



Supporting the
Student with Cancer

**A COMPREHENSIVE
HANDBOOK FOR YOUR
SCHOOL COMMUNITY**



**Children's Hospital
of Philadelphia®**

Cancer Center

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

TO SUPPORT TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH CANCER OR A HISTORY OF TREATMENT FOR CANCER

This handbook was developed to assist educators in welcoming a child with cancer into the school environment and providing them with support during and after treatment. The role that teachers and other educational support staff play in supporting students with cancer is incredibly important. Knowing more about a child's illness and what to expect can help educators and other school professionals better support a child with cancer.

TO ASSIST CAREGIVERS AND PROVIDERS IN SUPPORTING TEACHERS

This handbook can assist caregivers and providers in communicating with school staff who support the child with cancer in the school environment. The intent is not for teachers to read the document in one session but for teachers to feel supported by accessible resources that promote ongoing communication with students, their families and healthcare providers.

NOTE TO EDUCATORS

It may seem like there is a great deal to learn about your student's cancer diagnosis and its implications in the classroom. It is important for you to have access to a comprehensive, user-friendly resource with information about cancer and how this illness might impact your student's educational functioning. Our goal is to support the development of an academic action plan that can be tailored to the individual student's needs and that supports proactive planning for an optimal school year experience.

Designed with you in mind

We know that schools are communities where each person should feel cared for and supported. This material has been organized to serve as a reference that can be accessed and implemented during each stage of the student's academic career.

Sharing information

We hope that you will share this handbook with your colleagues so that they can also learn about the impact of cancer on classroom and school performance. We encourage you to take an active role in your school community and to have conversations that will promote ongoing and open communication between school personnel, the student and family and their healthcare team.

OVERVIEW

This handbook provides very basic information to support teachers of students with cancer. For a comprehensive resource about cancer and its treatments, we recommend the Children's Oncology Group Family Handbook, which can be accessed online at <https://www.childrensoncologygroup.org/index.php/family-handbook-268>.

WHAT IS CANCER?

The word cancer is used to describe many diseases where cells grow and reproduce in an abnormal, uncontrollable manner. Cancer is a life-threatening illness that comes in many forms. It is important to realize that the most common cancers seen in adults, such as breast cancer, lung cancer, skin cancer and ovarian cancer, rarely affect children. Cancer in childhood is rare, but as an increasing number of children survive their cancer treatment, the population of cancer survivors in our communities and schools continues to grow. It is likely that in a robust career as an educator, you may encounter a number of children who are being treated or who have been treated for cancer.

WHAT ARE COMMON TYPES OF CHILDHOOD CANCERS?

Each type of cancer has its own name, but all childhood cancers fall into one of three categories. **Leukemias** are cancers of the blood-forming cells produced in the bone marrow. **Lymphomas** are cancers of the lymph system. **Solid tumors** are cancers of the muscle, bone, organs or other tissues. Solid tumors of the brain and spine are the most common form of solid tumors in children.

When you have a student who is currently undergoing or has undergone treatment for cancer, you may want to learn more about their diagnosis and treatment. Visit chop.edu/cancer and select "Conditions We Treat" to learn more.

HOW IS CANCER TREATED?

Cancer treatment usually involves one or a combination of the following five methods: chemotherapy, radiation therapy, surgery, bone marrow transplant and/or CAR T-cell therapy. **Chemotherapy** consists of administering doses of medicines that kill cancer cells by stopping their growth or destroying them. **Radiation therapy** uses X-rays or protons to destroy the abnormal cells in the body and is often used with chemotherapy treatments. **Surgery** is performed to remove tumors found in a child's body and to see if the cancer has spread to other areas of the body. In some cases, treatment for cancer may permanently destroy the normal cells in the bone marrow. In order to improve the child's chances of achieving full remission or cure, a **bone marrow or stem cell transplant** may be an option. This procedure involves taking bone marrow or stem cells from a patient or a matched donor. Finally, some children with hard-to-treat cancer may receive a new type of treatment called **CAR T-cell therapy**, which uses a child's own genetically-modified cells to kill cancer cells in the body.

