



Administration of Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications

Purpose

Student health and well-being are essential to academic success. Short-term, minor health conditions—such as headaches, menstrual discomfort, seasonal allergies, and mild gastrointestinal symptoms—can significantly impact a student's ability to focus and participate in class. This policy authorizes the safe administration of over-the-counter (OTC) medications during the school day by qualified health personnel, following standardized procedures and in alignment with state guidance.

Policy Statement

In accordance with the *New Mexico School Health Manual* and state nursing guidelines, Explore Academy Las Cruces allows the administration of non-prescription, over-the-counter medications by the school nurse or designated health personnel, under standing orders issued by the New Mexico Department of Health. This policy supports equitable access to timely health care at school and reduces barriers for families by eliminating the need for individual provider authorizations for routine OTC medications.

If a student needs to take OTC medication during the school day for no more than three (3) consecutive days in which school is in session, the following steps must be completed:

1. Written Parental/Guardian Consent

- Parents/guardians must submit a completed and signed **OTC Medication Authorization Form** each school year. This form can be accessed at <insert link> or picked up at the health office or front desk.
- The form must be filled out in its entirety to include the name of the medication, dosage, symptoms for use, and explicit permission to administer.

2. Medication Provided by Parent/Guardian

- Parents/guardians must supply the specific OTC medication to be administered.
- *The medication must be in its original, sealed, and unopened container, and must be labeled with the student's name and date of birth.*

3. Medication Storage and Documentation

- All medications will be stored securely in the designated school health office area.
- Access to the medication will be limited to those with the authority to disperse the medication.



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- Each administration of medication will be documented in the student's health file, including:
 - Date and time of administration.
 - Dosage and reason for use.
 - Name and signature of administering staff.

4. Approved Medications

- Permitted OTC medications may include, but are not limited to:
 - Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
 - Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)
 - Antacids
 - Non-drowsy allergy medications (e.g., loratadine)
 - Topical treatments (e.g., hydrocortisone cream, antibiotic ointment)
- Medications containing aspirin and combination medications are **not** permitted without a provider's order due to health risks, including Reye's syndrome.

5. Compliance with State Standing Orders

- All administration of OTC medications must comply with the standing orders issued by the New Mexico Department of Health.
- All administration of OTC medications must follow the manufacturer's label directions for dose, indication for use, and age and weight guidelines unless medical authorization is obtained from the student's primary medical provider.

6. Professional Discretion of Health Personnel

- The school nurse or designated health personnel has the authority to refuse to administer medication if:
 1. The medication is not medically indicated.
 2. Symptoms warrant further medical evaluation.
 3. Proper documentation, packaging, or authorization is not provided.
 4. Policies are not followed.

Administration of OTC Medication For More Than Three (3) Days

When a student needs to receive medication for more than three (3) consecutive days, Explore Academy Las Cruces will require medical authorization from the student's primary medical provider. In these situations, all of the abovementioned steps must be followed in addition to having the OTC Medication Authorization Form signed by the student's parent or guardian AND the student's medical provider.



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Scope and Application

This policy applies to all Explore Academy Las Cruces students and shall be implemented by school nurses, health assistants, and administrators in collaboration with families. It is not intended to replace emergency care procedures or individual health care plans, including Individual Education Programs or Section 504 Plans.