

School Nurse

School nurses work alongside teachers and parents to promote the health of school-aged children. They are known in Scotland as public health nurses. The work of a school nurse can include:



- working with pupils, teachers and parents to promote healthy lifestyles
- helping to identify and address particular concerns in a school, such as smoking, drug abuse or safe sex
- supporting children with medical needs like asthma, diabetes or epilepsy and co-ordinating their healthcare
- supporting and counselling children with mental health problems
- working with parents to promote good parenting
- helping parents to deal with specific issues such as bedwetting or head lice
- playing a role in immunisation and vaccination programmes
- contributing to training in social education and citizenship
- working with teachers, social workers and other professionals to help protect vulnerable children.

Some school nurses work for a single school. Others cover a number of schools. In Scotland, the jobs of some public health nurses extend beyond school nursing, eg their work might include some health visitor responsibilities.

Salaries in the National Health Service (NHS) range from around £21,630 a year for a newly-qualified school nurse, to a maximum of £34,417 a year for a school nurse manager.

Most school nurses work part time and in term-time only. Nurses working in more than one school may need a driving licence. School nurses in private boarding schools usually live at the school and can be on call to cover emergencies 24 hours a day.

School nurses should:

- enjoy working with children
- be able to relate well to people of all ages and backgrounds
- be able to explain things clearly to young people and adults
- work well alone and as part of a team
- be able to talk confidently about sensitive issues
- respect children's confidences.

Most school nurses are employed by the NHS. Others are employed by individual schools, including independent boarding schools and day schools.

School nurses are qualified registered nurses, usually with at least two years' post-registration experience. For more general information about becoming a nurse, see **Nurse**. There is no upper age limit for entry to school nursing.

It is not essential to have further qualifications to become a school nurse. Many school nurses, though, work towards a degree or a postgraduate diploma in school nursing. Courses last one year full time, or two years part time and are available at universities and colleges throughout the UK.

Nurses may move to a larger school or another NHS trust for more responsibility and experience. Promotion is possible to school nurse manager. Nurses can also move to another branch of nursing or become a health visitor.