



CRESTWOOD
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Supporting Children with Epilepsy Policy

Epilepsy Overview

Epilepsy is a common condition that affects the brain and causes frequent seizures. Seizures are bursts of electrical activity in the brain that temporarily affect how it works.

They can cause a wide range of symptoms including:

- Uncontrollable jerking and shaking, called a “fit”
- Losing awareness and staring blankly into space
- Becoming still
- Strange sensations, such as a “rising” feeling in the tummy, unusual smells or tastes and a tingling feeling in your arms or legs.

In epilepsy the electrical signals in the brain become scrambled and there are sometimes sudden bursts of electrical activity. This is what causes seizures.

Crestwood Community School Protocol

At Crestwood Community School we are committed to fully meeting the needs of students who have epilepsy, keeping them safe, ensuring they achieve to their full potential and are fully included in school life.

We will do this by:

- Keeping careful records of changes in behaviour and levels of achievement to identify students who are not achieving to their full potential
- Tackling any problems early.
- Ensuring that all students with epilepsy are fully included in school life, activities and outings (both day and residential) and are not isolated or stigmatised.
- Giving voice to the views of students with epilepsy, for example regarding feeling safe, respect from other students, teasing and bullying, what should happen during and following a seizure, adjustments to support them in learning, adjustments to enable full participation in school life and raising epilepsy awareness in school.
- Making necessary adjustments e.g. exam timings, coursework deadlines, timetables.
- Liaising fully with parents/carers and health professional (with parental consent) to share information about the student’s education, healthcare, medication and any affects this has on their school life (for example epilepsy medication and seizures can affect a person’s ability to concentrate) This will be an ongoing process.
- Ensure staff are epilepsy aware and know what to do if a student has a seizure.
- There will be trained members of staff available at all times to deliver emergency medication.
- Every student with epilepsy will have an individual Health Care Plan in place which will include information of the student’s seizures, medication and emergency protocols.
- We will continue to raise awareness of epilepsy across the whole school community, including students, staff and parents.

Types of Seizures

Simple partial (Focal) seizures or “Auras”

- A general strange feeling that's hard to describe
- A “rising” feeling in their stomach – like the sensation they get on fairground rides
- A feeling that things have happened before “Déjà vu”
- Unusual smells or tastes
- Tingling in their arms or legs
- An intense feeling of fear or joy
- Stiffness or twitching in part of their body, such as an arm or hand.

The person will remain awake and aware while this is happening. These seizures are sometimes known as “warnings” or “auras” because that can be a sign that another type of seizure is about to happen.

Complex partial (Focal) seizures

During a complex partial seizure they lose their sense of awareness and make random body movements such as:

- Smacking their lips
- Rubbing their hands
- Making random noises
- Moving their arms around
- Picking at clothes or fiddling with objects
- Chewing or swallowing

They will not be able to respond to anyone else during the seizure and they will not have any memory of it.

Tonic-Clonic Seizures

A tonic-clonic seizure, previously known as a “grand mal” is what most people think of as a typical epileptic fit.

They happen in 2 stages – an initial “tonic” stage, shortly followed by a second “clonic” stage:

1. Tonic Stage – the person lose consciousness, their body goes stiff, and they may fall to the floor
2. Clonic Stage – their limbs jerk about, they may lose control of their bladder or bowel, they may bite their tongue or the inside of their cheek, and they might have difficulty breathing.

The seizure normally stops after a few minutes, but some last longer. Afterwards they may have a headache or difficulty remembering what happened. They may feel very tired or confused.

Absences

An absence seizure, which used to be called a “petit mal”, is where a person loses awareness of their surrounding for a short time. These types of seizure mainly affect children, but can happen at any age.

During an absence seizure a person may:

- Stare blankly into space
- Look like they are “daydreaming” or flutter their eyes
- Make slight jerking movements of their body or limbs

The seizures only last up to 15 seconds and they will not be able to remember them. They can happen several times a day.

Myoclonic seizures

A myoclonic seizure is where some or all of their body suddenly twitches or jerks, like they have had an electric shock. They often happen soon after waking up. Myoclonic seizures usually only last a fraction of a second, but several can sometimes occur in a short space of time. The person usually stays awake during them.

Clonic Seizures

Clonic seizures cause the body to shake and jerk like a tonic-clonic seizure, but they don't go stiff at the start. They typically last a few minutes and the person might lose consciousness.

Tonic Seizures

Tonic seizures cause all the muscles to suddenly become stiff, like the first stage of a tonic-clonic seizure. This might mean they will lose balance and fall over.

Atonic seizures

Atonic seizures cause the muscles to suddenly relax, so they may fall to the ground, they tend to be very brief and they'll usually be able to get up again straight away. These are sometimes called "drop" seizures.

Status epilepticus

This is the name for any seizure that lasts for a long time, or a series of seizures where the person does not regain consciousness in between.

It is a medical emergency and needs to be treated as soon as possible.