

# GORDON'S SCHOOL

## EPILEPSY POLICY

The core principle that guides everything we do is **Putting Students First**

### 1. Introduction

Epilepsy is a condition that affects the brain and causes repeated seizures. Epilepsy is estimated to affect more than 500,000 people in the UK. This means that almost one in every 100 people has the condition. Epilepsy can start at any age, but it most often begins during childhood.

It's often not possible to identify a specific reason why someone develops the condition, although some cases – particularly those that occur later in life – are associated with damage to the brain. For example, epilepsy can be caused by strokes, brain tumors and severe head injuries. Some cases of epilepsy may be caused by changes in the brain that occur as a result of the genes you inherit from your parents.

### 2. Symptoms and signs

Each student with epilepsy will experience the condition in a way that is unique to them. Seizures can happen at any time and generally last a matter of seconds or minutes, after which the brain returns to normal. Seizures are divided into two groups:

- Generalised
- Partial (sometimes called Focal)

#### **Generalised:**

These affect the whole or most of the brain and include the following;

Absence:

Here the person stops what they are doing and may **stare, blink or look vague** for a few seconds. They are often mistaken for **daydreaming or inattention**. These are the most common types of seizure in children and young people and can occur several times a day.

Myoclonic:

These involve **sudden contractions of the muscles**. Either a single movement or numerous. These seizures tend to affect the arm, sometimes the head but can affect the whole body in some cases.

Tonic clonic seizures:

This is the most widely recognized type of seizures. Here the student will **lose consciousness**, their **body will stiffen and they will fall to the ground**. This is followed by **jerking movements** known as convulsions. Sometimes the student will be **incontinent**. After a few minutes the jerking will cease, the student will be confused and will probably need to sleep.

Atonic seizures:

Here all muscle tone is lost and the person drops to the floor. **The body will go limp** and they will usually fall forward. They are therefore at risk of hitting their head. The student can usually get up straight away.

## Partial:

Only one part of the brain is affected. However, this may be a warning or act as an 'aura' for a generalized seizure. They are divided into simple (where consciousness is not impaired) and complex (consciousness is impaired).

Simple partial seizure:

Symptoms depend on which part of the brain is affected. For example, a student experiencing this type of seizure may report **tingling, sweating, go pale or experience a strange smell or taste**. The student will remain fully conscious and the seizure is brief.

Complex partial seizure:

Again the symptoms depend on the part of the brain affected, the student can appear fully awake but may be **acting strangely (e.g. smacking lips, plucking at clothing or wandering aimlessly)**. They cannot control their actions and therefore cannot follow instructions.

## 3. Triggers

In many students with epilepsy, seizures happen without warning, but in some people certain triggers can be identified. Here are some examples; Stress, anxiety or excitement, some over the counter/prescription medicines, hormonal changes, late nights, not taking medication, illness, unbalanced diet, photosensitivity, alcohol and recreational drugs.

## 4. Medication and Control

People with Epilepsy are very often medicated to control their condition. Further information for students who require medication at school is in the Gordon's School policy on the Administration of Medication in School.

## 5. Management in school

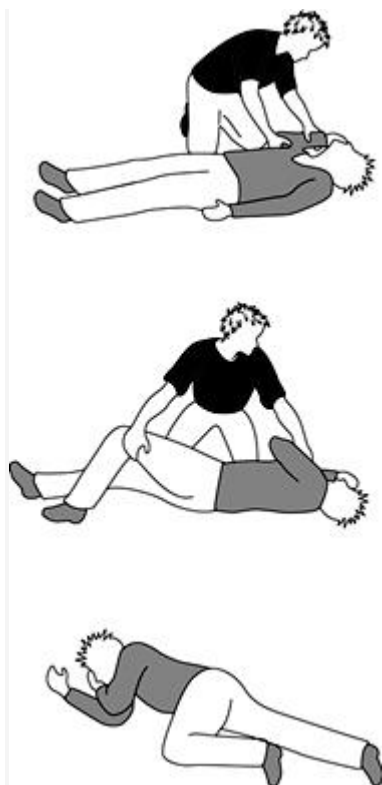
- It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to notify the school if their child suffers from epilepsy or another condition that involves seizures. Full details are required including the severity of the condition and the name and dosage of medication prescribed.
- Please refer to the School's Administration of Medications Policy regarding any medications prescribed to a Student for epilepsy or seizures.
- The School Nurses produce a 'Student's with Medical Conditions Register' (with a photograph of each student) from the information provided by parents. This is available to all school staff on the school intranet, and is displayed in key areas around School. This register would include any child who suffers with Epilepsy/seizures.
- All students with a diagnosis of Epilepsy/seizures will have an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP). This plan will include specific details of the student's condition and daily care requirements, medication, first aid procedures and emergency contact details. The IHCP is saved on the School intranet, printed in the House Medical folder and included in the trip pack given to teachers supervising off-site trips.
- The medical centre will issue a 'Green card' to the Student. This green card can be shown to a member of Staff to prompt/notify them of their condition. Students must only be allowed to leave the classroom after showing their card **if well and chaperoned by another**. Teacher to administer First Aid and call the medical centre 3333 or 999 in event of emergency or call the medical centre if Student feels a seizure is imminent

- Parents or guardians are politely asked to inform the school if and when their child has been unwell with a seizure outside of school, particularly if they have required hospitalisation.
- All trained First Aiders in school are taught how to manage a student having a seizure safely.
- First Aid awareness for all staff regarding seizures is given annually.
- First Aid advice for helping a person having a seizure is available on the school intranet.

**In the event of a child having a seizure staff should follow the procedure below:**

## **Do...**

- Protect the person from injury - (remove harmful objects from nearby)
- Cushion their head
- Look for an epilepsy identity card or identity jewelry
- Time the seizure from start to finish
- Aid breathing by gently placing them in the recovery position once the seizure has finished (see pictures)
- Stay with the person until recovery is complete
- Be calmly reassuring



## **Don't...**

- Restrain the person's movements
- Put anything in the person's mouth
- Try to move them unless they are in danger
- Give them anything to eat or drink until they are fully recovered
- Attempt to bring them round

## **Call for an ambulance if...**

- You know it is the person's first seizure, or
- The seizure continues for more than five minutes, or
- One tonic-clonic seizure follows another without the person regaining consciousness between seizures, or
- The person is injured during the seizure, or
- You believe the person needs urgent medical attention

Remember to alert the Medical Centre for assistance (ext. 3333). If a School Nurse is not on site, contact the school office or main reception and ask them to send a trained First Aider. There is also a list of trained First Aiders on SharePoint.

**Julie Unsworth**  
**Lead School Nurse**

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