

School Nurse

Healthy children are successful learners. The school nurse has a multi-faceted role within the school setting, one that supports the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of students and their success in the learning process.

The school nurse provides direct health care to students and staff.

The school nurse provides care to students and staff who have been injured or who are ill. She uses the nursing process to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate care for students with chronic health conditions. In addition, the school nurse is responsible for medication administration and health care procedures ordered by an health care provider. The school nurse also assists faculty and staff in monitoring chronic health conditions.

The school nurse provides leadership for the provision of health services.

As the health care expert within the school, the school nurse assesses the overall system of care and develops a plan for assuring that health needs are met. This leadership role includes developing a plan for responding to emergencies and disasters and training staff to respond appropriately.

The school nurse provides screening and referral for health conditions.

In order to address potential health problems that are barriers to learning or symptoms of underlying medical conditions, the school nurse often engages in screening activities. Screening activities may include vision, hearing, postural, body mass index, or other screening.

The school nurse promotes a healthy school environment.

The school nurse provides for the physical and emotional safety of the school community. The school nurse monitors immunizations, assures appropriate exclusion from and re-entry into school, and reports communicable diseases as required by law. The school nurse provides precautions for blood borne pathogens and other infectious diseases.

The school nurse promotes health.

The school nurse provides health education by providing health information directly to individual students, groups of students, or classes or by providing guidance about the health education curriculum, encouraging comprehensive, sequential, and age appropriate information. They may also provide programs to staff, families, and the community on health topics. Other health promotion activities may include health fairs for students, families, or staff, consultation with other school staff such as food service personnel or physical education teachers regarding healthy lifestyles, and staff wellness programs.

The school nurse serves in a leadership role for health policies and programs.

As the health care expert within the school system, the school nurse takes a leadership role in the development and evaluation of school health policies. The school nurse participates in and provides leadership to coordinated school health programs, crises/disaster management teams,



and school health advisory councils.

The school nurse serves as a liaison between school personnel, family, community, and health care providers.

The school nurse participates as the health expert on Individualized Education Plan and 504 teams and on student and family assistance teams. As case manager, the nurse communicates with the family through telephone calls, assures them with written communication and home visits as needed, and serves as a representative of the school community. The school nurse also communicates with community health providers and community health care agencies while ensuring appropriate confidentiality, develops community partnerships, and serves on community coalitions to promote the health of the community.

The school nurse may take on additional roles to meet the needs of the school community.

Source: *National Association of School Nurses*