National School Nursing Standards for Practice

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

Revised draft (Includes contents relevant to on-line survey)
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GLOSSARY

Decision making framework (DMF): the national Decision Making Framework is a set of tools and principles to assist nurses and midwives in the process of making decisions about whether specific tasks are within their individual scope of practice and in the delegation of care. The DMF also provides a framework for nurses seeking to expand their individual scope of practice.¹

Enrolled nurse: A person with appropriate educational preparation and competence for practice, who is registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. The EN works with the registered nurse (RN) as part of the health care team and demonstrates competence in the provision of person-centred care. Core practice generally requires the EN to work under the direct or indirect supervision of the RN. At all times, the EN retains responsibility for his/her actions and remains accountable in providing delegated nursing care. The need for the EN to have a named and accessible RN at all times and in all contexts of care for support and guidance is critical to patient safety.² Enrolled nurses in Australia are prepared at a Diploma level (or equivalent).

Evidence-based practice: is accessing and making judgements to translate the best available evidence, which includes the most current, valid, and available research findings into practice.³

Groups: this may be a number of students; a family; a mix of student, family, other care-givers, teachers, counsellor, and/or other health professionals. Groups may be used for a variety of reasons including, for example, health education/promotion sessions, counselling sessions, discussing the management of a health issue.

Student: the school attendee, who is the focus of school nursing care.

Family: parents, significant other, guardian, carer, care-giver, primary carer; the person or people identified by the student as their carer; one of the groups (families) who make up the school community.

Professional Practice Framework: Registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives have their practice governed by a Professional Practice Framework set down by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA), which assures protection of the public. The professional practice framework includes: registration; education standards; standards for practice; scope of practice; a decision-making framework; code of ethics; code of professional conduct; professional boundaries; and other relevant registration standards relating to: continuing professional development, criminal history checks, English language skills, recency of practice, and professional indemnity insurance arrangements.⁴

Registered nurse: A person who has completed the prescribed education preparation, demonstrates competence to practise and is registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as a registered nurse in Australia.⁵

Scope of practice: is that which nurses are educated, competent to perform and permitted by law. The actual scope of practice is influenced by the context in which the nurse practises, the health needs of people, the level of competence and confidence of the nurse and the policy requirements of the service provider.⁶

School community: all the people involved in the school; students (residential and non-residential), families, staff, visitors, volunteers.

Student wellbeing team: this is a group of people in a school involved in caring for student health and wellbeing. It has many different titles and many different constituents depending on the school and education sector. Variously known as: school health team, student support team, student services team, student welfare team, pastoral care team.

⁶ Ibid.
THE STANDARDS FOR PRACTICE FOR SCHOOL NURSES

The twelve standards within the National School Nursing Standards for Practice are organised into four domains which reflect the breadth of school nursing. There is no ranking to these domains. Each standard addresses a major practice (functional) area of school nursing practice. The standard within the domains is followed by the key elements of that standard. Although the standards are divided into separate domains for readability, in reality school nursing practice embraces most/all standards with each student/nurse interaction and each intervention program.

These standards reflect the aspects of the nursing role unique to the school nursing context. They indicate the desired and achievable levels of performance which can be reasonably expected of the school nurse. The key elements of the standards can be used to evaluate an individual nurse’s practice. The way an individual school nurse demonstrates how they meet the standards will differ depending on their individual scope of practice and context of practice.

These standards have been revised from the original document published in 2012, to reflect contemporary practice of school nurses across the country. As with all standards for practice, this document will need review from time to time, as the school nursing practice evolves to meet the health and welfare needs of students in an ever-changing society.

Defining Domains
The standards for practice for school nurses are ordered under four broad categories of aspects of care or ‘domains’, namely: Professional practice; Provision of care; Collaborative practice; and, School nursing environment.

Domain 1: Professional practice - refers to the role and responsibilities of the nurse as a health professional. Under the standards within Domain 1 the school nurse demonstrates their understanding of school nursing and practises in accordance with the nursing and midwifery professions’ codes of ethics and professional conduct as defined under the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) Professional Practice Framework (as defined in the Glossary). The school nurse at all times ensures their practice demonstrates cultural respect in the care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Cultural competence is demonstrated in the care of all those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Domain 2: Provision of care - reflects the delivery of nursing services to students within the school community. Under the standards within Domain 2 the school nurse uses evidence-based nursing practice and knowledge of child and adolescent health and development, to coordinate, organise and provide care for individual students, small groups (students and/or family members). At the classroom or whole of school community level, this is applied using a health promotion/population health approach. Child and adolescent health and development knowledge may include: developmental milestones, behavioural assessment, chronic conditions and disabilities.

