



22 August 2016

# School Learning Support Officers Defining Invasive Treatments

School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs) should not administer insulin injections or undertake diabetes management – you are not helping yourself or the student.

The PSA reiterates to members they should not perform injections as this is regarded as an invasive procedure and outside of their statement of duties.

In addition, the Department has not consulted the union or provided adequate evidence regarding the medical and legal risks.

The PSA is aware the Department has requested that members “volunteer” to perform injections for students as part of diabetes management. The PSA has exchanged correspondence with the Department on this matter which can be accessed by clicking the following links

## LETTER 1

[http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2016.08.18\\_AA\\_VB\\_SEWG-Bulletin-on-Injections-Attachment-A.pdf](http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2016.08.18_AA_VB_SEWG-Bulletin-on-Injections-Attachment-A.pdf)

## LETTER 2

[http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2016.08.18\\_AA\\_VB\\_SEWG-Bulletin-on-Injections-Attachment-B.pdf](http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2016.08.18_AA_VB_SEWG-Bulletin-on-Injections-Attachment-B.pdf)

## LETTER 3

[http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2016.08.18\\_AA\\_VB\\_SEWG-Bulletin-on-Injections-Attachment-C.pdf](http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2016.08.18_AA_VB_SEWG-Bulletin-on-Injections-Attachment-C.pdf)

## LETTER 4

[http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2016.08.18\\_AA\\_VB\\_SEWG-Bulletin-on-Injections-Attachment-D.pdf](http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2016.08.18_AA_VB_SEWG-Bulletin-on-Injections-Attachment-D.pdf)

### The Department’s position

- An SLSO can volunteer to undertake this procedure under a ‘diabetes management plan’
- The SLSO can undertake if they are trained
- The procedure falls within ‘prescribed medication’
- The SLSO is eligible for an allowance under the prescribed medications policy.

### The PSA’s position

The PSA disagrees that insulin injections fall within prescribed medications and believes the procedure should not be performed by SLSOs. The PSA regards diabetes management including such things as blood sugar level testing, injections and anything involving the administration of insulin into a child’s body as an invasive procedure.

The PSA is concerned for the safety of the **student and the SLSO** because of the potential risks associated with these procedures. These risks can be quite serious – an incorrect dosage of insulin can be fatal or seriously damage a child’s health.

There are also risks with using needles such as needle breakage, needle stick injuries, bleeding and the potential biological risks to the staff member that must be assessed and managed.

The PSA holds the view that clinical issues such as dosage, where to inject, how to inject, correct needle use and the correct timing of insulin injections are all issues best dealt with by a qualified and competent health care professional.

It is also noted that the 'training' provided for prescribed medication does not cover injections.

The Department has third party providers they can go to in order to provide health care for students with complex health care needs. By law, the child has a right to an education and your refusal to perform medical procedures does not abrogate this right or mean the child won't get to go to school. However, performing the procedure may enable the Department to avoid its responsibilities to students.

Your core role is educational support. This is why your job title was successfully changed from "Teacher's Aide" to "School Learning Support Officer". Your primary role is to support the teacher in the delivery of educational programmes in the classroom. Your focus is undertaking learning support, not a series of voluntary tasks that the Department has asked you to "volunteer" to perform that detract from this educational supporting role.

The PSA wishes to advise members cannot be coerced or pressured into "volunteering" to perform tasks outside their statement of duties. If this has happened to you or a colleague please contact us [schools@psa.asn.au](mailto:schools@psa.asn.au) for advice and support.

## Next steps

The issue of injections and invasive procedures has been formally raised by the PSA in proceedings at the NSW Industrial Relations Commission regarding health care procedures. The PSA will continue to advocate on this issue on behalf of our membership.

## Your views matter

The PSA is interested in hearing your views as we build momentum on the important issues happening in schools. If you are being pressured to volunteer to undertake health care procedures or injections or any other invasive medical procedure and/or you'd just like to share your thoughts, please feel free to email [schools@psa.asn.au](mailto:schools@psa.asn.au)

## Survey

Do SLSO members want the PSA to place a ban on injections?

Please click on the survey link [HERE](#) to vote yes or no.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X88LPCC>

