

Maythorn – Local Policy

Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps:

This policy describes the procedures to ensure the safe use and disposal of the medical instruments known as “sharps” in line with requirements and best practice.

Adherence to guidelines on infection control is of paramount importance in ensuring the safety of Children and staff.

“Sharps” refers typically to medical equipment such as syringe needles, including those used with Epi pens / Nordi pens and blood sugar testing lancets, that have the potential to cause injuries and illness following accidents.

Sharps safety and the disposal of sharps waste is covered by a number of legal requirements, including specific regulations on the use and disposal of sharps, regulations on the control and disposal of hazardous waste and general health and safety at work laws.

The aim of a “sharps” policy is to ensure the safety of staff and children where staff are required as part of their delivery of care to aid children with injections, if it is needed to meet specific health / medication needs or to help them dispose of sharps waste.

The outcomes will be to:

1. Ensure that children, their families and staff are as safe as possible from acquiring infections.
2. Ensure that all staff are aware of and put into action the basic principles of infection control.
3. Reduce the incidence of needlestick incidents to an absolute minimum and ensure the safest possible working environment.
4. Ensure that a proper procedure is being followed regarding the disposal of sharps.
5. Ensure that waste sharps boxes are not being overfilled and are being removed for safe disposal.
6. Ensure that any accidents or incidents involving sharps are appropriately managed and reported .

- **Staff should adhere to the following guidelines when dealing with sharps:**

Use of sharps:

1. Staff should avoid the unnecessary use of sharps if possible.
2. Where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid the use of medical sharps, staff should:
 - a. Attend relevant training and be signed off as competent to be able to administer medications via a syringe/ needle / epi/ nordi pen / use blood sugar monitoring devices.
 - b. avoid the recapping of needles
 - c. place secure sharps containers close to the work area when needing to use any type of needle for the purposes of administering medication / taking blood sugars.

Disposal of sharps (e.g., used needles and blood test lancets)

1. Sharps should be disposed of in proper, purpose-built sharps disposal containers. Sharps should never be disposed of in ordinary or clinical waste bins or bags.
2. Staff should never re-sheath needles or attempt to bend or break them or separate them from the syringe / pen.
3. Sharps disposal boxes should never be overfilled and no attempt should ever be made to force waste into a full container.
4. Sharps boxes must always be placed away from children and visitors, especially children who may be attracted by the bright colours.
5. Boxes should be placed where they are accessible to the job in hand. Staff should avoid situations where they have to cross rooms with unsheathed sharps to get to a disposal box.
6. Sharps boxes are designed with lids that can be closed in routine use and sealed when full. In between each use lids should be closed (but not sealed) and only opened immediately prior to use.
7. When full, boxes should be sealed and safely stored.
8. Used, filled boxes should be stored securely until collected for incineration by an appropriate licensed waste handler.
9. Sharps boxes should be collected by a certified contractor
10. Responsibility to ensure that sharps boxes are collected lies with the Registered manager / Deputy Manager.
11. While awaiting collection, full sharps boxes should be stored securely

Needlestick or sharps injuries

In the event of an injury with a used or potentially contaminated needle, staff should:

- a. wash the area immediately and encourage bleeding if the skin is broken
- b. apply a dressing
- c. follow the homes incident / accident reporting procedures
- d. Promptly seek advice from NHS 111, GP or A & E
- e. the management team should ensure that the incident is properly recorded and investigated and reported as required and that appropriate support is given to the staff member involved.

Infection Control / Training for use of needles / Lancets:

1. Infection control should be included in the training for all staff. All new staff should be made aware of this protocol in their induction and all existing staff should be offered a regular refresher course in infection control and injection techniques / blood sugar monitoring when needed.
2. Infection control refresher training sessions should be conducted as required and all relevant staff should attend. All staff should be made aware of the importance of the correct disposal of sharps and of the part they play in the process.

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