

North Carolina School Health Program Manual

Section B, Coordinated School Health, Chapter 3, Health Office

Health Office Suite

An essential part of providing quality health services is having a properly designed and equipped health office area. Whether planning a new school with a health office suite or remodeling an old space, the school nurse is an effective asset in the planning process. Location of the school health office is important and should be near the administrative offices and/or other student support services (social work, counseling, psychological).

Health Office Facilities

The size and layout of a school health office should be based on the number and age of students, prevalent health needs of the students, and the mission of the school health program. Adequate square footage recommendations related to facilities can be found in McClanahan et al. (2019).

All school health offices should be dedicated spaces that are designated for health-related services only. Ideally, they should include access to:

- A private conference space for health counseling in a confidential manner
- Networked, privacy protected, up-to-date computer with internet access and printer
- District provided phone
- Desk with lockable drawers and adequate work area
- General desk necessities (stapler, pens, paper, desk supplies, access to a photocopier, etc.)
- Lockable file cabinets for storage of student records
- Lockable wall and base cabinets for storage of medications, supplies, and equipment
- An area for maintaining professional reference books and manuals, as well as health education materials for school nurses, staff, students, and families
- A dedicated bathroom meeting ADA requirements with a grab bar next to the toilet, a sink (with hot and cold water), and good ventilation
- A sink outside the bathroom in the assessment and treatment area for hand washing
- All sinks are equipped with liquid soap, and paper towel dispensers
- Pedal-controlled, covered waste receptacles with disposable liners
- Area for assessments/treatments, first aid, and medication administration
- Area for health-related screenings
- Private, yet visible, area for short rest periods or observation when necessary
- Area for isolation when a communicable disease/illness is suspected
- Area for triage and waiting (to be seen or to go home after being seen)
- Easily cleanable countertops, floors, and walls (to facilitate disinfection of soiled areas)
- A refrigerator of adequate size for storing medications and snacks for special-needs students
- Adequate ventilation to support infection control

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Health Office Equipment and Supplies

Various resources exist for school health office inventory needs. If one is needed contact your regional school health nurse consultant. Maintain ongoing supply list/inventory with expiration dates and reorder as needed.

Classroom First Aid Kit

To minimize loss of pupil time from class, at the beginning of the school year each teacher should be provided with a re-sealable plastic bag or box containing soap, hand sanitizer, adhesive bandages, paper towels (if necessary), and instructions for the student on how to manage their own cuts and scratches. Instructions (written or verbal) given to teachers should include information that is consistent with the school's OSHA Infection Control policies concerning the provision of first aid to students. First aid supplies should be available to students on the playground and field trips. At the end of the school year, teachers should return all unused supplies.

Reference

McClanahan, R., Shannon, R. A., & Kahn, P. (2019). School Health Office Management. In Selekman, J., Shannon, R. A. & Yonkaitis, C. F. (Eds.), *School nursing: A comprehensive text* (3rd ed., pp. 888-908). F. A. Davis