Some children treated for cancer receive much of their care in the hospital setting and will have periods of lengthy absence from school. Others receive much of their treatment in an outpatient clinic setting. Every child follows an individualized treatment plan that may last several months or even years. When you have a student who has been diagnosed with cancer, it is important to gain a sense of their treatment plan from talking to their caregivers and medical team.

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF CANCER TREATMENT?

Side effects vary widely based on the types of treatment your student is receiving. Frequent communication with your student and their family is the best way to understand how treatment is affecting your student. For many of our patients, teachers might expect to see the following:

Hair loss	Susceptibility to infection
Irritability	Weakened muscles
Fatigue	Sleep problems
Mood swings	Headache
Nausea	Poor concentration
Bruises	Weight loss or gain
Bleeding	Changes in motor coordination
Constipation	Pain
Vomiting	
Behavior changes	

When surgery is part of a child's treatment, they may also have to deal with possible amputation, scars and other permanent physical changes.

Depending upon a child's treatment and cancer type, hearing loss, vision loss, partial paralysis, growth delays and heart damage may also occur.

A child who undergoes a bone marrow transplant will need extended hospitalization in isolation. Even after the child has been sent home from the hospital, there are restrictions around when the child can go back to school.

UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD A CHILD WITH CANCER ATTEND SCHOOL?

A child's medical team will help determine when and how a child on active treatment should attend school. It is important for school teams to communicate frequently with caregivers about the appropriate level of attendance. Some students may require homebound instruction for weeks or months, and others will be able to remain fully engaged in their school community throughout the entirety of their treatment. Schools can have a huge impact on a child's academic, social and emotional functioning by including them in programming even if they are not able to attend school every day.

INFECTION PREVENTION IN THE CLASSROOM

When you have a student with cancer, infection prevention becomes even more vital to the safety and functioning of your classroom. Children being treated for cancer or with a history of certain cancer treatments are at higher risk for illness than their peers. This does not, however, mean that you must "deep clean" your classroom on a consistent basis. Here are some suggestions to reduce illness in your classroom:

- Encourage parents and caregivers to keep sick students at home.
- Teach and emphasize hand hygiene for all students.
- Provide hand sanitizer throughout the room, at each table and near the entrance.
- Strategize how best to provide your student with cancer with their own supplies, rather than relying on shared items, such as markers and lab materials. This will allow you to easily track supplies that need frequent cleaning.
- Be mindful of where you seat your student with cancer, and allow for flexible seating to provide the student with more space.

KEY HEALTH INFORMATION FOR THE SCHOOL TEAM

You may feel nervous or hesitant about how to support a student who is receiving or has received treatment for cancer. Frequent communication with a child's family and — if necessary — their Cancer Center care team is a great way to stay on top of a child's evolving medical needs in the school setting.

Many children being treated for cancer will have more absences than other students, both because of clinic visits and because they may get ill more frequently than their typical classmates.

However, a student with cancer may show warning signs at school that may require action. Although having a student with cancer is unusual, you have likely developed a good sense of judgment in your career as an educator about when to reach out for help with a sick student. Here is some information to help inform your decision-making in the school setting:

CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES (911) IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR STUDENT:

- is not breathing or has severe difficulty breathing
- has skin and lips that look blue
- is having a seizure (refer to the child's seizure action plan if applicable and consult with school nurse about daily practice)
- loses consciousness (falls asleep and you cannot wake them up)

Don't hesitate to contact your student's caregivers if you feel concerned about the student's health.

CONTACT CAREGIVERS IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR STUDENT:

- reports pain
- reports trouble breathing
- is bleeding
- has a fever or chills
- has a change in behavior or level of consciousness (such as being very sleepy, very irritable or not making sense when talking)
- reports a change in vision
- has a severe headache
- has new weakness of the face, arm, or leg or changes in balance or gait
- is vomiting or has diarrhea
- displays an inability to drink fluids
- experiences a break in the central line (If your student has a central line, please reach out to their caretakers and the school nurse for more information.)
- has an exposure to chickenpox or shingles

When you contact a child's caregiver, also call your student's phone nurse at _____.



TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH CAREGIVERS

You may struggle with starting a conversation about cancer and treatment with your student's family or caregivers. If your student is a teenager, they should be involved in discussions about their illness and treatment, particularly around disclosure to their teachers and classmates. Here are some suggested questions you might ask to learn more about your student's treatment in a way that might inform the services you provide:

- What does your child know about their diagnosis and treatment?
- What language does your child use for their illness?
- What do you feel comfortable sharing with the class?
- What does your child think about sharing with the class? Would your child like me to share, or would your child like to take leadership in sharing?
- How would you like this information shared with your child's other teachers and members of their school team?
- What kinds of treatment is your child getting?
- What are the side effects you're seeing right now? Is there anything else I should be looking out for?
- What is the medical team's recommendation for returning to school?
- Who will be the main point of contact for your child's care team at CHOP?
- What are the barriers that you see for your child's return to school?
- Is there anything else you can think of in terms of how school should support your child?

STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

There are a variety of emotional responses you will observe in your classroom when one of your students is diagnosed with cancer. With the consent of the patient and family, CHOP advocates for open and honest communication with all students. Before addressing emotional responses, it is important to provide students with basic education on what cancer is and how it is treated. Please reference the

Overview section of this handbook for generalized cancer information.

You may find that other students in your classroom struggle to understand what cancer is. Younger students may worry that cancer is contagious or that something the child did caused them to get cancer. Older students may feel anxiety about their friend's wellness and may even avoid speaking with or socializing with the student. As a teacher, you have an opportunity to facilitate healthy socialization with your student with cancer and to dispel myths and fears.

It is important to validate — not minimize — appropriate concern. It's helpful for children to have the freedom to express a range of emotion in the face of a classmate's illness. Express to your students that you appreciate when they share their feelings with you, and that you are there for them if they want to process their feelings further.

Below you will find helpful language to start conversations with your students, provide basic education and address common concerns, misconceptions and emotions that students may experience:

- “_____ has cancer, which means some of the cells in her/his body are sick.”
- “Cancer can be treated with chemotherapy/surgery/radiation.” (Check with the child's family to determine the level of detail they want to share.)
- “You cannot get cancer from sitting near _____ or playing with her/him.” (It is important to emphasize that cancer is not contagious.)
- “Cancer is very rare and uncommon.”
- “_____ did not get cancer because she/he did anything wrong or someone else was mean to her/him.”
- “The most important thing is to continue to be a good friend to _____ and to be kind.”
- “The medicine that _____ takes may make _____ look a little different.” (See the Overview section of this handbook for possible side effects of cancer treatment.)

HOW CAN CHOP HELP?

Your student's care team at CHOP includes a social worker and child life specialist, both of whom have extensive experience providing support to children with cancer and their families. These professionals can direct you to lesson plans and materials to help explain cancer treatments to your class. Many CHOP patients also have a Hospital School Program teacher and education coordinator, who are experts in the effects of oncology diagnoses and treatment on your student's school functioning. Please refer to your contact person at CHOP if you find you need more assistance and support. You can also refer to the CHOP website for an extensive list of resources vetted by your student's treatment team. Visit chop.edu/cancer and select "Resources" for more information.

CHANGE IN MEDICAL STATUS/TREATMENT PLAN

Even if you are proactive in planning for your student's absences and needs, their treatment plan may change depending on their body's response to treatment. An unplanned hospitalization or a new plan that involves different or more treatment can cause additional stress on your student, their family and their classmates. Continue to communicate with your student's family and care team about the best way to communicate with your class. We appreciate your flexibility in accommodating your student with cancer as their needs change throughout the course of their illness and treatment. This will become even more vital if your student experiences treatment setbacks or relapse — the recurrence of cancer after it has gone away. In the event that your student passes away, please know that you can continue to reach out to your student's CHOP team for resources around bereavement and supporting your class through this rare and devastating event.



SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT WHEN THEY ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL

All families are unique and have their own responses to coping with a child's cancer diagnosis. Some families may choose not to disclose much information, even if their child has prolonged absences. However, many students with cancer prefer to keep in touch with their teacher and classmates while they are unable to attend school. They find comfort in communicating with their school community in order to maintain friendships and stay engaged with their education.

