

STUDENT HEALTH ADVISOR PROGRAMME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Student Health Advisor programme?

The Student Health Advisor (SHA) programme is a programme developed by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and fully supported by the Ministry of Education (MOE.) The SHA is a qualified and trained nurse stationed in selected secondary schools. The SHA will provide advice and guidance for the students with health-related issues so that timely intervention and follow up, if necessary, can be offered to them. The SHA may also refer the students to appropriate specialists for further management.

2. How many schools have been selected to take part in the Student Health Advisor Programme?

The pilot programme was implemented in 12 secondary schools in 2012 with positive feedback and results. The programme will be introduced to more schools as we scale up. This year, your child's/ward's school has been selected to participate in this programme.

3. Who will benefit from the Student Health Advisor programme?

The programme will benefit:

- Students who have general queries or concerns about their health
- Underweight or overweight students who need advice on healthy lifestyle practices (egs. healthy dietary practices and physical activity)
- Students who have existing medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and/or who require advice on the use of medications

4. How can students get to see the Student Health Advisor?

Students may be referred to the SHA by

- Teachers, school counsellors or any other allied education staff in school
- Doctors and nurses from the Health Promotion Board's (HPB) School Health Service teams during their routine school visits

Students who are not referred may also make an appointment to see the SHA on their own.

5. How will the counselling be carried out? Will there be any follow-up sessions with the students?

The counselling may be carried out individually or in a group in school. The frequency and number of counselling sessions for each student may vary according to their individual needs. Each counselling session should not exceed more than 30 minutes.

The SHA may arrange for follow-up session(s) to continue the counselling or to get an update on the student's health issues. She may also refer the student to a specialist for further follow-up, if necessary.

6. Will the proceedings of the counselling session be recorded? Will the information be shared with other people?

The SHA will keep paper records of case notes documenting the counselling session for the purposes of follow-up. While all health and medical information provided by students to the SHAs are confidential, should there be any potential/act of sexual abuse, self-harm or

homicide, SHAs will inform the school personnel and HPB accordingly so that the necessary action can be taken.

Some cases may also be used for the purposes of education, training and/or research to build the capacities of the SHA. If such cases are used, the identities of the students will be fully protected and not revealed.

7. What is my role as a parent/guardian?

You may receive a letter informing you of your child's/ward's appointment with the SHA if he/she has been referred by the school. You are strongly encouraged to remind your child/ward to attend the appointment. If necessary, the SHA may invite you to attend the appointment or a separate meeting to discuss your child's health issues.

8. Is there a fee for participating in the Student Health Advisor programme?

No. Students and their parents are not required to pay any fee for the programme.

9. Will there be any disruption to my child's/ward's lessons if he/she is referred for counselling?

The SHA will try to schedule counselling appointments during schools breaks or after school hours to minimise disruption to lessons. If the student is only able to attend the counselling during school hours, permission from the teacher will be sought to excuse your child from class.

10. Is the participation in the Student Health Advisor programme voluntary?

Your child's/ward's participation in this SHA programme is voluntary. Your decision to opt out of this programme will not affect your child's/ward's educational opportunities in the school. If you agree to participate in the programme, the consent you provide will be valid for the entire duration of your child/ward's stay in the school.

11. Can I withdraw consent for my child/ward after I have agreed to allow him/her to participate in the Student Health Advisor programme?

Yes, you may withdraw your child/ward from the programme at any time in writing.

12. Who do I contact if I have any other questions?

If you have any other questions regarding the programme, please feel free to contact the school's Principal or Vice-Principal who can also link you to the SHA who is based in the school.