



Epilepsy Policy

Introduction

Sacred Heart College is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment for all students. For students with epilepsy, additional care must be taken to ensure the safety and support of these students. Sacred Heart College has completed the requirements and is recognised as an Epilepsy Smart School.

Many students with epilepsy have their seizures well-controlled with medication and can participate fully in school life. However, studies indicate that students with epilepsy are at a higher risk of:

- psychological issues or mental health problems
- memory, attention and concentration problems
- behaviour problems
- fatigue
- school absences

All of these may negatively impact the student's learning and academic achievements.

Purpose

To provide, as far as practicable, a safe and supportive environment in which students with epilepsy can participate equally in all aspects of their schooling.

This policy aims to be both educational and preventative in nature so that staff, students and parents/carers take proactive steps to ensure their awareness and understanding of epilepsy.

Definitions

Epilepsy is characterised by recurrent seizures due to abnormal electrical activity in the brain.

Epileptic seizures are caused by a sudden burst of excess electrical activity in the brain resulting in a temporary disruption in the normal messages passing between brain cells. Seizures can involve loss of consciousness, a range of unusual movements, odd feelings and sensations or changed behaviour. Most seizures are spontaneous, brief and self-limited. However multiple seizures known as seizure clusters can occur over a 24-hour period.

Non-epileptic seizures (NES), also known as 'dissociative seizures'. There are two types of non-epileptic seizures:

- organic NES which has a physical cause
- psychogenic NES which are caused by mental or emotional processes.

Tonic-clonic seizure (convulsive seizure with loss of consciousness) presents as muscle stiffening and falling, followed by jerking movements.

Seizure triggers is a term used to describe known circumstances where the individual may have an increased likelihood of having a seizure. Seizure triggers are unique to the person and are not always known. Common seizure triggers can include stress, lack of sleep, heat, illness or missed medication.

Epilepsy Management Plan (EMP) is a plan signed by a doctor and provided to the school by the student's parents/carers. EMP define what an emergency is for the student and the appropriate response by staff but also whether emergency medication is prescribed, how the student wants to be supported during and after a seizure, identified risk strategies and potential seizure triggers.

Emergency Management Medication Where the student's Epilepsy Management Plan states that emergency medication has been prescribed then the school must hold a current Emergency Medication Management Plan (EMMP) signed by a doctor and provided by the student's parents/guardians. The plan provides information on the dose, route of administration and emergency response required in the event of a seizure.

Responsibilities of the College

Communication

- Ensure staff and parents are familiar with the College's Epilepsy Policy.
- Arrange a meeting with Parent/Carer to discuss student's management and treatment for epilepsy prior to commencement at the College.
- Inform staff of students with epilepsy through the students' SIMON medical notes and through the twice-yearly medical briefings.
- Contact the parent/carers if there are any concerns regarding epileptic management at school.
- Contact the parent/carers when the student is unwell.
- Raise awareness of epilepsy in the wider College Community.
- Liaise with the students Neurologist and/or GP if the need arose.
- Encourage students' independence and communication with staff as needed.

Student support

- Provide a private comfortable space for the student to rest if required.
- The College supports the wearing of medical alert jewellery on school grounds or during school activities.
- Ensure that emergency medication (if required) and supplies (if listed) on the EMP is in date and updated as required.
- Ensure (if required) emergency medication is located in an easily accessible location for responsible staff to administer should the need arise.
- Adhere to the student's individual EMP.

In the Classroom

- Consider the needs of the student with epilepsy when planning excursions, camps, exams and sporting activities.
- Be familiar with students EMP.
- Be able to recognise seizure triggers and act promptly.
- Give extra consideration if unwell. Supervise and do not leave unattended including when sending student to First Aid.
- Report concerns with the student's health or epilepsy to the parent/carers and Health Centre Coordinator.

On Camps and Excursions

- Consulting with parents when the student is participating in excursions, camps and other activities.

- Careful planning including a risk assessment, making considerations for seizure triggers, medication management, illness etc.
- Ensure EMP are accessible for the staff members attending the camp.
- Ensure the EMP is adhered to.
- Ensure students emergency medication (if required) is packed on all excursions and/or camps where the epileptic student is attending.
- Ensure the student is always supervised in and around water.

Exams/Assessment tasks

- Allow reasonable adjustments during exams, assessment tasks and tests. These could include
 - ☐ adjustment of assessment tasks related to time or reasonable expectations in group work.
 - ☐ examination adjustments related to increased reading time, breaks or identified trigger considerations

Staff training

- Provide professional learning opportunities to develop staff skills in management of epileptic health issues for responsible staff.
- Ensure adequate staff have a current First Aid qualification and follow first aid procedures for seizure management.

Responsibilities of the students

- To advise staff/First Aid staff of any seizure symptoms or if unwell.
- Be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of their condition and be aware of seizure triggers.
- Ask for assistance if needed.

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- To inform the school upon enrolment, or if the student is enrolled, as soon as possible after diagnosis, that their child has epilepsy.
- To consult with the Health Centre Coordinator regarding Epilepsy Management and EMP and or EMMP.
- Ensure EMP and EMMP are reviewed annually or when changes in epilepsy management occur.
- To provide a current and up-to-date medical profile for their child, reflecting an epilepsy diagnosis and the relevant EMP and possible EMMP.
- To consult with the school staff in the development of additional plans for off campus activities such as camps and excursions.
- To provide and replace medication (if required) as it expires or has been used.
- To provide medical identification jewellery where appropriate.
- To keep their child home if unwell.
- To ensure that they or nominated emergency contacts are accessible to provide advice regarding management or pick up if their child if unwell.

First Aid

- Please follow the students EMP and/or EMMP

For all seizure events:

- remain calm
- ensure other students in the vicinity of the seizure event are being supported
- note the time the seizure started and time the event until it ends

- talk to the student to make sure they regain full consciousness
- stay with and reassure the student until they have fully recovered
- provide appropriate post seizure support or adjustments

A **tonic-clonic seizure** (convulsive seizure with loss of consciousness) presents as muscle stiffening and falling, followed by jerking movements.

During this type of seizure:

- protect the head e.g. place a pillow or cushion under the head
- remove any hard objects that could cause injury
- do not attempt to restrain the student or stop the jerking
- do not put anything in the student’s mouth
- as soon as possible roll the student onto their side – you may need to wait until the seizure movements have ceased.

For a seizure with impaired awareness (non-convulsive seizure with outward signs of confusion, unresponsiveness or inappropriate behaviour) avoid restraining the student. You may need to guide the student safely around objects to minimise risk of injury.

When providing seizure first aid support to a student in a wheelchair:

- protect the student from falling from the chair, secure seat belt where available and able
- make sure the wheelchair is secure
- support the students head if there is no moulded head rest
- do not try to remove the student from the wheelchair
- carefully tilt the student’s head into a position that keeps the airway clear.

Call an ambulance immediately if:

- you do not know the student
- there is no Epilepsy Management Plan
- a serious injury has occurred
- the seizure occurs in water
- you have reason to believe the student may be pregnant.

Related Documents:

- Epilepsy Foundation
- Epilepsy Management Plan
- Emergency Medication Management Plan

Version	Comments	Date Released	Next Review	Author	Approved
1		May 2020	May 2022	Health Centre Coordinator	Principal
2		May 2022	May 2024	Health Centre Coordinator	Principal
3	Changes to formatting to reflect new template.	June 2024	June 2026	Health Centre Coordinator	Principal