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26 June 2015

Bulletin Update to SLSO's Health Care Procedures Meeting held on 25 June 2015

This email provides you with an update on the Health Care Procedures discussions with the Department.

At the last meeting of the **Special Ed Working Group**, the PSA advised it had been invited to meet with the Department in relation to **Health Care Procedures for School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs)**. Delegate Karenza Morison was nominated to attend to provide SLSO expertise and support PSA industrial staff with her knowledge.

The PSA met with the Department's Disability, Learning and Support Directorate on 25 June 2015. The meeting was an opportunity for the Department to share information about Health Care Procedures and for the PSA to raise the concerns identified by delegates to the Special Ed Working Group and members.

The meeting was productive and a number of issues were discussed. Items of primary interest to Special Ed Working Group Delegates and SLSOs discussed were:

1. Updated training
2. Draft Health Care Procedures in Schools Certification manual
3. Health Care Procedures kit
4. Special Consideration Applications.

Updated training

The Department now has 10 appropriately clinically qualified trainers across the state. A Health Care Procedures kit has been developed and the Department demonstrated the kit's

components at the meeting at the meeting. This demonstration included anatomically correct models for the use in catheterisation.

The PSA has again officially raised its concerns with the Department about to SLSOs performing invasive procedures. It is clear from the meeting there is a difference in opinion about the role of SLSOs involved with students who require invasive procedures as part of their quality of life and health considerations while attending school. The PSA will continue to explore this issue with delegates and members.

At no point during the meeting has the PSA agreed invasive procedures may be undertaken by SLSOs in schools.

Draft Health Care Procedures in Schools Certification Manual

The Department tabled a draft Health Care Procedures in Schools Certification Manual to the PSA and agreed to supply an electronic version for feedback. Once the electronic draft has been supplied, the PSA will email the document to delegates of the Special Education Working Group for feedback. This important document was last revised in 2008. The draft document seeks to bring the manual up to date to be used as a resource for SLSOs in schools.

Special Considerations Applications

The **Special Considerations Panel** includes representatives from the Department, the PSA and the NSW Nurses Association. Only the panel can approve a student's Special

Consideration Application. SLSOs are advised not to perform any procedures requiring special consideration without first sighting the student's Health Management Plan and an approved Special Consideration Application.

On behalf of SLSOs, the PSA advised the Department it seemed the Special Consideration Applications were not being appropriately administered. Anecdotally, SLSOs were undertaking health care procedures with students requiring special consideration that had not had appropriate oversight and approval by the Special Considerations Panel.

The Department has agreed to investigate the PSA's concerns about Special Considerations Applications administration and will utilise its networks to ensure these forms are escalated to the panel for approval.

The PSA requested periodic communications be sent to schools reminding staff Special Consideration Application forms are centrally administered for approval.

Other submissions

The PSA maintained that SLSOs performing health care procedures:

- a. Should only occur under the direct supervision of a teacher
- b. Invasive procedures (for example catheterisation and deep suctioning) are not within the SLSO role
- c. Are voluntary and that no SLSO should feel coerced into undertaking these duties

- d. Must be appropriately trained
- e. Must be remunerated in accordance with the award.

The PSA put that performing health care procedures with students should be performed by persons in order of:

1. Parent
2. Teacher
3. Nurse
4. SLSO (under the direct supervision of a teacher)

Health Care Procedures Consultation will be an agenda item for discussion at the next Special Ed Working Group meeting in August. The Department has undertaken to get the Draft document to the PSA as soon as possible to maximise consideration and consultation time in advance of the next meeting.

Overall, the PSA considers the meeting to have been a positive first step in giving SLSOs a stronger voice in schools. Not all issues were able to be resolved at this meeting, however, the stage is set moving forward to improve participation of SLSOs in the workplace, and a chance to progress the issues of significance to SLSOs.

The PSA wishes all its SLSO members a relaxing school break to recharge their batteries after another exhausting school term. If you are travelling, stay safe. See you next term.

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