There are many ways to support students both emotionally and academically while they are unable to attend school. Here are a few suggestions:

- Send cards, letters or artwork.
- Email photos or audio/video messages.
- Utilize Monkey in My Chair or other age-appropriate programs designed to help cancer patients stay in touch with their school communities.
- Allow opportunities for students to participate in lessons via Skype, FaceTime, VGo or HopeCam. Be creative and flexible!
- Create in-person occasions for students to connect with the school community or participate in other organized school events or activities.

Even though a student may not be able to attend school, we still encourage you to include the student in school activities as much as possible. Ideas for student involvement include organizing a welcome parade, pep rally or other fun event. It is important to check with the student's family regarding the appropriateness of any planned event. If you have questions about the programs or activities suggested here, please reach out to your CHOP contact person for this student.

HELPFUL LINKS

Monkey in My Chair

www.monkeyinmychair.org/

This program is designed for preschool and elementary-aged children who are away from school because of a cancer diagnosis. Students receive a "monkey kit," which includes a stuffed monkey that takes their place in school when they are unable to be there, as well as an educational book, teacher guide and other materials.

HopeCam

<https://www.hopecam.org/>

HopeCam allows students to stay socially connected with their classmates online. This program provides students and schools a way to communicate when a child is going to be isolated from their classmates for a considerable amount of time.

CHOP resources

CHOP staff may have additional suggestions to help you stay connected with your student. Please reach out to your student's contact person to find out what technology may be available.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

Each student with cancer or with a history of treatment for cancer will have unique educational needs depending on their diagnosis and treatment plan, as well as their prior educational strengths and needs. However, many of our patients benefit from advance planning about their school needs.

Children with cancer are eligible for **Section 504** Service Plans or other formalized accommodations depending on their school, and many may become eligible for **Individualized Education Plans** as a result of their treatment. A proactive written plan with clear needs and strategies can help the school team coordinate support.

We know that as seasoned educators, your school has planned for many children with healthcare needs. We recommend involving your school counselor and nurse in discussions about your student’s plan, so that professionals with diverse expertise can weigh in. This list of suggestions is by no means comprehensive, but is meant to give your school team a jumpstart on planning for your student with cancer.

<p>Attendance/ Scheduling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider shortened school days/flexible scheduling. - Provide supplemental home instruction (such as Homebound Instruction or tutoring) for re-teaching material or covering content from missed classes. - Allow the student to have Extended School Year Services/Extended Homebound.
<p>Medical Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students with central lines must remain dry and be allowed access to a central line emergency kit at all times. - Nurses, teachers and other caregivers should learn central line safety and emergency care. - The student should have permission to visit the school nurse as needed. - Implement the use of a buddy system for visits to the nurse, counselor or principal's office in case of feeling ill. - Consult this resource for more information about your student's medical needs as they undergo treatment for cancer. - Continue to be mindful of your student's medical history and needs as they transition from school to school.
<p>Family Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage in ongoing communication with the family through email and in person. - Schedule regular meetings with the school team, including the counselor, teachers, special education liaisons and any other team members. - Arrange communication between school and CHOP providers, such as the school-based speech pathologist and a CHOP speech provider. - Provide the student with a second set of books for home. - Ensure the student and their family has access to an online gradebook and all necessary online learning platforms used for coursework. - Ensure the student and guardians have access to and know where to locate assignments and due dates. Use home-school communication tools, such as a weekly communication notebook, daily log, phone calls or email message. - Contact the family when the student's grade is below __ (decide threshold with family input). - Ensure communication continues after the child's treatment has concluded in order to monitor for late effects of treatment.

Classroom Environment

- Provide the student preferential seating.
- Give the student permission to wear a hat, scarf or other head covering.
- Give the student permission to carry a water bottle and snacks.
- Give the student permission to use the restroom as needed for as long as the student needs, especially as indicated by their medical team.
- Consider giving the student more time between classes or an opportunity to wait until the hallway is less crowded.
- Provide the student scheduled breaks in a quiet place.
- Provide the student a locker near the classroom.
- Allow the student use of the elevator.
- Excuse the student from PE and recess or adapt activities as needed.
- Modify tests and homework assignments as needed for the student.
- Increase test time by 50%-100% extra time.
- Consider adjusting the testing format to allow for accessible testing.

