the school setting for the treatment of students' behavioral, emotional or medical conditions. By definition: "[controlled medication is] a substance subject to the U.S. Controlled Substances Act (1970), which regulates the prescribing and dispensing, as well as the manufacturing, storage, sale or distribution of substances assigned to five schedules according to their 1) potential for or evidence of abuse, 2) potential for psychic or physiologic dependence, 3) contribution to a public health risk, 4) harmful pharmacologic effect or 5) role as a precursor of other controlled substances." These can include medications (Adderall, phenobarbital, Concerta and Ritalin, for example) which have a high potential for abuse that may lead to psychological or physical dependency.

School personnel must follow established guidelines to safely handle and dispose of medication with adverse potential effects taken by students. The guidance in this document is designed to help relevant school personnel understand both how to handle potentially dangerous student medications and safely dispose of medication if parents/guardians fail to retrieve the unused portion. **Under no circumstances should unused medication be sent home with a student.**

How to Handle Student Medications

1. Parent/legal guardian delivers the medication to the school in the original prescription bottle and completes the district form giving permission to administer the medication according to the physician's written directions.
2. The appropriate school staff member and a witness must count the medication and document the count weekly.
3. Controlled substance medication must be kept in a separate locked container in a locked cabinet or drawer. Only the staff member assigned medication administration duty or school nurse should have keys to the locked container and cabinet or drawer. Keys must be kept in a secured location not accessible to other staff members or students.
4. School notifies parents/legal guardians three times that medication not claimed at the end of the school year will be destroyed: 1. in a letter at the beginning of the school year explaining the procedure, 2. in a letter at the end of the school year letter explaining the need to claim unused medication and 3. in a phone call or email at the end of the school year to remind of the need to pick up medication and restate that medication not picked up will be destroyed. (See sample letters.)
5. The appropriate school staff member completes a controlled medication log that includes the following: school name, academic year, student name and date of birth, medication (name, dose, form, quantity), verification date of two letters and one phone call and discarded amount. (See sample forms.)
6. Two designated staff members (the person who administers the medication and an administrator **or** school nurse and an administrator) must count the unused medication prior to disposal and document the count.
7. All disposal logs must be kept in the office or school nurse office for 5 years or according to current district policy.

How to Dispose of Unused Medication Not Retrieved by Parents/Guardians

1. Medication should never be flushed down the toilet or sink.
2. Disposal procedures:
 - a. Empty each medication from its original container into a sealable container or sealable plastic bag.
 - b. Do not mix different types of medicine; dangerous chemical reactions may occur.
 - c. If the medicine is a solid (pill, capsule, suppository, etc.), add a small amount of water to dissolve it.
 - d. Add an unpalatable substance (such as coffee grounds or cat litter) to the liquid medicine in the bag.
 - e. Seal the plastic bag.
 - f. Dispose in the regular trash.
3. Remove labels from the empty medication container or use a permanent marker to black out the student's name, name of the medication, name of the prescribing doctor and prescription number prior to disposing of empty container in the trash.

Sample Parent/Legal Guardian Medication Letter (New School Year)

Date:

RE: Parent Medication Letter _____ School Year (example 2017-2018)

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

This letter is sent to you as an acknowledgement of your request to have your child receive medication during the school day.

Please note, all medications (controlled substance prescription medications, non-controlled prescription medications and over-the-counter medications) must be picked up by a parent/legal guardian by the last day of school **or** if the child withdraws or transfers to another school. **Medications will not be sent home with students; those remaining in the school office or school nurse's office on the last day of school will be destroyed.**

Please contact the principal or school nurse if you have any questions.

Thank you,

[Insert name of Principal or School Nurse]

[Insert school contact information]

Sample Parent/Legal Guardian Medication Letter (End of school year)

Date:

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

If your child has received medications at school this school year, please make arrangements with the school office or school nurse to pick up any unused medications.

Medication(s) will not be sent home with students. If you have any questions regarding the current medication requirements, please contact the school office or school nurse.

Please note that student medications left at school after the last day of class will be destroyed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

[Insert name of Principal or School Nurse]

Sample

Controlled Medication Disposal Log (Unclaimed Medication by Parent/Legal Guardian)

Name of School _____ Academic School Year _____

Date	Student Name	Name of Medication	Amount of Medicine Discarded (Pills/Liquid)	Initial of Administrator and Staff/School Nurse Witness

Initial _____ Signature _____

Initial _____ Signature _____

Initial _____ Signature _____

Initial _____ Signature _____