



# A summary for managing cystic fibrosis in the classroom

## THINGS TO DISCUSS WITH THE CHILD'S PARENTS:

### Medication:

- Medication required e.g. enzymes, salt tablets, Ventolin, salty drinks.
- Discuss with the parent what type of system will work for their child in terms of administering the enzymes and how many are required for different food items.
- Parents could provide a list of common classroom foods e.g. cupcakes, pikelets or popcorn and how many enzymes their child may need for these types of food so teaching staff are aware.
- Is any other medication required while the child is at school e.g. Ventolin or antibiotics?
- Any side effects of medications that impact on the child while at school?

### Exercise:

- How much exercise can the child participate in? Is he/she likely to tire easily?

### Toilet habits:

- Easy (and quick) access to a toilet may be required.
- Be aware that the child may be embarrassed about the situation.

### CF Diet:

- High calorie drinks or snacks other than what the child might consume at recess or lunch may be needed to assist the child with weight gain or maintenance.

- Some children with CF can take a long time to eat all their lunch, plus take their medication, so can miss out on part of their play time. Allowing the child to start eating their lunch a little earlier (to get a head start) can really help the child with CF with their nutritional and social needs.
- If your class is doing a healthy eating program, it can be helpful if reference is made to the CF diet and how it is different from the healthy eating pyramid.
- Sometimes children with CF can become very confused when they learn about healthy eating habits at school and this can negatively impact on their calorie intake at home.

### Are there any specific CF symptoms that you need to be aware of?:

- Any potential emergency situations?
- Hospital admissions in the past?
- Likely to be admitted during the year?
- Psycho-social issues e.g. phobias, anxiety, embarrassment?

### Things to let the child's parent know about:

- If the child is extra tired or there is a big decrease in energy levels.
- If the child is coughing more than usual.
- Communicate with parents if the child is on the toilet for long periods or going more frequently than normal.

 See [cfsmart.org](https://www.cfsmart.org) for lesson plan ideas

## THINGS TO CONSIDER IN THE CLASSROOM:

### Infection control:

- All students should wash their hands with liquid soap and dry with paper towels or a hand dryer. Avoid shared towels and shared soap.
- Have a strong school policy about parents bringing sick children to school.
- Encourage all students to cough and sneeze into their elbow or sleeve instead of using their hands.
- Encourage appropriate use of antibacterial hand gel.
- Keep the child with CF at least a metre away from other children who appear to be sick.
- Avoid children in the class sharing eating utensils, cups or water bottles with other students.
- Include hand washing and germ lessons as part of the learning program. See [cfsmart.org](https://www.cfsmart.org) for lesson plan ideas

### Exercise:

- Hydration for when participating in physical activity.
- Extra rest if the child needs it.
- Toilet breaks.
- Tissues if coughing up mucus.

### Homework:

- Discuss with parents in advance about possible homework which could be undertaken if the child has to go to hospital or is at home on IV treatment.
- There is also a hospital school service available in each state hospital, to liaise with in regards to school work.

### Minimise the child's exposure to the following:

- Fish tanks in class rooms: ok as long as they have a cover on them.
- Water play, water toys.
- Excursions, where hay, ponds.
- Swimming: avoid change rooms if possible.
- Soil: gardening, keep exposure to 15 minutes or less
- Air-conditioning : have serviced annually.

### Cross infection if other students with CF in the school:

- Only one person with CF should be in a classroom, unless they are siblings who reside in the same home.
- People with CF should keep more than a metre apart from others with CF.
- People with CF should not travel in the same vehicle such as buses or gather in common areas.
- At outdoor events such as sports days the children must maintain a distance from each other.
- Shaking hands, hugging or physical contact between people with CF is not recommended.
- If you are aware of a potential cross infection situation, work with both parties ASAP to develop a plan.
- For further support in this area either contact the CF clinic or CF organisation.

