

Ronald McDonald® Learning Program

WHAT SHOULD I TELL THE SCHOOL??

You are your child's best advocate. You understand better than anyone, your child's personality, strengths, fears and concerns. When deciding what to tell the school you will need to take into account;

- What information is **vital** regarding the health of your child?
- What information is your child happy for the teachers to know? (He/she may be happy for teachers to know they have had an operation but they may not like them to know they were catheterised following the operation)
- What information will reassure peers that the health condition is not contagious and will promote transition back to school?

In addition to considering the above, school administrators also need to be made aware of what information can be disclosed to other teachers and students.

The following information about consent and child questions has been adapted from *Helping Schoolchildren with Chronic Health Conditions. A Practical Guide*. by Daniel L. Clay. 2004 Guilford Press.

This is an excellent resource available in Australia through Therapy Tools <u>www.therapytools.com.au</u>

The following consent template can assist staff and parents to have a clear understanding of disclosure.

Consent for Disclosure

.....**Yes**, you have permission to discuss my child's condition with other school personnel and my child's peers

.....**Yes**, you have permission to discuss my child's condition with other school personnel but **not** my child's peers

.....**No**, we would like to keep my child's condition private. Please do not disclose information about my child's medical condition with anyone at school.

If **yes** describe what information you would like disclosed and how you would like the information shared with others.

.....

•••••		•••••	••••••	
Parent signature	Date		School Official	Date



Ronald McDonald® Learning Program

Answering Questions about Your Child

It can be very helpful to prepare for the return to school by considering how you will respond to the many caring and inquisitive questions from your child's peers. Depending on your child's age and his / her diagnosis these questions could be discussed together and agreed upon.

Possible questions that may be asked;

- 1. What is wrong with you?
- 2. How did you get sick?
- 3. Can I catch it?
- 4. Are you going to die?
- 5. Can you still play with us?
- 6. Will you keep missing school?
- 7. Why do you look different?
- 8. Why don't you have any hair?
- 9. Will you get better?
- 10. What can I do to help?
- 11. Is anyone picking on you?
- 12. Can I still be your friend?
- 13. When are you coming back to school?
- 14. Is it OK to talk to you about your illness?
- 15. Why can't you play sport?
- 16. Can I see your scar?

On occasion using humour can be the best medicine for answering common, recurring questions. Think about fun ways your child can communicate with his / her peers.

e.g. Why don't you have any hair?

- What? I've got no hair? Oops, must have left it in the cupboard this morning.

- I can read people's minds and the hair got in the way. When I rub my head like a crystal ball I can tell exactly what you're thinking

- I was kidnapped by Martians and they use my head to transmit signals back to Mars.