

Medical Care

The Medical Centre

The Medical Centre opened in September 1998 in one end of the building formerly occupied by Wilson House. It is ideally positioned in the middle of the campus serving both the Senior and Junior Schools. There is a treatment room, consulting room, counselling room and two three-bedded "lying-in rooms", where sick pupils may rest for an hour or two until better or until collected by parents or house matrons

Sister Ann King and her team of nurses are on duty Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and on Saturdays from 9am to 5pm. A further team of paramedics and nurses have received specialist training in Sports First Aid and provide pitch-side support for rugby matches in the Autumn Term.

Dr Mike Ellis leads a team of doctors from Berkeley Place Surgery in Cheltenham. There are doctors' surgeries for boarders at the Medical Centre between 8 and 9am Monday to Friday. Dr Ellis is usually in the Medical Centre all morning on a Thursday and does a lunchtime surgery on Mondays and Thursdays for Junior School boarders.

Medicals

Medicals are performed on all new pupils during their first term. The purpose of these medicals is largely two-fold:

1. A "getting to know you" exercise. We get to know any medical problems that pupils may have and they become familiarised with the Medical Centre.
2. A brief medical – where we pay particular attention to factors which are important to education, which may not have been examined in the past, particularly eyesight and hearing.

NHS or Private

The School Doctors (General Practitioners), Dr Mike Ellis, Dr Vanessa Dane and Dr Wendy Allum work within the NHS. It is on strong recommendations of the Department of Health and the Medical Officers of Schools Association (MOSA) that pupils at boarding schools are registered at the School. This makes good sense for two reasons. Firstly more time is spent at school than at home and secondly when at home the parents are in a position of knowing all the important medical details whereas those at the school may not if they are not registered with the School Doctor.

Referrals on from the GP can always be made on the NHS, but unfortunately this is often not as prompt as we would like. Many parents choose to have private cover and the school offers a scheme through the bursar's office if parents choose to join.

To keep parents informed you will be notified of referrals to consultants. You will usually be notified via matron.

Matrons

From a medical point of view the Matron's main role is that of a "mother". As a rule they do not have any medical qualifications. They will treat minor illnesses such as coughs, colds, bugs etc like any mother would, turning for help to either the nurses or doctors whenever needed. They give out paracetamol, ibuprofen, simple cough linctus, indigestion remedies and other over the counter remedies under protocols from the school doctor to treat minor ailments. Matrons will take pupils to Casualty and the Hospital when necessary and on a medical front, will largely be the go-between between home and school. It is obviously very important that Matrons and the rest of the medical staff at the school are aware of any drugs, medicines, treatments that you would rather your child did not receive.

Consent

The law on this is quite straightforward from a medical point of view. Any child over the age of 16 is able to give consent for their own treatment. Any child under the age of 16, if thought to be mature enough, is also able to give consent. The duty of confidentiality owed to a person under 16 is as great as that owed to any other person.

We do however seek parental consent for College staff to administer prescribed and non-prescribed medicines, and to give boarders immunisations as recommended by the Department of Health. We require this parental consent to be updated annually. The Headmaster and Matrons will act in loco-parentis and will, in incredibly rare situations, consent for emergency treatment, operations etc.

Confidentiality

Most medical matters within the school do not need "strict confidentiality", for example a child with a sore throat or sprained ankle would approach Matron. Matron will send the child to the doctor with a "chit" and the doctor will treat the child as appropriate and return the chit to Matron with his/her instructions on. For the vast majority of cases, it is in the pupil's best interest that Matron, teachers, sports staff etc know what is happening and there are no difficulties regarding confidentiality.

From a medical point of view there are very few instances when we would not strongly encourage a pupil to discuss all aspects of their medical care with their parents and this is something we would always strongly encourage pupils to do. Having said this, every patient's expectation of confidentiality must be respected and the law on this and on consent is very clear. The medical computer record systems are separate from the College network to ensure confidentiality.

Local Hospitals

Cheltenham General Hospital (NHS) is extremely convenient and is our main local referral source, although for some procedures admission may be arranged at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. There is a good local private hospital, the Nuffield Cheltenham Hospital to which most private referrals are made. There are times when it would be more appropriate to use hospitals (NHS or private) nearer patient's homes, for example towards the end of term, and this is something that can quite easily be arranged.

Physiotherapy

NHS Physiotherapy is available at Cheltenham General Hospital, and the waiting time for first appointments is usually around 5 weeks. There are three private physiotherapy clinics within walking distance of the school.

Communication

If two-way communication between home and school works well everything runs more smoothly. The obvious link in this chain is the pupil, but on occasions this is not as reliable as we would like, Matron should know everything that is going on.

Holiday Treatment

If your child should need treatment during the holidays, this may be arranged with your family doctor as a "Temporary Resident". If your child has any operation, accident, severe illness or is given vaccinations, please notify the House Matron on return to school and inform the Medical Centre, preferably in writing. This is especially important to ensure that vaccinations are not duplicated, and to ensure that any medication is safely administered as intended. If your child returns to school with medication, please hand this to the House Matron, who will dispense appropriately.

Contact Details

Parents are encouraged to contact the Medical Centre if they have any health concerns about their children. During school holidays, medical queries regarding boarders should be addressed to Berkeley Place Surgery.

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