Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

This is specific to students with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and supplements the Burgate School’s Medicines and Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy and the Burgate School’s First Aid Policy.

The Burgate School recognises the challenges Chronic Fatigue Syndrome may present to a student.

Symptoms can include:

- debilitating fatigue
- muscular pain, joint pain and severe headaches
- painful lymph nodes
- stomach pain, nausea and other problems similar to irritable bowel syndrome
- sore throat
- sleeping problems, such as insomnia and feeling that sleep is not refreshing
- sensitivity or intolerance to light, loud noise, and certain foods
- psychological difficulties, such as depression, irritability and panic attacks – these often occur as a result of dealing with the illness
- less common symptoms, such as dizziness, excess sweating, balance problems and difficulty controlling body temperature
- Memory loss, ‘fuzzy thinking’ and lack of concentration are key factors of CFS/ME
- Teachers may find that the pupil “loses the thread easily”
- Poor short-term memory and concentration, and difficulty organising thoughts and finding the right words ('brain fog')

Steps to aid management of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in school and support students when they are unable to attend school

Children/young people and their parents/carers should be actively involved in the planning and reviewing of any arrangements and in the development of an Individual Learning Plan that will be shared with the students’ teachers

- Energy management routine and graded exercise should be followed as advised by health professionals
- Peer support should be encouraged
- Access to a quiet area in school for rest and recovery – a designated space in the school library
• Part time timetable – this may be around essential subjects or at a time when energy levels enable attendance

• On-line learning and packages of work to be done at home may be appropriate

• The students age and imminence of exams will influence the course of action

For children/young people who are so severely affected that they are temporarily unable to access education:

• To avoid students becoming isolated it is important to ensure ongoing home/school links and communication with a named person being the conduit for these. Sending home cards/letters from friends, newsletters and other student information can help the student they are part of the school community

• Where students are temporarily receiving home teaching it is vital to have strong links and regular communication between a named person in school and the home tutor to ensure the provision and return of appropriate programmes of study, course work and resources

  It is especially important to make sure the deadline dates for coursework are known to a student being taught at home

• An application for special access arrangements can be made to the exams board by the examinations officer with medical backing – each case is assessed individually

  This might include:
  o Delayed start of exams
  o Extra time
  o Rest breaks
  o Scribe
  o Use of laptop
  o Alternative accommodation for exams (for example, in a smaller group within school or at an alternative venue)

• As the condition improves, careful consideration needs to be given to re-integration into school. Prolonged absence from school can lead to other problems such as raised levels of anxiety which may need the involvement of other agencies, for example, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The Pastoral Team within school will offer support to the student and when necessary liaise with the Access Team.

Additional information to enable support of students with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is available on the staff shared area.