
Position Statement

SUMMARY

It is the position of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) that the registered professional school nurse (hereinafter referred to as the school nurse) should be clinically supervised and evaluated by a registered nurse knowledgeable of the scope and standards of practice for school nursing. The school nurse job description and performance evaluation should be based on the standards of school nursing practice, the standards of professional performance, and related competencies described in the current version of “School Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice” (American Nurses Association [ANA] & National Association of School Nurses [NASN], 2011).

BACKGROUND

The school nurse is often the only healthcare provider in a school. However, school nurses may be supervised and evaluated by school administrators who have little or no knowledge and understanding of the school nurse role. Liability exists when school administrators, who do not fully understand the scope and standards of school nursing practice, are responsible for supervising and evaluating the clinical competency of the school nurse (Hootman, 2013; McDaniel et al., 2013).

NASN, in collaboration with the ANA, has developed standards of practice that apply to the specialty practice of school nursing. These standards provide a framework for the expansive scope of practice and authoritative statements of the duties that school nurses are expected to competently perform. To be truly meaningful, the standards statements and the accompanying competencies must be further refined to reflect the context of practice, district policies, and state nurse practice acts. The standards of practice and professional performance for school nursing provide the tools to focus on the tasks that promote the health and academic achievement of all students (McDaniel, Overman, Guttu & Engelke, 2013) and guide the evaluation of competencies needed to meet these standards.

RATIONALE

In order to meet students’ health needs and to function effectively with school and community team members, school nurses need supervision and evaluation to maintain and improve competence in this independent practice. Accurate job descriptions and an evaluation process that includes both an administrative and a clinical nursing component are essential and should be based on the standards of practice and professional performance for school nursing practice. School nurses are instrumental in creating and revising job descriptions and the competencies to be included in a performance evaluation (McDaniel et al., 2013).

Clinical Supervision

As the health needs of today’s students have increased in the school setting, school nurses have expanded their base of knowledge and skills to safely care for them (Resha, 2009). School nurses need the support provided by clinical supervision, which requires “specialized, professional knowledge, skills and related credentials for the practice of school nursing. It promotes, enhances and updates the professional growth of school nurses in terms of their professional and clinical skills and knowledge” (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2009, p. 20).

The National Association of State School Nurse Consultants’ (NASSNC) 2007 position paper supports clinical supervision of school nurses by licensed, experienced registered nurses rather than a non-nurse supervisor. NASN