

Medway School Nursing Service – Universal & Targeted Support

The Medway School Nursing service offers a comprehensive, confidential public health support package for school aged children and young people aged 4–19, focusing on physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing, early intervention, health promotion, safeguarding support, and care coordination with education, health and social care partners.

Lead by a team of Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (registered as School Nurses on the NMC register), school staff nurses, emotional wellbeing practitioners and clinical support workers.

The service works across schools, clinics, homes and community settings to support young people and families with issues such as emotional health, healthy lifestyles, sleep, and healthy relationships.

We support children who attend Medway schools (excluding independent schools) regardless as to where they live or are registered with a GP. We also support those children who are home educated, and those not in education or employment or training (NEET) but they must live in Medway.

The following pages provide more detailed information on the support we can provide and the referral criteria.

- **Emotional Wellbeing** - Promoting resilience, coping strategies, and mental health awareness.
- **Health Needs Impacting School Attendance** - Helping address health barriers to regular school attendance.
- **Healthy Eating & Lifestyle** – supporting families with nutrition, meal routines, and promoting active lifestyles
- **Healthy Relationships** - Supporting positive friendships, boundaries, and online safety.
- **Puberty & Hygiene** - Providing education on puberty changes, menstrual health, and personal hygiene routines.
- **Sleep Support** - Helping families establish healthy routines and environments for better sleep.
- **Toileting** - Providing advice on healthy bladder and bowel habits and routines.
- **Vaping** - Educating on risks, supporting quit attempts, and signposting to cessation services.



Emotional Wellbeing

Promoting resilience, coping strategies, and mental health awareness.

School health can support:

- Schools not receiving support from NELFT Emotional Support Team (check [Find your school | NELFT NHS Foundation Trust](#))
- General advice on managing stress and emotions
- Promoting resilience and coping strategies
- CBT based interventions/solution focused
- Signposting to local wellbeing resources
- Short term targeted support to children/young people and/or their parent/carers
- Deliver school-based mental health promotion activities
- Provide parental workshops

School health cannot support:

- Children already receiving therapeutic intervention
- Suspected or diagnosed mental health disorders - Refer to CAMHS/NELFT
- Children in crisis or at risk of harm - Follow safeguarding procedures; consider NELFT consultation line
- Counselling

Additional exclusion criteria:

- Persistent low mood or anxiety impacting all activities of daily living
- Suicidal ideation - Refer to CAMHS/NELFT or emergency services

How to refer to the emotional wellbeing service:

- Use the standard School Nursing Referral Form for [professionals](#) or request the parent/carer completes a [parental referral form](#).
- Include details of observed behaviors, concerns, and strategies tried
- Ensure parental consent is obtained before referring, unless child is deemed to be Gillick competent.
- After submission, a school nurse will review the referral and inform the parent/carer and referrer of the outcome usually by email



Health Needs Impacting School Attendance

Helping address health barriers to regular school attendance

School nursing can support:

- Advice on managing minor health issues to support attendance
- Liaison with school and family to address barriers
- Liaison with other health professionals to support development of appropriate care plan in school. The care plan remains the responsibility of school and is an agreement between home and school.
- Emergency medication management for school staff
- Signposting to relevant health services

School nursing cannot support:

- Complex medical conditions requiring specialist care

Additional exclusion criteria:

- School nursing cannot diagnose or authorise investigations/tests

How to refer to the school nurse:

- Use the standard School Nursing Referral Form for [professionals](#) or request the parent/carer completes a [parental referral form](#).
- Include attendance data, health concerns, and strategies tried
- Ensure parental consent is obtained before referring
- After submission, a school nurse will review the referral and inform the parent/carer and referrer of the outcome usually by email



Healthy Eating & Lifestyle

Supporting families with nutrition, meal routines, and promoting active lifestyles.