Emotional/ Behavioral and Adjustment Difficulties

- Provide a daily check-in with a case manager, special education teacher or another trusted adult.
- Evaluate school services that promote positive social/emotional growth, and develop a plan to assess and intervene with the student.
- Plan ahead for school transitions and transition into adult life.
- Follow a consistent routine/schedule.
- Use verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task. Cue expected behavior with a private signal — a gentle tap on the shoulder, for example.
- Provide immediate feedback as well as daily feedback to the student.
- Discuss de-escalation strategies and create a plan with the student, modifying as needed.
- Schedule rest breaks as needed and/or breaks between tasks.
- Model expected behaviors and utilize peer supports/mentoring to reinforce.
- Post clear expectations and consequences, and routinely review these with the student.
- Use varied reinforcement strategies, such as behavior charts and positive calls home.
- Chart student's progress and maintain data. Communicate findings with the student and their family.
- Involve guardians. Seek signatures on homework, behavior charts, etc.
- Utilize manipulatives and hands-on activities.

LATE EFFECTS OF CANCER TREATMENT

The end of active cancer treatment means fewer visits to CHOP, less time out of school and often less stress on the family. But students treated for cancer may have ongoing psychosocial and educational needs. Some students with a history of cancer will require minimal support in school; others require intensive supports and services to access the school environment and curriculum and to transition into adult life. Many children with cancer will reintegrate well into full-time schooling, and as their health improves, will begin to function like a typical student. Other children may have emotional and behavioral difficulties following treatment. The end of treatment for cancer does not mark an end of surveillance and monitoring, and students will continue to benefit from the support of their school team.

Youth with a history of treatment for cancer may be at risk for cognitive weaknesses, which can emerge years after treatment has completed. These weaknesses, called **cognitive late effects**, may include difficulties with impairments in attention, memory, visual-spatial and visual-motor functioning, motor skills, language and executive functioning. These cognitive issues may result in difficulties with certain aspects of academic performance, such as reading comprehension and mathematics. As the difficulty of academic work increases throughout their schooling, youth with a history of cancer may struggle to acquire complex knowledge or to complete work at a similar rate as their peers.

CHOP's **pediatric neuropsychologists** evaluate and make recommendations for many of our patients struggling with the late effects of cancer treatment. Schools play an essential role in coordinating with our staff to ensure appropriate levels of support.

Your student with cancer may have been serviced under a **Section 504 Plan** during and immediately following their treatment, to assist them in accessing their environment and staying engaged in school. Students with a history of cancer treatment require closer educational monitoring than other students, and some may need more intensive supports provided through an **Individualized Education Plan**. The impacts of oncological treatment on school functioning may be subtle and may only appear years after a student completes treatment. As a child with a history of cancer progresses through school, it is important to remember that they are at significant risk for learning issues and must be closely monitored. If you suspect that your student may be dealing with late effects of cancer treatment, it is important to reach out to the student's caregivers and communicate your concern. Frequent, earnest communication with your student's guardians can facilitate teamwork and problem solving in the school and classroom. Here is how your intervention can help:

- Your student's guardians can communicate with CHOP staff about new learning concerns.
- Consult the accommodations guide here or consult with other professionals in your building and district about accommodations for these late effects.
- Use your school's RTI or MTSS system to intervene swiftly, tracking the efficacy of interventions.
- Consider a special education referral.
- During the evaluation process, encourage your school psychologist and other members of the evaluation team to reach out to CHOP staff to gain insight about a child's treatment history and possible educational effects, as well as best practices for intervention.
- Continue to consult with and involve your student's oncology care team in educational planning as needed. We are here as a resource long after treatment.

Some of the challenges our patients face with **executive functioning** can be difficult to problem-solve in the classroom. Consider consulting the following recommended resources about executive functioning:

- CHOP Cancer Center’s EXCEL (Executive Function Consultation, Education and Skills) Clinic <https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/executive-function-consultation-education-and-skills-excel-clinic>
- *Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents, Second Edition: A Practical Guide to Assessment and Intervention* (Peg Dawson, PhD and Richard Guare, EdD)
- *Smart but Scattered Teens* (Richard Guare, EdD; Peg Dawson, PhD; and Chris Guare)
- *The Work-Smart Academic Planner, Revised Edition* (Peg Dawson, PhD and Richard Guare, EdD)
- “Activities Guide: Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills with Children from Infancy to Adolescence” from Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/activities-guide-enhancing-and-practicing-executive-function-skills-with-children-from-infancy-to-adolescence/>
- Applications for Executive Functioning Skills <https://www.neurodevelop.com/Virtual-Handout-on-Executive-Functioning-Apps>

We know that as a professional educator you are invested in students’ long-term academic growth and achievement. You play a key role in helping to identify and mitigate the impact of late effects on your student’s academic growth.

