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Mastering Diabetes in schools and early childhood settings

Living with type 1 diabetes is a 24/7 challenge, which doesn't stop during school hours. New resources launched by Diabetes Victoria today will help the 2700* young Victorians with type 1 diabetes to receive the support they need to feel safe and happy to play, explore, develop and learn alongside their peers in schools and early childhood settings.

Minister for Education James Merlino today launched the free 'Mastering Diabetes in Schools and Early Childhood Settings' information packs at Malvern Primary School, where six students affected by the condition are enrolled.

"Many schools and early childhood centres are already providing excellent support to students with type 1 diabetes so they can achieve their full academic potential," Minister Merlino said. "These new packs will further assist teachers and school staff to give the best possible health support and create safer learning environments for children with type 1 diabetes."

Type 1 diabetes is a complex and potentially life-threatening condition, which requires constant care and vigilance. "We know that many parents feel overwhelmed when their children with type 1 diabetes attend school or an early childhood setting," Diabetes Victoria CEO Craig Bennett said.

"Equally, some staff might become anxious if they haven't had any experience in supporting a young person with type 1 diabetes. This is why we believe there is a great need for the 'Mastering Diabetes' information packs, to help ease these concerns and provide valuable evidence-based information for all parties involved."

Malvern Primary School Assistant Principal Lynne Foster said the school had an important role to play in ensuring their students with type 1 diabetes, who are aged 7 to 12 years, stay healthy and can fully participate in school life.

"We communicate regularly with parents to learn about the specific needs of their children with type 1 diabetes, and ensure we have diabetes action plans and management plans in place for students," Ms Foster said. "We have also been proactive in supporting our teachers to attend professional development opportunities, so they can understand the condition better. They need to know about blood glucose levels and what to do if these readings are out of range."

Mr Bennett commends Malvern Primary School for their proactive care. "It is essential that all schools and early childhood settings get this right. Only then will all young people with type 1 diabetes be given the opportunity to thrive and fulfil their potential."

The 'Mastering Diabetes in Schools and Early Childhood Settings' information packs were developed and funded by Diabetes Victoria, with additional funding provided by the State Government, the Susan Alberti Medical Research Foundation and other donors. They have been adapted from resources developed by Diabetes UK and have received input from various stakeholders, including Royal Children's Hospital, Monash Children's Hospital, staff and parents of children with type 1 diabetes.

** There are currently 2700 young people aged 3 to 18 from Victoria registered with type 1 diabetes on the National Diabetes Services Scheme.*

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We support, empower and campaign for all Victorians affected by diabetes.