Managing Sharps Policy



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Safe Management of Sharps and Clinical Waste

1. Scope and Purpose
This section outlines the safe handling, storage, and disposal of sharp objects (including needles, lancets, and adrenaline auto-injectors) to protect pupils, staff, and visitors from injury and blood-borne infection.

2. Safe Handling and Use

- **Individual Responsibility:** Pupils who self-manage medical conditions (e.g., blood glucose monitoring or insulin injections) must do so in a designated, private area (e.g., the medical room) unless their Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) states otherwise.
- **Supervision:** Staff supervising pupils using sharps must be trained in the school's medical procedures and cross-contamination risks.
- **No Re-sheathing:** Staff and pupils must **never** re-sheath, bend, or break needles prior to disposal.

3. Storage and Disposal of Sharps

- **Approved Containers:** All used sharps must be discarded immediately into a UN-approved, puncture-resistant, colour-coded sharps container (yellow-lidded for medicinal waste or orange-lidded for non-medicinal sharps).
- **Location:** Sharps bins must be kept in a secure, designated location out of reach of young children (e.g., the medical room) but easily accessible to the individuals who need them. They must never be left on floors or corridors.
- **Capacity Management:** Sharps bins must be securely closed when they reach the **"fill line" (three-quarters full)**. They must never be overfilled or forced shut.
- **Collection:** Sealed sharps bins will be collected and disposed of by a licensed clinical waste contractor. They must never be disposed of in standard domestic or recycling waste streams.

4. Incident Management: Needlestick Injuries
If a staff member or pupil experiences an accidental puncture or scratch from a used sharp, the following **immediate first aid actions** must be taken:

1. **Encourage bleeding:** Wash the wound thoroughly under cold running water and encourage it to bleed freely. Do not suck or squeeze the wound.
2. **Wash:** Clean the area generously with soap and running water (do not use scrub brushes).
3. **Cover:** Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing.
4. **Report & Seek Medical Advice:** Report the incident immediately to the Headteacher and designated First Aider. The injured person must seek urgent medical advice (via A&E or NHS 111) within one hour of the injury for assessment regarding post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).
5. **Record:** Log the incident formally using the school’s accident reporting system (and via RIDDOR if applicable).

5. Discarded Sharps on School Grounds

- **Site Staff Protocol:** If a discarded needle or sharp object is found on school grounds, pupils must be kept clear.
- **Safe Retrieval:** Only trained site staff using a dedicated sharps retrieval kit (including thick puncture-resistant gloves, a sharps container, and retrieval tongs) may pick up the item. It must never be picked up with bare hands.