

Anderson County School District Three
Post Office Box 118
Iva, South Carolina 29655

Notification Letter to Parents/Guardians

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Our goal is to help each student succeed in school. Some students have health needs that must be taken care of during the school day. Many health care services can be provided to students at school, which will keep students at school where they can learn.

A new law (Sections 59-63-80 and 59-63-90 of the 1976 Code of Laws of South Carolina, amended May 26, 2005) requires school districts to let parents/legal guardians know about the rights that students with special health needs may have if they qualify for services related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and/or medical homebound regulations. The new law also requires individual health care plans for students with special health care needs.

We are writing this letter to help you better understand how schools can help students who have special health care needs. Included is information about individual health care plans, Section 504, the IDEA, and medical homebound. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Individual Health Care Plans

Section 59-63-80 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina requires school districts to adopt a policy that students with special health care needs have individual health care plans. The new law also requires school districts to adopt a policy for authorizing a student to self-monitor and self-administer medication as prescribed by the student's health care provider unless there is sufficient evidence that unsupervised self-monitoring or self-medicating would seriously jeopardize the safety of the student or others. The requirement regarding self-monitoring and self-administration of medications does not mean that all students must self-monitor and/or self-administer their medications, but gives that option to students who meet the requirements of their school district's policy and whose parents want them to self-monitor or self-administer medications.

Individual health care plans are plans written by a registered nurse for meeting the health monitoring and care of a specific student during the school day or at school-sponsored functions. The nurse works with the student and the student's parents/guardians, health care providers, and teachers to write an individual health care plan that will meet the student's special health care needs. Individual health care plans should be written for students who have health conditions that are medically fragile, require complicated or lengthy health procedures during the school day, who require several contacts with the nurse or health assistant during the school day, who have conditions that may require emergency care, or who have been granted permission to self-medicate and/or self-monitor in accordance with the local school board's policy.

For more information about individual health care plans, talk with your child's school nurse.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 protects the rights of individuals with disabilities that substantially limit one or more major life activities to take part in programs and services supported by federal funds. Schools that get federal funding must provide a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to students with physical and mental health impairments that qualify under Section 504. A team of individuals who know about the student's needs decides if a student is eligible for services under Section 504. The team usually includes a parent/legal guardian, the student (if able), a teacher, a principal, a school nurse, and other school staff. If the student is eligible, the team then develops an individual accommodation plan. The purpose of the individual accommodation plan is to ensure that students with disabilities have educational opportunities equal to those provided to students who do not have disabilities. Section 504 is administered through the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

More information about Section 504 can be found on the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html> or by calling the Office for Civil Rights at 1-800-421-3481.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The IDEA provides eligible students with disabilities, who are determined to need special education and related services to benefit from their educational programs, the legal right to receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Students, ages 3 through 21 years, may be eligible for services under the IDEA if they need special education and related services to learn. Using the criteria in the State Board of Education Regulation 43-243.1, a multidisciplinary team including the

parents/legal guardians decides if a student is eligible and identifies the health services, if any, that are necessary to enable the student to attend school and to participate fully and safely in educational activities. The team then develops an individualized education program for the student. A diagnosed illness or special health care need alone will not qualify a student for eligibility under the IDEA.

More information about special education services in South Carolina under the IDEA can be found on the State Department of Education's Web site at http://www.myschools.com/offices/ec/publications/documents/ParentsGuide_000.doc.

Medical Homebound Regulations

Medical homebound instruction is a service that is available for both disabled and nondisabled students who cannot attend school for a medical reason, even if transportation were furnished. A physician must certify that such a medical condition exists and must complete the medical homebound form that the local school district provides. The district superintendent or his or her designee must then decide whether to approve the student's participation in a program for medical homebound instruction. In making a decision about medical homebound instruction, schools should consider the severity of the student's illness or injury, the length of time that the student will be out of school, the possibility that the student's health care needs might be met at school, and the impact that a long period away from school will have on the student's academic success.

More information about medical homebound services can be found on the State Department of Education's Web site at <http://www.myschools.com/offices/ec/publications/MedicalHomeboundInstruction.doc>.

If you think that your child has a special health need, please contact your local school.