Children’s Services School Health

When should a referral be sent to the South East LHIN? Is there something a school should do first before making a referral?

Teachers should utilize all resources available through their school and school boards before referring to LHIN.

If a student is in need of Speech Language Pathology services from the School Health Support Services program, an assessment by a Speech Language Pathologist must have been completed within 12 months of the referral (and should accompany the referral).

If a student has fine motor issues, please refer to the “Tips for Teachers” and “Tips for Parents” information sheets on the South East LHIN website and refer to the strategies and resources that should be tried prior to a referral being made.

Teachers and parents should complete the Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy checklist prior to sending in a referral for Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy services.

What are School Health Support Services and how are they provided?

The School Health Support Service Program is for children and youth up to age 21 with medical or rehabilitation needs who otherwise would be unable to attend school, or whose education would be compromised by having to leave school for necessary therapy.

Students in the School Health Support Services program may have developmental delays (intellectual or physical, or both) such as fine motor skills or speech problems, or may be medically fragile due to disease or disorder. A child’s particular needs will be assessed by a LHIN Case Manager, and then a care plan is developed.

Some services follow a more consultative approach whereas others provide direct treatment. Please speak with a Care Coordinator for further explanations. Also available on this website is a link to the School Health Support Services Therapy Guidelines document which will provide additional information.
How can families access School Health Support Services and what is the process for assessment?

If you believe a child is eligible for the School Health Support Services Program, contact your child’s school who will make a referral to the LHIN or families can call the LHIN directly. A doctor’s referral is not necessary. If the referral comes through the school, a parent or guardian must sign the referral form, giving consent for the referral to be made.

Once the referral has been made, a member of the Child and Family Team will contact the parent/guardian to set up an appointment in order to complete an assessment of the child’s health care needs. A school or home visit, or both, may be required. Once the assessment is complete and the child is deemed eligible for LHIN services, the Care Coordinator will work with the student (if appropriate), the parent/guardian and/or teacher to set goals for the student and a plan of care with appropriate services.

What services does the South East LHIN provide?

School Health Support Services include:
- Nursing
- Nutrition (e.g. tube feeding)
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Speech Language Pathology
- **only students in private and home school settings are eligible for Personal Support Services

Is there a cost for these services?

No. LHIN services are funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

What services does the South East LHIN not provide?

The South East LHIN does not provide Social Work services to children in schools. Students in public schools are not eligible to receive Personal Support Services at school.

Is a student eligible for a drug card?

No. The Ontario Drug Benefits program is available only to LHIN clients who receive in-home services, have a valid Ontario Health Card and who meet the eligibility requirements.
What if a student is not eligible for services?

If a student is not eligible for the School Health Support Services Program, the Care Coordinator will suggest other community supports that could help meet the student’s needs. A parent or guardian has the right to appeal a decision of ineligibility. The Care Coordinator will provide information on the Appeals Process.

What are the eligibility criteria for School Health Support Services?
To be eligible for School Health Support Services, a child must:
- Be enrolled as a pupil at a school or receive satisfactory instruction at home within the boundaries of the South East LHIN. A letter from the school board stating the home schooled child is registered with their board is required.
- Require the services in order to attend school, participate in school routines and receive instructions, or receive satisfactory instruction at home and
- Have a valid Ontario health card

In addition:
- The school must have the physical features necessary to enable the services to be provided
- It is safe for the service providers to provide the care required

Are there waitlists for service?
Some areas within the South East have waiting lists for School Health Support Services. You will be informed of any waiting lists at the time of assessment.

What priority should be/is given to children attending private schools and children on home schooling?

Early in 2012, all LHINs were given the direction from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, via their Local Health Integration Network, to assess and prioritize all School Health Support Services referrals in the same fashion regardless of the school setting. Prior to 2012, there was a separate funding envelope for private and home schooled children. The change that has now taken place was intended to ensure that all children have equitable access to school health services regardless of whether they attend a private school, public school or receive home schooling.
How are students prioritized for LHIN School Health Support Services?

See link to School Health Support Services Rehabilitation Priority Tool.

Some children, because of medical risk, require the attendance of a nurse on the school bus or other school vehicle while being transported to and from school. Should the LHIN provide this service?

The South East LHIN may only provide school services when the student is being transported:

- If there is a risk of significant physical to the student injury during transportation and
- The skills of a nursing professional or Personal Support Worker (for private and home school students only) are within their scope of practice

A student who is home schooled is also eligible for nursing service while being transported in a private vehicle to attend an organized activity directly related to the education of the student as long as the student meets the above criteria.

The South East LHIN does not provide school services in relation to casual activities that are not related to the student’s education.

The student’s Care Coordinator will assess for eligibility related to transportation.

Children on home schooling may not have regular school hours. How much service can a child on home schooling receive?

Therapy services (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Speech Language Pathology) would be the same as a child attending a school in the public system. They would follow the South East LHIN guidelines for therapy. With regards to Personal Support and Nursing, a child may be eligible for up to 6 hours a day, 5 days a week.

Should the South East LHIN provide services to children on school trips? How does this apply to children on home schooling?

If a child is eligible for Nursing (public, private and home schooling) or Personal Support (home schooling only) services, then the same services would be available to the child for school trips. The South East LHIN does not provide services in relation to casual activities that are not related to the student’s education.
Does the South East LHIN provide services when a student is being transported to and from school?

The South East LHIN may only provide school services when the student is being transported if there is a risk of significant physical injury during transportation and the skills of a Nursing professional or Personal Support Worker required are within their scope of practice. A Care Coordinator will determine if the student is eligible for services during transportation.

Are children in JK or SK eligible for School Health Support Services?

Children in those grades are assessed similarly to other grades. There is nothing preventing a child in those grades to be referred to LHIN and they may be eligible for services. For Speech Language Pathology services – JK students are followed by Preschool Speech and Language. LHIN services for Speech Language Pathology start in the fall of their SK year.

Are there limits for nursing services for student who receive School Health Support Services?

Yes there are limits. Nursing services are only provided for non-Activities of Daily Living tasks and the limit is up to 6 hours a day, 5 days a week and only on school days (excludes PA days, Stat holidays, March Break, Christmas Break etc.)