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8<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Dear Parent or Carer

Oxfordshire County Council's Public Health directorate commissioned Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust to provide the school health nursing service within Oxfordshire as of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. We are delighted to be delivering this service and work closely with our colleagues from Education as we take forward the health and wellbeing of the children and young people in Oxfordshire. A great deal of work was undertaken, working with our Commissioners, in developing the service model and the School Health Nurses work at 4 different levels following the Health Child Programme 5-19. This service model can be seen in more detail on our website [oxford heath](http://oxfordheath).

Where the secondary schools are in agreement we can provide sexual health support. This will mean that young people will be able to access confidential advice and support about wellbeing, relationships and sexual health. Our school health nurses are trained nurses who have undertaken further specialist training, which is updated regularly to reflect changes in sexual health and keeping our children and young people safe. School health nurses have full access to support services and adhere to confidentiality procedures as per Oxford Health Trust policies and the Nursing, Midwifery Council (NMC) code of conduct. (Detailed below).

We know that the best people to support young people are their parents and carers and therefore will always work with the young people to encourage them to talk to their parents/carers. We are aware, however, that occasionally young people feel

unable to do this and it is therefore important for them to have someone they can turn to for advice. The School Health Nurse service will, by using evidence based sexual health provision in school, encourage young people to have a positive approach to their sexual health and empowering them to make informed and responsible choices about relationships and sex.

Research shows that young people do want sexual health services that are easy to access. Furthermore evidence shows that young people between the ages of 16-24 years continue to have the highest rates of sexually transmitted infections (STI) with Chlamydia remaining the most prevalent STI in England with rates substantially higher in 15-24 year olds than any other age group. With the School Health Nurse providing education, information and support to young people we strive to improve the sexual health outcomes for young people and are able to do this because we are based in school and often have an ongoing working relationship with the young people. The school health nurse offers a range of services in school which will include support and advice on the following; delaying sex, healthy relationships, the meaning of consent and what constitutes abusive relationships, screening for child sexual exploitation, pregnancy and STI testing, and contraception. We can contribute to whole school programmes in supporting the school to ensure that young people develop healthy and well, in all aspects of their growing years to reach their full potential.

### **Information and confidentiality**

School Health Nurses can provide confidential contraceptive and sexual health advice and care in response to individual requests from young people within the boundaries of the NMC code of conduct and safeguarding policies. Young people accessing the service would receive age appropriate health advice and information relevant to their sexual history and clinical condition (health and wellbeing/past medical history). The school health nurse would be able to offer translators or interpreting services (face-to-face or telephone) where requested or necessary. Condoms, pregnancy testing, contraception pills and emergency hormonal contraception will be available free of charge, and when needed, signposting to other services for further treatment.

[www.nmc-uk.org/standards](http://www.nmc-uk.org/standards) NMC Code of conduct

However, School Health Nurses contributing to a school sex education programme must follow the school's sex education policy.

### **Gillick and Fraser competence**

All young people accessing the school nurse service for sexual health advice is assessed to ensure that they are mature enough and competent to make decisions for themselves. This has particular relevance in regard to sexual health and we use 'Fraser guidelines' to establish that they are 'Gillick competent'.

The Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines help us all to balance young peoples' rights and wishes with our responsibility to keep children safe from harm.

Consideration would be given to those aged 16-18 years with a mental or physical disability or in a relationship where there are power or control concerns. Their ability to consent would be assessed (Sexual Offences Act 2003) **Gillick competence** is a term originating in England and is used in medical law to decide whether a child (16 years or younger) is able to consent to his or her own medical treatment, without the need for parental permission or knowledge.

It is considered good practice for health professionals to follow the criteria outlined by Lord Fraser in 1985 in the House of Lords' ruling in the case of Victoria Gillick v West Norfolk and Wisbech Health Authority and Department of Health and Social Security. These are commonly known as the **Fraser Guidelines**:

- The young person understands the health professional's advice;
- The health professional cannot persuade the young person to inform his or her parent or allow the doctor to inform the parents that he or she is seeking contraceptive advice;
- The young person is very likely to begin or continue having intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment;
- Unless he or she receives contraceptive advice or treatment, the young person's physical or mental health or both are likely to suffer;

The young person's best interests require the health professional to give contraceptive advice, treatment or both without parental consent.

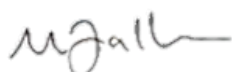
Clinical information regarding young people using the services of Oxford Health, including those related to their sexual health will be held securely and strictly in

accordance with Caldicott Guidance, the Data Protection Act (1998), the NMC Code of Conduct and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust Policies, including Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (OSCB) information sharing policy.

School health nurses have a passion to improve the health outcomes for children and young people and by working with school staff and parents, we strive to ensure our children and young people achieve their full potential.

For more information or to discuss this further please don't hesitate to contact your school health nurse (contact details below) or myself.

Yours faithfully



Margaret Fallon

Operational Manager School Health Nursing

School nurse contact details:

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[www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

<http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/children-and-young-people/oxon/school-health-nursing/>