

First Aid in Schools Fact Sheet

First aid responsibilities in schools are generally undertaken by teacher aides. This is specified in the *General Employees (Queensland Government Departments) and Other Employees Award – State 2015* and *Department of Education and Training Teacher Aides’ Certified Agreement 2015*, where first aid allowances are paid to level OO2 teacher aides who agree to be first aid officers. Level OO3 and OO4 Teacher Aides have their first aid allowances included in their salaries.

However, Together members who are administrative officers, schools officers and other school support staff can be asked to perform first aid duties. Note that it is absolutely not a **requirement** of your role and you can only be appointed as a first aid officer by agreement.

Public servants like AOs, SOs, Science Technicians, BMs, IT staff and others can be asked to be first aid officers if they hold a current first aid certificate issued by the Queensland Ambulance Service or equivalent qualification.

These conditions are outlined in the *Queensland Public Service Officers and Other Employees Award – State 2015*.

In schools, administration officers are most likely to be asked to be first aid officers if there are to be additional officers who are not teacher aides.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. If my principal asks me to be a first aid officer can I refuse?

Yes. It is not a requirement of your role to perform first aid duties.

2. If I complete a first aid course, do I automatically get a first aid allowance?

No. Public servants will only receive a first aid allowance if they are appointed in writing to perform first aid duties.

If you do not hold a current CPR Certificate, you will not receive a first aid allowance.

Note: If you are not the school’s appointed first aid officer, you should not perform first aid duties. It is very dangerous to undertake this work if you are not appointed as the first aid officer and we firmly recommend members **DO not** undertake these tasks unless you are the designated officer.

3. Why does my school have more than one first aid officer?

The appointment of first aid officers is at the discretion of the Principal or BM. In larger schools, there may be multiple first aid officers.

This is recommended as there are likely to be many students requiring first aid.

4. I am an administration officer assigned as my school’s first aid officer, but my first aid duties are affecting my workload. What should I do?

Discuss this at a meeting with your BM or Principal. Ideally in the first instance you should also document your concerns in an email and then negotiate and agree to duties to be undertaken. If you need help or support with this contact your union office on 1800 177 244 or email schools@together.org.au.

5. Our school has been asked to provide medication (other than tablets). Do first aid officers have to do this?

Appropriate training needs to be provided for all first aid procedures. If a first aid officer does not feel comfortable administering medication other than orally, they should advise their line manager that they will not be performing this request.

It is really important to speak up about concerns. Epi-pens and other medications require special training and procedures. This can be a life and death issue, it is really important that everyone is sure what should happen and who is responsible.

Continued over page...

6. How do I apply for a first aid allowance?

Provide a copy of your first aid certificate to your BM, Principal or line manager.

Once you have been appointed in writing (e.g. an email from the Principal) as a first aid officer these documents can be forwarded to Payroll (via Regional Office) for processing.

7. What does payroll do?

Payroll records employee's first aid qualifications on The Solution Series (TSS) and coordinates payment of the allowance.

8. If I go on holiday, is my first aid allowance suspended?

First aid allowances are treated as part of your ordinary fortnightly salary for the purposes of annual leave (but not leave loading) sick leave, long service leave and all other paid leave.

This is outlined in the *Queensland Public Service Officer and Other Employee Award – State 2015*.

9. If my employer won't endorse my application for a first aid allowance, can I refuse to provide first aid?

If you are not the designated first aid officer then you should not perform first aid. If you are the designated first aid officer, and you have been appointed by the Principal or BM then you should be paid the allowance.

If the school is refusing to pay the allowance contact the union office for further advice and support. However, note that there is a general duty of care to all students and staff of the Department of Education Queensland, requiring first aid to be administered in emergency situations, if you are qualified.

10. If employees transfer, does their first aid allowance transfer with them?

If employees transfer to another location and their new duties include being a first aid officer, they should continue to be paid the first aid allowance.

Duties and allowances should be negotiated at each location.

Do not assume you will be a first aid officer at your new school. That is something that should be specifically discussed.

11. What if I don't want to be a first aid officer anymore?

If you are the appointed first aid officer and you no longer wish to perform this role, discuss this with your principal or line manager.

At these discussions, you and your principal or line manager should negotiate and agree on alternate duties to be undertaken. Remember you cannot be forced to be the first aid officer – it is a voluntary role. Payroll must be advised so the allowance can be ceased.

12. How much is the First Aid allowance?

As of 2 September 2020 the first aid allowance for school support staff is \$34.40 per fortnight.

Queensland Public Service Officers and Other Employees Award - State 2015

13.6 First-aid allowance

An employee holding a certificate in first-aid issued by the Queensland Ambulance Service or equivalent qualification who is appointed in writing by a chief executive as a first-aid attendant/officer shall be paid an additional \$34.40 per fortnight which shall be treated as part of the employee's ordinary fortnightly salary for the purposes of annual leave (but not loading on leave), sick leave, long service leave and all other paid leave.

If you need help or support in relation to first aid duties contact your union office on **1800 177 244** or email schools@together.org.au

Keep up to date by visiting our Schools page at www.together.org.au/schools

You can encourage your colleagues to join you as union members at www.together.org.au/join