Domain 3: Collaborative practice - acknowledges the pivotal role of the nurse as an ‘agent of connectivity’. Under the standards within Domain 3 the school nurse demonstrates communication and relationship building skills, functioning as an agent of connectivity within the school health team and within the broader school community.

Domain 4: School environment - acknowledges the unique environment of a school community and highlights the contribution of the nurse to this area of practice. Under the standards within Domain 4 the school nurse exhibits a capacity to practice within the structures and resources of the school community; and, shows an understanding of their contribution to improving and maintaining a healthy environment for learning and development.

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SUMMARY OF DOMAINS AND STANDARDS

Domain 1: Professional practice

Standard One  Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of school nursing.
Standard Two  Practises within a professional and ethical nursing framework.
Standard Three  Practises in accordance with legislation related to school nursing practice.
Standard Four  Participates in ongoing professional development.

Domain 2: Provision of care

Standard Five  Undertakes nursing assessment and plans ongoing care to effectively address healthcare needs of individual students and groups within the school community.
Standard Six  Effectively implements evidence-based health promotion and preventive care within the school community.
Standard Seven  Advocates for the rights of children and young people.
Standard Eight  Contributes to quality improvement and research activities to monitor and improve health outcomes.

Domain 3: Collaborative practice

Standard Nine  Effectively communicates and works collaboratively within the school community.
Standard Ten  Builds and maintains professional and therapeutic relationships with students, their families and/or support person(s).

Domain 4: School environment

Standard Eleven  Effectively manages human and physical resources.
Standard Twelve  Contributes to the maintenance of a healthy work and learning environment that is respectful, safe and supportive of students, the school community, and self.
Domain 1: Professional Practice

STANDARD 1
Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of school nursing

1.1 Identifies current nursing theory and models of care to inform school nursing practice

1.2 Demonstrates knowledge of child and adolescent physical, cognitive, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, and sexual health and development

1.3 Demonstrates knowledge of child and adolescent behaviour and learning

1.4 Understands the context of school nursing within the wider Australian health care system.

STANDARD 2
Practises within a professional and ethical nursing framework

2.1 Practises in a way that acknowledges the dignity, culture, values, beliefs, privacy and rights of individuals and groups within the school community

2.2 Integrates nursing and healthcare knowledge, skills and attitudes to provide safe, effective and quality healthcare in the school community

2.3 Understands and practises within own scope of practice:
   • Demonstrates accountability and responsibility for own actions within school nursing practice
   • Consults relevant members of the school staff/student wellbeing team as appropriate
   • Manages workload according to a realistic assessment of own abilities and the complexity of student and school community needs
   • Seeks clarification when questions, directions and decisions are unclear or not understood
   • Consults with an experienced school nurse, a nurse with specific expertise, or other personnel, when school nursing practice requires expertise beyond own scope of practice
   • Recognises the differences in accountability and responsibility of Registered nurses, Enrolled nurses, and unregulated workers (for example first aiders, integration aides, teacher aides)

2.4 Contributes to the development and/or review of philosophies, policies, procedures, guidelines and protocols within the school and the relevant education sector, which relate to student health and wellbeing

2.5 Integrates school and education sector philosophies, policies, procedures and guidelines with professional nursing practice

2.6 Identifies gaps between evidence-based practice in school nursing and existing protocols and implements required changes

2.7 Identifies and integrates evidence based policies relevant to school nursing practice

2.8 Practises in accordance with agreed role statement/position description

2.9 Considers own health and wellbeing in relation to being physically and mentally fit for practice
STANDARD 3
Practises in accordance with legislation related to school nursing practice

3.1 Complies with regulatory requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA)

3.2 Complies with relevant legislation and common law governing school nursing practice and child and adolescent healthcare

