

Who are school nurses and what do they do?

School nurses are crucial to child health and wellbeing, ensuring young people reach adulthood ready and resilient both physically and psychologically.¹

School nurses champion children and young people to reach their full health and wellbeing potential.

Who are school nurses?

- Registered nurses with additional registered specialist training in public health
- Skilled, knowledgeable, experienced and vitally, trusted by families and stakeholders, who, with the required investment, can significantly contribute to a number of cross-governmental priorities¹
- Bring clinical expertise and knowledge to a wider system to improve population health and reduce health inequalities²
- Innovative workforce that embraces digital technology, service redesign, skill mix, and models for integrating services around children, families and schools¹
- Supported by skilled, mixed teams of health workers and work alongside other members of the wider children's workforce.



What do school nurses do?

- Promote the health, wellbeing and protection of all children and young people in all settings throughout their school aged years³
- Identify the health needs of individuals and communities using evidence-based assessment tools³
- Co-produce programmes with children, young people and families. Plan work collaboratively in partnership with the multi-agency team to address local need and national health priorities outlined by the NHS, OHID and UKHSA¹
- Use research and audit to deliver an evidence-based service with clear outcomes, with evaluation as an integral part of the process³.

School nurses put children and young people's health and wellbeing central to the delivery of services²

"School nurses have long played an invaluable role, helping children with both their physical and mental health in a safe and supportive environment. From early intervention services to dealing with serious youth violence, school nurses have a significant, positive effect on young people's lives which benefit them both within and beyond the school gates. Their pastoral, supportive role is needed now more than ever as our young people recover from the impact of the pandemic and our schools try to build safe environments for pupils to thrive in going forward. School nurses are on the frontline of spotting problems such as abuse and mental health support needs in vulnerable young people, as well as championing healthy eating and providing immunisation and health protection services. The need for comprehensive wellbeing support for pupils has never been greater and school nurses are an essential part of this."

Councillor David Fothergill, Chairman of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board



Promote healthy lifestyles

- Maintaining a healthy weight (inc. physical activity, healthy eating and advice for worries about eating disorders)
- Preventative education about tobacco, alcohol and substance misuse
- Promoting good oral health
- Screening and support to provide and increase immunisation uptake
- Relationships, sexual health and contraception.



Keep children and young people safe and well

- Safeguarding against knife, gun and gang crime
- Promoting good mental health to enhance resilience (inc. bullying, including physical/on-line, peer pressure)
- Promoting safety and reducing accidental injuries
- Safeguarding vulnerable children and young people
- Looked after children.



Support children and young people who have additional needs

- Long term health conditions e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and anaphylaxis
- Disability and complex health needs
- Continence.



Help children and young people make transitions

- Starting school
- Moving to secondary school
- Preparing for adulthood
- Changes and life events.

What difference do school nurses make?

School nurses provide a **vital and unique link** between school, home, and community. Using a public health approach and through offering early identification and intervention, they:

- Support children being **school ready**
- **Reduce health inequalities** reaching out to **vulnerable and marginalised young people** who may otherwise 'fall through the gaps' of health provision²
- Reduce **attendance at accident and emergency departments** and **hospital admissions**
- **Reduce childhood obesity**
- **Reduce dental caries**
- **Reduce under 18 conception rates**
- **Reduce the prevalence of chlamydia, human papilloma virus (HPV) and cancers**
- **Increase** uptake in childhood immunisations
- **Provide health infection, prevention, and control expertise**
- **Promote and support positive mental health, thus, school attendance and attainment**
- **Reduce the burden** on community health services, parents, families, schools and specialist services children's services e.g. child and adolescent mental health services
- Supports **vulnerable** children, young people, families, and schools as a recognised professional external to the school, offering **emotional support** to address any **risk-taking behaviours** and/or support presenting health issues⁵
- Parents, teachers, and students perceive school nurses as a positive, accessible, flexible resource; they are trusted, highly valued, and appreciated. They impact positive **behaviour change** through holistic health assessment.^{4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11}

"Our current school nurse is outstanding. She is extremely proactive and has brokered us essential support; in addition to supporting us with child protection and early help cases."

North West England Head Teacher

"Thank you for letting me discuss the problems that I had in Year 7 and how I can change my behaviour."

Feedback from a young person, who attended a health assessment

"Very informative, makes you re-think everything but doesn't make you think you are a bad parent."

Parent feedback from School Nurse led Parenting Group

"Very good, enjoyed talking about feelings and emotions and being able to share experiences with other parents."

Parent feedback from School Nurse led Understanding your child's emotions workshop

"The School Nursing service knows which children and young people are Home Educated. They ensure that they can opt into the available support, should they require it. The service makes available additional support for those children with an identified safeguarding need."

Ofsted Safeguarding Inspection feedback, 2019

"A really good nurse who explained everything and was really good with our son."

Feedback from a parent who attended a health assessment

The LGA has long called for an increase in the public health grant to enable councils to commission a school nurse for every secondary school, as well as a comprehensive workforce plan to address shortages.

“Thank you so much for teaching us and helping us in the FRIENDS group... I really enjoyed the books and games... it’s been such fun.”

Feedback from a young person,
School Nurse led Resilience Group

“I am writing to express my enormous thanks for your support today in delivering a workshop to our students. Thank you for engaging with them and making the session productive and entertaining. The students all found it extremely helpful.”

Teacher feedback following
health education session in school

“You encouraged me to drink more and go to the toilet, you made me feel better and happier.”

Feedback from a child,
attending a bedwetting assessment

“It really helped me to think of ways to support pupils and I look forward to sharing the resources with staff and using them with our children.”

Teacher feedback from Mental Health Training

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