

# Starting School

Here are some tips to consider when your child with cystic fibrosis (CF) is getting ready to start school:

## Choosing a school for your child

- Ask if there are any other children with CF enrolled at the school.
- Is the principal/deputy willing to learn about CF, and encouraging of their staff doing the same?
- Do the student toilets have soap and paper towels/hand dryers available?
- What is the school policy on infection control? Are children who come to school unwell sent home?

## Collaborating with the school

- Develop a good relationship with a key contact person at the school that you can liaise with about your child's needs, such as the deputy, school nurse or principal.
- Try to make contact with the school before your child starts, so you can provide information and education about CF and what your child's needs are. Educating the school about CF is usually ongoing. CFWA's Education Officer is available to visit your child's school and provide CF education. Contact [education@cfwa.org.au](mailto:education@cfwa.org.au) for more information.
- Usually teachers have two days of meetings, planning and professional development before school starts for the year, and sometimes they are available to have a meeting then.
- You will be required to fill out a Medical Form and this will need to be updated on an annual basis, or more often if your child's medical details change. For a sample plan, see <https://cfsmart.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/student-health-support-plan-for-cf.pdf>
- Communicate regularly with the school, be clear about your child's needs, be realistic about what the teacher can do and teach your child good hygiene practices.

## Disclosure

- How many people do you want to know about your child having CF? It is good to think about this before your child

starts school. Your or you child's thoughts might change over time. Some people are very private and some are happy for others to know about CF.

- Some parents choose to let the wider school community know and they might ask to say a few words at the parent information evening at the start of the year, or ask the class teacher to send a note home to other parents.

### Getting ready for school

- Practice having recess or lunch at home with their lunch packed in a lunch box as you would for school. Talk about how their enzymes will be packed in their lunch box.
- Take your child to visit the school to see where the classroom, play and lunch areas are.
- Discuss and practice what the daily school routine might be e.g. getting up, doing physio, getting dressed, packing school bag.
- Practice learning to swallow tablets. It is not a necessity but it might make life easier if your child can do this by the time they go to school. We have a pill swallowing factsheet for more information, and our Community Nurse can also assist with pill swallowing. Contact [communitynurse@cfwa.org.au](mailto:communitynurse@cfwa.org.au)

### Useful Resources

- CFSmart <https://cfsmart.org/>
- Good Clean Hands (a film about CF, germs and handwashing) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-WVOBTW6iA>
- Oli and Nush (an animation explaining CF) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkqRPeROGXM>
- Infection Control in Schools Factsheet
- Pill Swallowing Factsheet [https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.au/media/wysiwyg/CF-Australia/Fact\\_Sheets/CF\\_Aust\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Pill\\_Swallowing\\_Techniques.pdf](https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.au/media/wysiwyg/CF-Australia/Fact_Sheets/CF_Aust_Fact_Sheet_Pill_Swallowing_Techniques.pdf)

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