

RETURNING TO SCHOOL **POST FRACTURE /** **OPERATION OR SERIOUS** **ILLNESS (PUPILS)**

Health, Safety & Wellbeing Guidance Children's Services Department

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Returning to School Post Fracture / Operation or Serious Illness (Pupils)

Following on from a fracture, operation or serious illness, parents / carers may wish for their child to return to school, however, the pupil may still be in a cast or in a weakened / immune suppressed state. It is therefore important that the school puts in place measures to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of the pupil and to prevent making any condition / injury worse.

This guidance is not regarding moving and handling support for schools who have pupils who need assistance to move due to a disability (a disability is not a short-term situation such as broken bones). The safe moving and handling of pupils is covered by statute, namely the Manual Handling Operations Regulation and as such the advice and support to ensure compliance with schools' legal duties needs to be considered and therefore Schools should ensure all staff are appropriately trained on moving and handling techniques and use of equipment that is required to assist these pupils. For assistance around this situation please contact your Moving and Handling specialist consultant.

The school should ensure they have medical advice that the young person is fit to return to the school and any risks to their health that may still exist from their condition. This is important as it could be that there are additional risks to the young person caused by their accident / illness and the school need to be aware of these to manage them effectively.

Parents / guardian need to be made aware of the need to obtain this medical information as soon as possible. Therefore when parents / guardian ring to notify the school of a serious accident / illness it would be sensible to alert them to the need to obtain medical advice in writing from the lead medical practitioner dealing with their child regarding future return to school.

If for any reason medical consent for a pupil to return cannot be obtained then this should be discussed with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Section, to see how the pupils return can best be facilitated before allowing the pupil to return.

Health and Safety legislation requires employers to adopt a pro-active approach to managing health and safety, principally through assessing risks and then putting in place suitable risk control measures with adequate supervision, training, monitoring and effective management. So once the school have a return date then they should carry out a pupil specific risk assessment for their return if they are not fully recovered (eg. still in rigid cast). This risk assessment should cover all the risks relating to the pupil's condition and how this could be made worse by their return and also any risks to staff the pupil return could present. Derbyshire Health, Safety and Wellbeing team have produced a generic risk assessment to support as a starting point for undertaking this process.

Where mobility is an issue then the school should also carry out a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). If you require any assistance, you should in the first instance, refer to the Health Safety and Wellbeing teams guidance and PEEP form, if you require further assistance contact your Area Health & Safety Consultant.

Where a PEEP is required and the pupil needs assistance to move downstairs during an evacuation, the Derbyshire Health, Safety and Wellbeing team offer a training course on Evac Chair / Evacusafe and Ski mat. All training should be carried out in advance of the pupil returning to school.

Once the risk assessment and PEEP (if required) are completed then this should be shared with the parent / carer and Pupil and all parties involved should confirm that they are happy with it. Following the pupils return to school the risk assessment and PEEP should be reviewed as the condition changes until such time as the young person is fully recovered.

It is advised that when a pupil is returning post operation, that a multi-agency meeting is held in advance of the return. It is advised that Health attend to offer advice, to ensure nothing detrimental happens and all paperwork and if required equipment / support is in place.

Where a pupil returns to school post fracture or operation and a wheelchair is required, to reduce the risk to staff and pupils, it is advised that staff undertake (in advance of the return) training on safe use of wheelchair session.

Things to consider when creating the risk assessment will vary depending on the type of injury / severity, the pupil's mobility and your school setting but as a starting point the following should be considered:

- How is the pupil arriving at school
- Can they arrive later or finish earlier
- How will they move around the school – can they be sent off early to avoid being knocked.
- Where are they being seated in the classroom to avoid contact
- How will they participate / be included during a lesson
- Break and lunch times, where will they go
- How will they access lunch, could they be sent down early / front of queue with a designated friend
- Are they able to toilet independently
- Alternative toilet provisions – bottles / commodes, how is the waste disposed of
- Do they require regular issue of medication
- Do they require change of dressing
- Is there any medical waste to dispose of

For further information see the generic risk assessment for returning to school or contact your Health and Safety Consultant
healthandsafety.enquiries@derbyshire.gov.uk