



Meeting with your child's school

It's understandable for parents or carers to be worried about their child returning to school. School staff may also be unsure about how to support a child, especially if type 1 diabetes is new to them. Here are some tips for parents about how to work with schools and school staff.



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For many school staff, supporting a student with diabetes is a new experience. By taking part in diabetes education and training, they can gain the knowledge and skills to support a student with type 1 diabetes in a school setting. Along with information and support from you and your child's clinical treating team, school staff can have the confidence to support your child and their specific needs. It's very important that all people involved in your child's diabetes care at their school meet at least once a year, or more often if necessary. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss how to provide your child with the support need when at school. It also provides an opportunity to update staff of any changes to your child's diabetes management. Your child's management plan is a key document to use during these meetings.

Let your child's school know

Generally, it will be you who tells your child's school about your child's type 1 diabetes. If your child is newly diagnosed, you need to inform the school as soon as possible. If they're starting at a new school this needs to be done at the time of enrolment and again when their place is confirmed. When choosing a school, it's worth asking to view any relevant policies and procedures, investigate funding opportunities for additional staff and whether the school has had any previous experience with students who have type 1 diabetes.

Attend a meeting with the principal and school staff

Your first meeting with the school is to ensure there is a clear understanding of the level of support that your child needs. This should

include discussion about your child's management plan and the importance of notifying relevant staff that your child has type 1 diabetes. Make sure that someone takes notes at the meeting. A good way to make progress is to record decisions and actions, noting the people responsible and a timeline for the actions.

It's important to make it clear that you will develop the diabetes management plan with your child's clinical treating team, and you will provide it to the school. This will need to be done by you before the school year begins, or as soon as possible if your child is diagnosed during the year.

Preparing for the meeting with school staff

It's important to prepare for any meeting with the key staff at your child's school. There's a lot to discuss and there are plenty of things to consider. Here are some points to help you prepare for the meeting:

- Make a list of all of the diabetes-related tasks your child will need help with.
- Get a copy of the school timetable and consider how your child's current insulin routine and eating habits will fit, or if you need to discuss changes that could be made.
- Think about tasks like hand washing, sharps disposal, storage of equipment and supplies, and a private space if desired for insulin administration.
- Read any relevant policies, procedures and/or plans in place at your child's school. Make notes to provide helpful feedback if you feel there's not enough information.





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Who should be at the meeting?

- You, and any other member of your family who is directly involved in the daily management of your child's diabetes. If there's shared custody for your child, all parties need to be present to ensure that everyone is using the same strategies to help manage your child's diabetes.
- Your child may wish to attend, however their age needs to be carefully considered. For example, it may not be necessary for younger children to attend.
- The most relevant staff members. For schools this may include the Principal or Vice Principal, as well as the classroom teacher, and possibly the Physical Education teacher and staff involved in student welfare. Those in attendance need to be able to make agreements on behalf of the school.

Tips for a productive meeting

Do your homework. Make notes about any concerns you wish to talk about, as well as the questions you would like answered.

- Be confident to ask for what you want and be ready to talk about your child's needs.
- Recognise that type 1 diabetes may be new to the school staff. It may be useful to recall how you felt at the time of diagnosis.
- Show the staff that you appreciate that there's a lot to learn about type 1 diabetes and you are just learning yourself.
- Acknowledge that providing care and support to a child with type 1 diabetes at school is complex, but manageable, and it will take some getting used to.
- Listen to what others have to say.
- Stay focused on the discussion, concentrate on the relevant issues and try not to get sidetracked.
- Be clear on actions; who is responsible for what and the time frame for completion.



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What to talk about at the meeting

Before the meeting think about the following points and discuss them with your child's clinical treating team. This will help you explain the support your child needs. Together with your child's clinical treating team, prepare the management plan for your child's school.

1 School training

You may like to let the school know about the Diabetes in School training available for staff to learn more about type 1 diabetes.

2 Your child's management plan

Use your child's management plan to highlight the specific needs of your child regarding their type 1 diabetes.

3 Communication

You and the school staff will need to find a way of communicating with each other that works for both of you. All communications need to

be clear, direct and in writing where possible. This may be through a communication book where you and the staff can detail any relevant events and information. You may also want to communicate by text message, phone call or email. There may also be times during the day when you might need to be called. Let the school know in what situations you would like to be contacted. Keep the school aware of any changes to your contact numbers or those of the alternate adult you have nominated. Find out who will be your main contact person at the school and the best way of getting hold of them. This is to ensure that any information reaches the right person who is caring for your child with type 1 diabetes.

4 Equipment

Make sure the school staff have all the equipment needed to look after your child. Decide where your child's diabetes equipment will be kept or if it is to be carried with them. Provide back-up equipment and supplies to the school and decide where these will be kept. This all needs to be documented in your child's diabetes management plan.

