



Supporting our students' health and wellbeing through the
GPs in Schools Pilot



For Parents/Carers

Helping students access the health care they need

Starting from 7th Feb, 2022, secondary students at Merrimac State High School will have access to a free GP clinic at school.

Our school's clinic will be staffed by Dr Chris Briggs, a General Practitioner (GP) and a Clinical Nurse.

What services will the GP be providing?

Dr Chris Briggs will provide students with the majority of the same services that GPs in the community do, including management of physical health, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health issues. Only secondary students enrolled at Merrimac SHS will be able to access healthcare in our school's clinic.

How can my child make an appointment with the GP?

Our school's GP clinic will be open every Monday during school terms between 8:30am and 3:30pm.

Appointments to see the school GP can be made either in person by seeing the Guidance Officer by sending an email to GP@merrimacshs.eq.edu.

How much will it cost for my child to see the GP at school?

All visits with the school GP will be provided at no cost to students or their families. The GP will bulk-bill all appointments through Medicare, so it is important that your child brings their Medicare card or number with them to their appointment.

If students are ineligible to access Medicare, the cost of the appointment (equivalent to the Medicare rebate) will be covered by Merrimac State High School.

When can a young person get their own Medicare card?

Young people can apply for their own Medicare card when they turn 15 years of age. They will need to complete an application process through [Services Australia](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au). The GP can help your child with this process.

Where will my child's medical records be kept?

The medical records will belong to the GP's base clinic, Her Medical Services, where they will be securely stored. The school will not be able to access your child's medical records.

Can my child consent (agree) to their own medical treatment?

In Queensland, young people under the age of 18 can consent to their own medical

treatment if they are determined to be a mature minor. Young people who are not deemed to be a mature minor cannot give consent to their own medical treatment and consent will be sought from parents/carers.

What does “mature minor” mean?

Mature minors are young people under the age of 18 years who are determined by a medical professional to be capable of providing informed consent for treatment of a particular health issue without having the permission of a parent or carer.

How will the school GP decide whether a young person is a mature minor?

To decide whether a young person is a mature minor and can consent to their own medical treatment, the GP will consider a range of factors, including:

- the young person’s age;
- maturity in other areas of the young person’s life;
- independence – whether they live at home with a parent or carer, or support themselves;
- how serious the treatment is; and
- if the young person understands what their health issue is, why treatment is needed, what the treatment involves, what other options they have, things that might go wrong (like side effects from drugs, or other complications), and what happens if there is no treatment.

Any student at Merrimac SHS who wants to make an appointment with the school GP can do so. The GP will then determine if the student is a mature minor for the health issue for which they are seeking treatment.

It is important to understand that this is the same process that would occur if your child were to see a doctor in any GP clinic in the community.

What if my child is not a mature minor?

The decision about whether a young person is a mature minor might be different depending on the nature of the health issue. If the GP decides your child is not a mature minor, they must get your consent before any medical treatment is provided.

What if my child already has a GP?

If your child already has a GP but would like to see the GP at school, your child’s medical records can be transferred. This is what happens in GP clinics in the community. This

sharing of records is important and encouraged so that all health providers your child sees have up-to-date information.

If your child is a mature minor, they can consent to the transfer of their own medical records. If your child is not a mature minor, consent to the transfer their medical records must be provided by their parent or carer.

Can I come to the appointment with my child?

Yes, if your child would like you to. Parent/carer involvement is encouraged. We recognise that parents and carers can be an important source of support and information for young people in managing their health and wellbeing.

If your child is not a mature minor, then it is up to you as the parent/carer whether you wish to accompany your child to their GP appointment.

Will the GP involve me?

There will be many circumstances in which it will be helpful or necessary for you to be involved.

If your child is not a mature minor, the GP will always seek to involve you. If your child is deemed to be a mature minor by the GP, the GP may see them alone if that is what your child wants. However, the GP will often encourage your child to involve you in their care.

Can the GP refer (send) my child to other health services if needed?

Yes. In most instances, Dr Chris Briggs will encourage your child to include you in these referrals.

What if I don't want my child to see a GP?

You should talk about this with your child, and with the school. Generally, all secondary students will be considered mature enough to decide to see the GP on their own. The GP will then determine if your child is a mature minor for the reason they are visiting the clinic. This approach is the same for GP clinics in the community.

Would I ever find out about my child's GP visit?

If the GP decides that your child is a mature minor, their health information cannot be discussed with you or anyone else unless your child says it is OK to share, or the sharing of the information is permitted or required by law. This is called confidentiality.

The following are examples of when the sharing of health information is permitted or required by law:

- Your child consents to sharing the information.

- Sharing information is necessary to prevent a serious threat to public health, safety or welfare – e.g. your child has an illness that must be notified to the Department of Health.
- Sharing information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious and imminent threat to any person's health, safety or welfare.

If your child is a mature minor, to maintain confidentiality, school staff are not able tell you when your child has seen the GP unless your child agrees, or the sharing of information is permitted or required by law.

What if my child is not eligible for a Medicare card?

The intention of providing a GP clinic at Merrimac SHS is to provide students with free access to a GP, to make it easier for students to access the healthcare they need.

If your child is not eligible for a Medicare card, they are still able to access the school GP free of charge.

For more information about the school's GP clinic please contact our Guidance Officer.