**Crohns Disease (IBD)**

**Summary**

Inflammatory Bowel Disease is the name given to a group of conditions, of which

Crohn’s Disease and Ulcerative Colitis (UC) are the two main forms. IBD is an invisible condition – while your student might look ‘okay’ on the outside, there may be in a daily battle with serious medical problems. IBD is also complex, fluctuating and affects people in different ways so it is important to discuss each student’s particular needs with them and their parents, and possibly also with the health professionals involved in their care.

Crohn’s Disease is a condition that causes inflammation of the digestive system or gut. Crohn’s can affect any part of the gut, though the most common area affected is the end of the ileum (the last part of the small intestine), or the colon. Crohn’s is a chronic condition. This means that it is ongoing and life-long, although there may be periods of good health (remission), as well as times when symptoms are more active (relapses or flare-ups).

**Symptoms** Crohn’s is a very individual condition – the symptoms vary from person to person, and may depend on where in the gut the disease is active:

* Pain in the stomach
* Diarrhoea (sometimes mixed with blood and mucus)
* An urgent need to go to the toilet
* An increased bowel frequency
* Loss of appetite, weight loss and slowed growth in height (particularly in Crohn’s Disease)
* Nausea
* Tiredness and fatigue
* Feeling generally unwell with raised temperature and fever
* Anaemia (a reduced number of red blood cells).

**Support**

* Let the young person leave and return to the classroom discreetly and without having

to get permission whenever they need the toilet. If other toilets are locked or some distance

away, let them use a staff toilet.

* Appreciate that they may arrive late to college or for lessons because of an urgent need to

use a toilet or because tiredness or joint pains have slowed them down.

* Be aware that a young person with IBD may need to take medication during school

hours and/or need extra meal breaks.

* Respect their need for privacy. They should decide how much teachers and other students are told about their condition.
* Try to be alert to their psychological needs and relationships with other students.
* Let them judge for themselves if they wish to join in sports or other activities - but

don’t stop them trying whatever they want to try.

* When a college trip is coming up, talk to the student about their needs and try and arrange to meet these, e.g. with an aisle seat at the theatre or cinema and using a coach with a toilet.
* If a young person with IBD is unwell at college, consider giving them time to rest rather

than sending them home. They may be able to return to lessons later in the day.

* If a student with IBD is ill at home or in hospital, encourage the class to stay in touch by phone or email or by sending cards.
* Help a student who is at home to keep up with others in their class and with college work if they feel up to it. Keep in contact on a regular basis and, for example, send notes on lessons and work assignments by email.

For more information visit: [www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](http://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk)