



October 2022

**Retford Hospital**

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Dear Head Teacher,

We are writing to notify you of the **Medicines for Self-Care Guidance**, now in place in the Bassetlaw area.

Currently approximately 40% of all GP consultations are used for common, minor conditions which could be treated without seeing a GP, do not require a doctor's prescription and could be dealt with by visiting the pharmacy and accessing over the counter (OTC) medicines as the first stage of treatment. By encouraging self-care and supporting people to take responsibility for any minor illnesses and conditions, we will give our healthcare professionals the opportunity and the time to support patients with complex conditions and high levels of need. This is the rationale for the development of the **Medicines for Self-Care Guidance**.

As part of the **Guidance**, Bassetlaw Place Based Partnership part of NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and local GPs support and encourage people to buy medicines/products and access advice from local pharmacies for the treatment of minor illnesses and ailments. This also applies to parents buying over the counter (OTC) medicines for their children including medicines which may need to be taken whilst their child is at school.

As part of implementing the **Guidance**, we would like to ensure that schools are able to use it, to support self-care and reduce demand and pressure on local health services when appropriate. Schools are permitted to hold and administer over the counter medicines and a doctor's prescription for these is NOT required. Parents are encouraged to obtain relevant over the counter medicines and authorise these for use in school, where appropriate for their child. The medicines should be labelled with the child's name and the school can then follow the generic age related instructions when administering to the child, as would a parent. We would suggest you consider ensuring your school policies align with this guidance.

Appendix One, below lists the common minor illnesses considered to be suitable for self-care. It is a guide and the list is not exhaustive. It is important to highlight that this **Guidance** covers minor illnesses and conditions. Where signs and symptoms of illness are persistent and over the counter medicines have not been successful in treating a condition, parents and students should be advised to seek medical help.

For children with long term diagnosed medical conditions, such as asthma and epilepsy, GPs will continue to prescribe the required prescription medicines for dispensing & labelling by a pharmacy.



Furthermore, our GPs have also reported a large surge in parents attending GP surgeries simply for a confirmation of a diagnosis for their children's minor illnesses. They frequently report that this is at the insistence of the child's school.

We can understand the pressure schools are under to improve and maintain good attendance, but I would like to impress upon you the impact that this is having upon local GP practices, particularly as these parents then often request an urgent appointment.

GPs and health services will of course want to see children when their parents have any concerns at all about their child's health and welfare but there is no necessity to routinely confirm a diagnosis of, for example, chicken pox, when a child is otherwise well.

GPs do not have a role with regards to issuing the equivalent of sick notes for children.

We would request that for minor illness, schools leave the decision as to whether to attend their GP to the parents.

For further advice on self-care please visit <http://www.selfcareforum.org/>.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Eric Kelly'.

Dr Eric Kelly  
Clinical Lead

Enc Appendix 1



### **Appendix One : Medicines for Self-Care**

The following minor illnesses are examples of conditions that can be treated effectively and safely using over the counter (OTC) medicines. A doctor's prescription is not routinely required or recommended for treatments of these conditions.

Aches and pains	Head lice
Athlete's foot	Headaches and Migraines
Cold sores	Heartburn and indigestion
Colic	Mild dry skin
Constipation	Skin rashes
Coughs and colds	Other skin complaints Including acne, sun protection, birth marks, facial hair, bruising, tattoos, sweating
Dandruff	Sore throat
Diarrhoea	Teething and toothache
Ear wax	Threadworm
Foods Including gluten free, sip feeds & soya milks where not clinically required	Travel medicines including travel sickness
Fungal nail infections	Vitamins for prevention of deficiency, complementary medicines and health supplements when not clinically required.
Fungal skin infections – ringworm	Varicose veins
Haemorrhoids (piles)	Vaginal thrush
Hay fever and allergies	

For further advice on self-care please visit <http://www.selfcareforum.org/>.