

Guidance for Staffing Health Services in Schools

The following guidance is offered by the Maine Department of Education (DOE) to clarify the use of additional personnel within a school setting to extend the reach or the ability of the registered nurse (RN) to ensure all student health needs are met. Specifically, Maine DOE intends to clarify the limitations of hiring a person as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) within the school.

School nursing is founded in public health nursing and is defined as “a specialized practice of nursing [which] protects and promotes student health, facilitates optimal development, and advances academic success. School nurses, grounded in ethical and evidence-based practice, are the leaders who bridge health care and education, provide care coordination, advocate for quality student-centered care, and collaborate to design systems that allow individuals and communities to develop their full potentials” (ANA & NASN, 2022).

This document is meant as an assistive tool. Its purpose is to give a general overview of the types of roles that may be part of a healthcare team within a PreK-12 school. The full scope of activities in the school nurse role is only found in the registered nurse (RN) license. In all settings, nursing activities are regulated by the Maine State Board of Nursing.

A Scope of Practice Decision Tree from the Maine Board of Nursing can be accessed [here](#). A separate decision tree is available on our [Delegation, Coordination, & Oversight](#) webpage to assist the RN in determining if delegating a specific nursing task in a school setting is appropriate.

While this document intends to provide a brief overview of school nursing activities, it does not replace clinical nursing judgment in practice when determining the appropriate staff for the job, nor is it inclusive of all activities that occur within the school setting.

School Healthcare Staff Role Descriptions

Registered Nurse (RN) is a professional nurse as defined by [Maine Revised Statutes, Title 32, section 2102, subsection 2](#). Any RN working in a school as a school nurse must also meet any additional certification requirements established by the state board [Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 6403-A, subsection 3](#).

A Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) is a practical nurse as defined by [Maine Revised Statutes, Title 32, section 2102, subsection 3](#). They work under the direction of a registered nurse or licensed or otherwise legally authorized physician, podiatrist, or dentist.

Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP) are persons acting on behalf of the school, who do not have a professional license that allows them to practice nursing. They complete tasks as trained, directed, and overseen by a registered professional nurse. This may include a person who has experience as a certified nursing assistant*. School Health Office Assistant is an example of a job title for this role.

**Because a school is not listed among the approved healthcare sites for a certified nursing assistant (CNA), in this setting they are considered a UAP and will receive the same teaching, coordination, and oversight by the RN. They may not use the job title or credentials of CNA within a school, nor will their hours worked in a school count towards minimum hours to maintain certification as it is not one of the approved settings for CNA practice. [\(02-380, ch.5, section 1A \(1\), last revised January 1, 2023\)](#)*

School Health Activity Based on Staff Role

	Registered Nurse (RN)	Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP)
Health Care Plans (Individual Health Plan (IHP), Emergency Action Plan (EAP), 504 Plan)	Develop, implement, and evaluate health plans. Update with changes.	Implement health plans under RN direction/supervision. Report student progress to RN.	Complete assigned tasks per training and protocol under the supervision of school nurse.
Medication	Review orders and assess for clarity and need at school. Monitor expected student response and side effects. Manage medication administration process in the school setting. Provide training and	Administer ordered medications as assigned by RN per local policy. Report student response and/or concerns to the school nurse. May reinforce medication administration education but may not determine competence.	Administer ordered medications as trained by RN and directed by school administration per local policy. Report student response and/or concerns to the school nurse.

	assure the competence of staff.		
Health Office Visits	Assess student needs and ability to remain in school. Provide care to students with illness or injury. Train staff and assure competence to provide basic care and/or first aid.	Follow structured guidelines and protocols to care for students with illness or injury. Notify school nurse of visits and follow up needs.	Provide help in a limited manner for students with illness or injury (Call parent, call 911, first aid). Notify school nurse of visits and follow up needs.
Special Health Procedures	Assess student needs and determine procedure steps in school. Complete ordered medical procedures. Assign tasks, train, and supervise LPN/USP and assure competence.	Complete ordered procedures per policy under supervision of the RN. Assign tasks, reinforce training and supervise USP's completing procedures. May not determine competence. Report student response or concerns to RN.	Complete assigned ordered procedures or tasks per policy under supervision of the school nurse. Report concerns to school nurse.
Health Screening and Follow-up	Perform student screening. Perform rescreens that determine referral needs. Follow up to ensure care was received.	Perform student screening per policy, if trained. Report results to RN for referral and follow-up.	Perform student screening per policy, if trained. Report results to RN for referral and follow-up.
Health Care Related Staff or Student Training	Develop staff training following local policies. Complete standardized staff training and assure competence.	Assist with staff training as assigned by RN. Audit medication and procedure records as assigned. May not train students or other staff but may reinforce the education provided by the RN.	Attend training as needed. May not train students or other staff. May reinforce the education provided by the RN.