School nursing can support:

- General healthy eating advice e.g., balanced diet, portion sizes, meal routines
- Support with fussy/selective eating (non-complex cases)
- Promoting daily physical activity
- Advice on healthy weight and lifestyle choices
- Signposting to local healthy lifestyle and weight management programmes
- Deliver school-based health promotion activities at individual, class or whole school level
- Deliver parent interactive workshops or for school staff

School nursing cannot support:

- Children who are underweight or suspected malnourished - Refer to GP and Dietitian
- Suspected eating disorders - Refer to GP and/or NELFT All Aged Eating Disorders
- Children with medical dietary needs (e.g., diabetes, coeliac) - Refer to Specialist
- Complex feeding issues eg. When diet is severely restricted due to sensory or emotional needs such as ARFID avoidant restrictive food intake disorder - Refer to Dietitian

Additional exclusion criteria:

- Recent unexplained weight loss in past 3 months - Refer to GP
- Visible physical symptoms e.g., pallor/weight change - Refer to GP

How to refer to the school nurse:

- Use the standard School Nursing Referral Form for [professionals](#) or request the parent/carer completes a [parental referral form](#).
- Include relevant concerns, background, height/weight if known
- Ensure parental consent is obtained before referring, unless child is deemed to be Gillick competent
- After submission, a school nurse will review the referral and inform the parent/carer and referrer of the outcome usually by email



Healthy Relationships

Supporting positive friendships, boundaries, and online safety.

School nursing can support:

- Education on friendships, empathy, and communication
- Advice on boundaries and consent (age-appropriate)
- Promoting online safety and healthy digital interactions
- Sexual health
- School based interventions, 1:1 targeted support

School nursing cannot support:

- Cases involving abuse or exploitation - Follow safeguarding procedures until appropriate interventions with specialist services are complete eg. SARC
- Complex relationship counselling - Refer to specialist services

Additional exclusion criteria:

- Concerns about coercive control or unhealthy behaviours – refer specialist services

How to refer to the school nurse:

- Use the standard School Nursing Referral Form for [professionals](#) or request the parent/carer completes a [parental referral form](#).
- Include details of concerns and any interventions tried
- Ensure parental consent is obtained before referring, unless child is deemed to be Gillick competent
- After submission, a school nurse will review the referral and inform the parent/carer and referrer of the outcome usually by email



Parenting impacting on health

Supporting families with behaviour management strategies and signposting.

School nursing can support:

- Support with behaviour impacting health (e.g., refusal to eat, sleep disruption)
- General advice on positive parenting strategies and routines
- Guidance on behaviour management techniques for non-complex cases
- Signposting to parenting programmes and community resources
- Deliver school-based health promotion activities and wellbeing

School nursing cannot support:

- Severe behavioural issues or suspected neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., ADHD, ASD) - Refer to specialist services
- Complex family dynamics requiring intensive intervention - Refer to Early Help or Social Care

Additional exclusion criteria:

- Persistent challenging behaviour despite routine strategies
- Associated concerns (e.g., parental mental health, neglect, or family stressors) – refer to [Medway Threshold document - Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) for appropriate support

How to refer to the school nurse:

- Use the standard School Nursing Referral Form for [professionals](#) or request the parent/carer completes a [parental referral form](#).
- Include details of behaviour patterns, strategies tried, and any health impact
- Ensure parental consent is obtained before referring
- After submission, a school nurse will review the referral and inform the parent/carer and referrer of the outcome usually by email



Puberty & Hygiene

Providing education on puberty changes, menstrual health, and personal hygiene routines.

School nursing can support:

- Education on puberty changes and what to expect
- Advice on personal hygiene routines (washing, deodorant use, dental care)
- Guidance on menstrual health and managing periods
- Support with confidence and body image during puberty
- Deliver school-based health promotion sessions on puberty and hygiene

School nursing cannot support:

- Complex endocrine or hormonal issues - Refer to GP or specialist
- Suspected precocious or delayed puberty - Refer to GP
- Medical concerns related to menstruation (e.g., severe pain, heavy bleeding) - Refer to GP

How to refer to the school nurse:

- Use the standard School Nursing Referral Form for [professionals](#) or request the parent/carer completes a [parental referral form](#).
- Include details of concerns, strategies tried, and any health impact
- Ensure parental consent is obtained before referring, unless child is deemed to be Gillick competent
- After submission, a school nurse will review the referral and inform the parent/carer and referrer of the outcome usually by email



Sleep Support

Helping families establish healthy routines and environments for better sleep.

