



A GPs in Schools Pilot school

Providing students with access to free, confidential health and mental health support at school

For Staff

Helping students access the health care they need

Students at St. George SHSS will have access to a free GP clinic at school, starting from 2022.

Our school's clinic will be staffed by a doctor (Dr), a General Practitioner (GP) and Nurse. They will be joining us from St. George Medical Centre where they work on the other days of the week.

What services will the GP be providing?

A doctor will provide students with many of the same services that GPs in the community do, including management of physical health, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health issues. The doctor will not provide emergency care, manage significant injuries, perform excisions or keep medications on school premises.

How can students make an appointment with the GP?

Our school's GP clinic will be open every **Thursday** during school terms between 0830-1500. Appointments will be available during class times, as well as at break times. Students should be supported to attend their GP appointment during class times.

Appointments to see the school GP can be made by students either in person by seeing Reception at the Skills Centre, by sending an email to reception@stgmed.com.au, or by calling the St George Medical Centre on 07 4625 5344.

Can parents or carers accompany their child to appointments?

If a student is considered to be a mature minor, the student can decide if they wish their parent to attend their GP appointment with them.

If a student is deemed by the GP to be a mature minor, parents/carers can accompany their child to GP appointments and must provide consent for their child to receive treatment.

St. George SHS will generally encourage parents or carers to be involved in their child's healthcare when required, with the consent of the young person. This is the same as any GP clinic in the community.

Can students consent to their medical treatment?

Some jurisdictions in Australia have legislation that addresses the issue of a child's consent to medical treatment. In the states and territories that have not specifically legislated in



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relation to the issue of children's consent to medical treatment, the common law applies. In Queensland the principles of common law apply.

The common law position relating to a child's competency to consent to treatment was established by the English House of Lords decision in *Gillick v West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority* [1986] AC 112.

That case determined that children may authorise medical treatment when they are old enough and mature enough to decide for themselves, provided they are capable of understanding what is proposed and of expressing their own wishes.

This is commonly referred to as the *Mature Minor* or *Gillick competent child*.

In Queensland, a young person under the age of 18 can consent to their own medical treatment if they are considered to be a mature minor.

Mature minors are young people under the age of 18 years who are determined by a medical professional to be capable of providing informed consent for treatment of a particular health issue without having the permission of a parent or carer.

Young people who are not mature minors cannot give consent to their own medical treatment and the GP will seek consent for medical treatment from the parents/carers prior to proceeding with any treatment. Under these circumstances, the GP must ask the student if they wish to continue before seeking a parent or carer's consent. The GP will work with the school's Program Lead to obtain parent/carer consent.

How is a young person's status as a mature minor determined?

In determining whether a young person is a mature minor and can consent to their own medical treatment, the GP will consider a range of factors, including:

- the young person's age;
- maturity in other areas of the young person's life;
- independence – whether they live at home with a parent or carer, or support themselves;
- how serious the treatment is; and
- if the young person understands what their health issue is, why treatment is needed, what the treatment involves, what other options they have, things that might go



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wrong (like side effects from drugs, or other complications), and what happens if there is no treatment.

What if a parent/carer doesn't want their child to see the GP?

The aim of providing a GP service to students in our school is to provide secondary students with access to primary health care. Any student at St. George SHS who wants to make an appointment with the GP can do so. The GP will then determine if the student is a mature minor for the health issue for which they are seeking treatment. This is the same process that would occur if a young person were to see a doctor in any GP clinic in the community.

If a parent informs the school that they do not want their child to access the GP clinic, the Principal and/or the Program Lead will liaise with the parent/carer and the GP to resolve the issue. Decisions will be based on what is in the student's best interest.

What can schools disclose to parents/carers?

In accordance with privacy obligations, if a student is deemed to be a mature minor, school staff must **not** disclose to a parent/carer that their child has made an appointment with or visited the GP, unless the student's consent has been formally recorded, or there are other legal reasons for the disclosure of this information.

Will the GP share information with the rest of the wellbeing team?

Conversations between the GP and students will be confidential and not shared with others (including the wellbeing team at the school) unless:

- it is with the consent of the student (if they are a mature minor) or their parents/carers (if the student is not a mature minor); or
- the disclosure is otherwise permitted or required by law.

What does Medicare disclose to parents and carers?

If the student's name is on their parent's Medicare card or the student has a duplicate card, parents will usually have access to their child's Medicare records.

It is important that students are aware their parents can access this information through Medicare.

Where will students' medical records be kept?

The medical records will remain the property of the GP's base clinic, where they will be securely stored. GPs have responsibility for all medical records.



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Will the GP make referrals to other services?

Yes. It is anticipated that referrals will be an important part of this program. GPs will use their established processes around consent to make referrals for students.

If the student moves schools, what happens to their medical records?

The student's medical records will remain the possession of the GP's base clinic, where they will be securely stored.

If a student moves schools, they (if they are a mature minor) or their parents/carers (if they are not a mature minor) may request their information is transferred to another GP, as would happen in the broader community. This is important and encouraged, so that continuity of care is promoted across all the healthcare providers a young person sees.

For more information please contact: Practice Manager 07 4625 5344.

What if a student is not eligible for a Medicare card?

The intention of providing a GP clinic at St. George SHS is to provide students with free access to a GP to ensure they can access the healthcare they need.

If a student is not eligible for a Medicare card, they will still be able to access the school GP free of charge.