For more guidance about populations most at risk and about the impact of treatment on learning, see these useful resources from Children’s Oncology Group:

- [http://survivorshipguidelines.org/pdf/2018/English%20Health%20Links/14_educational_issues%20\(secured\).pdf](http://survivorshipguidelines.org/pdf/2018/English%20Health%20Links/14_educational_issues%20(secured).pdf)
- <https://www.childrensoncologygroup.org/index.php/school-support/learning-problems-after-treatment>



DOCUMENT TEMPLATES FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Teacher/Substitute Teacher Personalized Action Plan

The following template can be used to create a personalized action plan to be attached to the student's 504 Plan or IEP and kept in your classroom for quick reference.

Student Name: _____

School Year: _____

Grade: _____

Diagnosis: _____

Student has 504 Plan: Yes/No (explain): _____

Student has an IEP: Yes/No (explain): _____

Student has been experiencing/may experience the following side effects:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hair loss | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue | <input type="checkbox"/> Mood swings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea | <input type="checkbox"/> Bruises |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bleeding | <input type="checkbox"/> Constipation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vomiting | <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior changes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Susceptibility to infection | <input type="checkbox"/> Weakened muscles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Headache |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor concentration | <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss or gain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in motor coordination | <input type="checkbox"/> Pain |

Classroom accommodations/modifications for this student: _____

Breakdown of likely treatment: _____

Planned absences: _____

Changes in behavior that may indicate the student is experiencing pain, side effects or fever:

The school staff members responsible for assisting this student in the event of a medical complication are:

1. Name: _____ Position: _____

Contact Number: _____

2. Name: _____ Position: _____

Contact Number: _____

Contact information for the parent(s)/guardian(s) is:

1. Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

2. Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

3. Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Additional Authorized Emergency Contact:

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

CHOP Point of Contact:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

CHOP Oncology Phone Nurse: _____

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

School Re-entry: How CHOP Can Help

School is an important part of a child's life, and disruptions to the school schedule as a result of cancer treatment can make the return to school difficult. One way to help welcome the child with cancer back to school is to host a school re-entry meeting. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia can send a representative to the school to facilitate a short presentation for the child's classmates. This presentation will provide developmentally appropriate information on where their classmate has been and ways in which their classmate would like to be supported upon returning to school. Such a presentation can help ease the transition back into the school environment. Parent and child permission should be obtained before any such presentation occurs.

Once you have received parent/guardian and child permission to host a school re-entry meeting, another important step in the process is to inform the parents/guardians of the child's classmates that a school re-entry meeting will take place. Below is a template that can be sent to parents/guardians to advise them about a school re-entry meeting.

Letter template for advising parents/guardians about a school re-entry meeting:

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I am writing to advise you that our school currently has a student who is receiving medical treatment through Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). The student is actively involved in the school community and recovering from treatments and side effects.

At the request of the student's parents/guardians, two representatives from the CHOP Cancer Center psychosocial team — an education coordinator and a certified child life specialist — will be coming to our school to provide developmentally appropriate information to the student's classmates about the student's illness and ways in which this student would like to feel supported by their classmates. We plan to have this meeting on _____ **DATE/**
TIME.

We appreciate your cooperation and thank you in advance for your understanding and compassion. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

School Principal/Teacher

Letter template for advising parents/guardians about a classmate with cancer:

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I am writing to advise you that our school currently has a student who is receiving medical treatment for cancer. The student is actively involved in the school community and recovering from treatments and side effects.

As this student has a compromised immune system and is more vulnerable to disease, hand hygiene practices are particularly important, and we will be learning more about them as a class this school year. I would also appreciate it if you would notify the school immediately if your child has an infectious disease. For more information about how long an illness is contagious, contact your child's primary care provider.

We appreciate your cooperation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

School Principal/Teacher