School nursing can support:

- General advice on sleep hygiene (consistent bedtimes, calming routines)
- Guidance on appropriate boundaries (screen time limits, bedtime expectations)
- Support with creating predictable routines for evenings and mornings
- Advice on sleep environment (quiet, dark, comfortable, temperature control)
- Deliver school-based health promotion activities on sleep and wellbeing at individual, class or whole school level.
- Deliver parent interactive workshop

School nursing cannot support:

- Suspected sleep disorders (e.g., sleep apnea, narcolepsy) - Refer to GP
- Persistent insomnia or complex sleep issues - Refer to GP or specialist sleep clinic
- Sleep difficulties linked to underlying mental health conditions - Refer to CAMHS/NELFT
- Medical conditions impacting sleep (e.g., ADHD, epilepsy) - Refer to GP or specialist

Additional exclusion criteria:

- Significant impact on school attendance or daily functioning
- Sleep issues persisting >3 months despite routine changes
- A child has been prescribed medication for sleep

How to refer to the school nurse:

- Use the standard School Nursing Referral Form for [professionals](#) or request the parent/carer completes a [parental referral form](#).
- Include details of current routines, environment, and strategies tried
- Ensure parental consent is obtained before referring, unless child is deemed to be Gillick competent
- After submission, a school nurse will review the referral and inform the parent/carer and referrer of the outcome usually by email
- If accepted, the parent will be asked to attend a parent workshop (if appropriate) and to implement recommended strategies before being offered an initial assessment



Toileting

Providing advice on healthy bladder and bowel habits and routines.

School nursing can support:

- Advice on healthy bladder and bowel habits
- Support with toilet training and routine establishment
- Guidance on hydration and diet for bowel health
- Signposting to continence services for more complex continence needs
- Parental interactive workshop
- Continence Champions session for professionals

School nursing cannot support:

- Complex continence needs or underlying medical conditions - Refer to GP or specialist
- Children with suspected urinary tract infections or severe constipation - Refer to GP
- Prescribe medication to support continence needs eg anticholinergics; macrogols
- Daytime wetting where the child has previously been dry during the day, or if there is no night time wetting – refer GP/tier 2 children's bladder and bowel service

Additional exclusion criteria:

- Signs of pain, blood in urine or stool - Refer to GP

How to refer to the school nurse:

- Use the standard School Nursing Referral Form for [professionals](#) or request the parent/carer completes a [parental referral form](#).
- Include details of toileting patterns, strategies tried, and any symptoms
- Ensure parental consent is obtained before referring, unless child is deemed to be Gillick competent
- After submission, a school nurse will review the referral and inform the parent/carer and referrer of the outcome usually by email
- If accepted, the parent will be asked to attend a parent workshop (if appropriate) and to implement recommended strategies before being offered an initial assessment



Vaping

Educating on risks, supporting quit attempts, and signposting to cessation services.

School nursing can support:

- Education on risks of vaping and nicotine addiction
- Advice on health impacts (respiratory and oral health)
- Support for young people wanting to quit (basic strategies and signposting)
- Peer pressure
- Deliver school-based sessions on vaping
- Signposting to local stop-smoking/vaping services

School nursing cannot support:

- Complex addiction or dependency – Refer to GP or specialist cessation services
- Vaping linked to mental health or safeguarding concerns – Follow safeguarding procedures
- Medical complications from vaping (respiratory distress) – Refer to GP or emergency care

How to refer to the school nurse:

- Use the standard School Nursing Referral Form for [professionals](#) or request the parent/carer completes a [parental referral form](#).
- Include details of concerns, strategies tried, and any health impact
- Ensure parental consent is obtained before referring, unless child is deemed to be Gillick competent
- After submission, a school nurse will review the referral and inform the parent/carer and referrer of the outcome usually by email