3.3 Complies with requirements for Working with Children Checks

3.4 Describes and adheres to legislative requirements for medicines management

3.5 Identifies and adheres to legislation regarding consent, confidentiality, privacy and release of information

3.6 Ensures all processes for nursing communication of clinical and personal information within the school community are consistent with relevant State/Territory privacy legislation

3.7 Where relevant, identifies and explains effects of legislation on the care of children, young people and whole of school community, to students and school community

3.8 Fulfils duty of care requirements:
   - Recognises the responsibility to prevent harm through maintaining an environment of safety and well-being
   - Clarifies school nurse responsibilities for aspects of care, with other members of the school community
   - Performs school nursing interventions following comprehensive and accurate nursing assessments

3.9 Identifies and adheres to infection control guidelines and work health and safety legislation.

STANDARD 4
Participates in ongoing professional development

4.1. Undertakes regular evaluation of own school nursing practice:
   - Uses reflective practice to identify professional/personal development needs
   - Meets the NMBA continuing professional development requirements for annual renewal of registration
   - Seeks and considers feedback from peers and critically reflects on own school nursing practice
   - Seeks additional knowledge and/or information when presented with unfamiliar situations

4.2. Participates actively in annual performance planning and review activities for health and well-being of students

4.3. Takes an active role in professional development activities related to current child/adolescent health and school community health:
   - Reads relevant literature, including professional journals and critically reflects on information gathered
   - Engages in professional organisations relevant to school nursing and/or child and adolescent health
   - Establishes peer contacts in the specialty area of school nursing and participates in relevant conferences and seminars, where possible, for learning and networking

4.4. Contributes to the learning experiences and professional development of others, including health/education colleagues, parents and other members of the school community:
• Acts as a preceptor, mentor, or professional facilitator of students of nursing and midwifery, when required.
• Liaises with universities to facilitate placement of nursing and midwifery students, as appropriate.
• Develops, maintains and shares specialist knowledge and skills with colleagues and the school community

4.5. Uses appropriate strategies in managing own response to the work environment to ensure safe practice:
• Reflects on own practice and experiences, and seeks appropriate support through clinical supervision and professional debriefing where required
• Recognises the need for care of self by addressing work/life balance, stress, burnout and difficult situations.

DOMAIN 2: Provision of care

STANDARD 5
Undertakes nursing assessment and plans ongoing care to effectively address healthcare needs of individual students and groups within the school community

5.1. Appropriately and accurately uses validated tools to comprehensively assess the health status of students. This includes assessing the physical, emotional, mental, cultural, spiritual, social, and sexual health and wellbeing specific to child and adolescent health, growth and development

5.2 Demonstrates proficiency in a range of data gathering techniques and nursing assessment skills within the nurse scope of practice

5.3. Formulates and documents a school nursing care plan in partnership with the student/s, family, and interdisciplinary student wellbeing team, as appropriate

5.4. Implements, coordinates and documents comprehensive, safe and effective evidence-based school nursing interventions to achieve planned individualised health outcomes for students

5.5. Incorporates health education at all levels of care, educating students or small groups to promote independence in managing their health

5.6. Delegates to others according to their scope of practice, role and level of competence, providing effective and timely direction and supervision to ensure that delegation is provided safely and accurately

5.7. Evaluates the care plan and documents progress towards expected and agreed outcomes.

STANDARD 6
Effectively implements evidence-based health promotion and preventive care within the school community

6.1. Integrates an evidence-based approach to underpin health promotion into all aspects of school nursing practice

6.2 Identifies and gathers appropriate resources to support health promotion and preventive care activities

6.3 Identifies and implements relevant opportunistic health screening activities
6.4. Identifies, prioritises and documents health needs and resources within the school community, taking account of those with special needs

6.5 Creates and implements a school health promotion plan in collaboration with the school community:
   • Creates and maximises opportunities to disseminate information to enhance health and well-being
   • Provides information and advice regarding child and adolescent health, development, and family health

6.6. Coordinates, manages, monitors, advises and makes referrals regarding immunisation and communicable diseases according to school procedures and current evidence

