

Recd.

Medical records at GGS

All students at Corio and Timbertop, both those boarding and day boarders, have a medical file kept at Kennedy and the San at Timbertop. Health information held in the files include information provided by parents, including vaccination status and allergies, letters concerning health and records of attendance at the centres written by nurses, doctors and counsellors. Some information is not recorded in the student's file, including highly confidential information (e.g. sexual abuse) which is kept in a special file. Records of physiotherapy and the notes kept by counsellors may be held by them.

These medical records are confidential and should only be accessed by health staff directly concerned with care of the student, and specific staff members responsible for keeping the records (e.g. receptionists).

The student has the right to see their record if they are judged to be mature enough to understand the record but not if it is judged that seeing information on their record may be detrimental to their emotional well being (e.g. confidential information from a parent or counsellor). Parents of mature age students do not have right of access unless permitted to do so by the student. Maturity may be assessed by age of the student, their ability to understand the information and other factors. In some cases, particularly if possibility of legal action, there should be formal documentation of the assessment of intelligence and maturity of the young teenaged student

The records belong to the school and not the student or family, and must never leave the school unless required by subpoena for Court action. This includes a situation where a student is taken to hospital or the attending general practitioner is to see the student at the doctor's practice.

Access to all documentation, whether held on paper or electronically, and including the informal notes kept in their own possession by health staff, may be required by law in cases involving legal action, including litigation.

A summary or copies of parts of the file may be provided to another doctor if requested and signed authorisation by the student, whether a current or past student, or in the case of a young person, by the parents. In some cases, especially in legal action, it would be wise to seek legal advice on providing copies of files to a third person, including one or other parent.

Period of holding the files is judged by medical requirements and legal wisdom. The medical record is required by law to be kept for 7 years after last seen by the doctor, or the age of 26, whichever is later. It is however important to realise that legal action including litigation may require the school's response many years after the student has left the school and for this reason, in addition to the possibility that the ex-student may seek childhood medical information later in adult life, that it is agreed that the medical file be kept for 50 years after the student has left the school.

Storage of files must be secure and files must be accessible reasonably quickly. This is especially important for files judged to be highly confidential (e.g. allegation of sexual assault or HIV status) and held separately by the school.

John M Court
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