

To the Ohio Representatives of 2023:

As a mother of six grown children and a registered nurse for over 30 years—sixteen of those nursing years have been spent as a school nurse—I am writing to encourage all schools that currently do not have a policy in place for administering all over-the-counter medications to adopt one.

I understand that 20 percent of Ohio schools are without policies for over-the-counter medication dispensing in Ohio. From my years of giving students medication, whether over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medication, the parent or guardian must always sign to give me permission to give medicine to their child. Policy for OTC drugs is to protect the Nurse and the School District from negligence of dispensing medication to students without parents/guardians being aware. As a parent, I would not want it any other way.

As a nurse, I choose not to take that responsibility. The responsibility of what medication a child may consume should be by the authority of the parent/guardian. The school district in which I work has a medication form for the parent to complete and sign. This form permits me to act on their behalf should their student(s) need medication while at school. The medicine must not be expired and must be age appropriate. Our school system has in place a Health Service policy manual.

It is not my place as a nurse to supersede a parent's rights nor act as a prescriber. My job is only to assist the student to take their approved medication, helping the student to remain in the school learning environment if possible. Through policy designed by Health Services and approved by our school board, we nurses are able to curb some of the unnecessary absences of students.

Some of our local districts carry stock OTC medication, but policy states that a parent still must grant permission in writing via the medication permit form in order for a nurse to administer any over the counter medication to a student.

I would like to see you encourage policies be developed by your school districts that fit each school with minimal requirements from State oversight. These policies are for the safety of the children and still promote parental rights.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Darlene Saxton, RN