



Heartkids School Information

When any child starts school or moves onto high school, it can be an equally exciting and stressful time for parents. When your child is also a Heartkid who has faced many challenges it makes all these feelings more intense. You may feel you are over-reacting, but if you share these feelings you may be surprised to find out you are not alone. Most principals and teachers are only too happy to listen to your concerns and very eager to know as much about your child's condition as they can. You may like to refer them to the HeartKids website www.heartkidsvic.org.au for further information and access to related sites. This will ease their anxiety and yours. Probably the only person who may be oblivious to all the fuss will be your Heart child. They will be caught up in the excitement of starting school, making new friends and learning something new every day.

Set out below are some suggestions we have put together to help you in this process.

1. We recommend that you discuss your child's Heart Problems and any anticipated effect this will have on their schooling with the following people:
 - Primary School - make an appointment with the principal and your child's teacher.
 - High school – make an appointment with your child's year level coordinator, sports coordinator, welfare coordinator, school nurse (if applicable) and principal.
2. Guest speaking at a staff meeting early in the new year gives you an opportunity to explain your child's needs and time to discuss any issues or questions staff may have.
3. If your child cannot keep up during physical education classes or is struggling to keep up with the class group on excursions that involve considerable walking, the class teacher needs to understand and make allowances for this.
4. Give a copy of HeartKids 'Teachers and Carers' brochure to the principal and teacher.
5. If your child has specialist teachers, ensure they are informed of your child's condition.
6. Ensure that all staff are aware of the importance of good wound care to prevent endocarditis (a brochure is available from HeartKids). We suggest that you insist all cuts, abrasions and bumps are reported to you and action taken, particularly if your child is on anti-coagulant therapy.
7. Complete a First Aid Action Plan for the teacher and suggest that it be displayed in the staff room and sickbay, as well as all emergency kits, with a photo of your child. For high school students some parents suggest keeping a copy in the student's diary and the teacher's roll book for emergency teachers to use. You may like to use the enclosed example as a guide.
8. Ensure that your emergency contact details are always up to date.
9. During excursions and camps ensure a copy of your child's Action Plan is given to the supervising teacher and accompanies the emergency kit.
10. Some parents suggest that you:
 - Inform the class about your child's condition, as this may help friends and fellow students understand why your child may not be able to keep up during PE lessons.

- Inform older students at the school of your child's condition so that others will be aware of their needs in the playground.
11. We would advise you to seek your child's permission before informing students in the school of your child's medical condition.

To assist you in informing the school about your child, we have also included:

- *A medical history form that you may like to copy, or use as a guide.*
- *A copy of a suggested First Aid Action Plan which you may like to adapt to suit your child's needs.*

If you would like an emailed copy of this information, please contact HeartKids Victoria: heartkids@heartkids.org.au.