6.7. Evaluates health promotion activities and uses information to improve future programs

**STANDARD 7**  
**Advocates for the rights of children and young people**

7.1. Advocates for the rights of children and young people within the RN scope of practice:
   • Practices in a way that empowers students and recognises their individual circumstances, needs and values
   • Provides education and support to empower students to understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to their health and well-being. Identifies and works with the school to change structures, policies or practices to empower students to exercise their rights regarding health and wellbeing
   • Initiates and/or participates in action at a local, state or national level to promote the health and welfare of children and young people

7.2. Ensures the right to confidentiality and privacy for student/family in all discussions, and advises under what conditions information will be disclosed (for example, in the case of mandatory reporting)

7.3. Acts to protect children and young people from harm: physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, neglect, violence and the effects of witnessing violence

7.4. Encourages students to be active, involved and informed participants in their own healthcare and wellbeing.

**STANDARD 8**  
**Contributes to quality improvement and research activities to monitor and improve health outcomes**

8.1. Ensures school nursing practice is evidence-based

8.2. Demonstrates awareness of current research relating to school nursing practice, and uses research findings and relevant literature to inform and improve practices

8.3. Participates in relevant audits to identify quality of care issues relating to school nursing care

8.4 Participates in review of policies, procedures and guidelines based on relevant research, and advises of changes in practice
8.5. Protects the rights of students and school communities involved in research by ensuring ethical considerations and processes are in place.

DOMAIN 3: Collaborative practice

STANDARD 9
Effectively communicates and works collaboratively within the school community

9.1 Uses appropriate communication and interpersonal skills to build collegial relationships within the school community

9.2 Clarifies and promotes the school nursing role to the interdisciplinary student wellbeing team (where available) and others within the school community

9.3 Uses language appropriate to the context, culture, and age/developmental level of student/s

9.4 Uses appropriate strategies to promote self-esteem, dignity, integrity and comfort of student/s

9.5 Applies effective facilitation skills for groups which may include parents, allied health professionals, students and other family support network

9.6 Uses well developed verbal and written communication skills

9.7 Demonstrates proficiency in the use of information technology to manage information and support decision-making in nursing care

9.8. Maintains up to date knowledge on the changing digital environment relevant to children and adolescent health and the school community

9.9 Promotes the safe use of communication technology and the prevention of its misuse, for example, cyber bullying, cybercrime, or cyber stalking.

STANDARD 10
Builds and maintains professional and therapeutic relationships with students, their families and/or support person(s)

10.1 Practices in a manner that recognises the importance and maintenance of professional and therapeutic relationships in the school nursing setting

10.2 Uses a range of collaborative approaches to continually build and maintain networks and links within the school community and with relevant local healthcare providers and community services

10.3 Collaborates with the interdisciplinary team to provide comprehensive school nursing care, recognising when to negotiate with or refer to school staff or service providers

10.4 Facilitates coordination of care to achieve agreed health outcomes.
Domain 4: School environment

STANDARD 11
Effectively manages human and physical resources

11.1 Manages and prioritises own workload

11.2 Uses human and physical resources effectively and efficiently in providing school nursing care to promote optimal healthcare

11.3 Ensures appropriate clinical supplies and equipment are available

11.4 Undertakes checking of clinical equipment used in school nursing care to ensure it is well maintained and serviceable.

STANDARD 12
Contributes to the maintenance of a healthy work and learning environment that is respectful, safe and supportive of students, the school community, and self

12.1 Collaborates with the school to maintain an age-specific and developmentally appropriate environment that promotes safety, security and optimal health and wellbeing for students, staff and visitors

12.2 Maintains knowledge and skills in emergency management and crisis response

12.3 Acts as a positive role model for students and the school community in maintaining attributes of caring, empathy, trust, respect, dignity, and compassion

12.4 Acts to maintain the dignity and integrity of the student and school community and their values

12.5 Provides school nursing care in a respectful and culturally safe manner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

12.6 Demonstrates respect for students and their families regardless of their first language, cultural/ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, physical or mental capacity, values or beliefs in the delivery of school nursing care

12.7 In collaboration with the school community facilitates a physical and psychosocial environment that promotes safety and security

12.8 Adheres to work health and safety legislation within the school nurse facility

12.9 Maintains and promotes standards of universal infection control; including emerging infectious/epidemic/pandemic illnesses and antibiotic resistant bacterial infections

12.10 Applies ergonomic principles to promote comfort and to prevent injury for students, others and self.