

## Principle: Standards of Practice

**Definition:** *Standards of Practice for school nursing direct and lead every part of the framework and incorporate a wide range of practice and performance standards that are essential in the specialty of school nursing, regardless of the role, population served, or specialty within school nursing (ANA & NASN, 2017). Specialized knowledge, skills, decision making, and standards for practice are required to provide the best possible nursing care with the best possible outcomes. The Standards of Practice and the related practice components are vital and overarching for the other principles of the framework. Specialized knowledge, skills, decision making, and standards for practice are required to provide the best possible nursing care with the best possible outcomes. Standards of practice is defined as a competent level of nursing practice and professional performance common to and expected of all school nurses. Included in this principle are integral practice components that underlie school nurses' daily activities and include the scope and standards of nursing practice, code of ethics, nurse practice acts, position statements, evidence-based practice, clinical guidelines, clinical competence and critical thinking.*

PRACTICE COMPONENTS	DEFINITION*
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CLINICAL COMPETENCE</b></p>	<p>Clinical Competence means that the school nurse successfully performs at an expected professional level that integrates knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment. The school nurse maintains a high level of competency and professional knowledge and skills through continuing education and collaboration with peers and community health professionals, all while adhering to the standards of school nursing practice (ANA &amp; NASN, 2017).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CLINICAL GUIDELINES</b></p>	<p>Clinical guidelines are determined by the systematic review of the evidence and direct the practice of school nursing. Clinical guidelines assist school nurses to provide best practice and facilitate positive health outcomes that influence academic outcomes (Maughan &amp; Schantz, 2014). Following clinical guidelines advances the professional practice of school nursing.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CODE OF ETHICS</b></p>	<p>Code of Ethics is a part of every nurse's professional life (American Nurses Association, 2015). School nurses provide care, advocate for families, outreach to those at risk, and collect data with compassion, honesty, and integrity that protect the dignity, autonomy, rights, and client confidentiality within the legal limit of the health and educational systems (ANA, 2015; ANA &amp; NASN, 2017).</p>

<p><b>CRITICAL THINKING</b></p>	<p>Critical thinking is a dynamic, vital, and continuing part of every step in the nursing process. Critical thinking uses knowledge and reasoning skills to make sound clinical decisions that influence nursing practice (ANA &amp; NASN, 2017; Weismuller et al., 2016).</p>
<p><b>EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE</b></p>	<p>Evidence-based practice incorporates the best available research and scientific evidence that inform decision making and promote best practices for optimal health outcomes (Jacobs, Jones, Gabella, Spring, &amp; Brownson, 2012). School nurses are obligated to recognize that evidence-based practice replaces empirical and authority-based care (Bultas &amp; McLaughlin, 2013) and that it is the basis and standard of health care practice for the 21st-century school nurse.</p>
<p><b>POSITION STATEMENTS</b></p>	<p>Position statements from the NASN are documents that present the official position of the NASN Board of Directors. These position statements include historical, political, and scientific facets of topics relevant to school nursing, school health services, and children’s health care.</p>
<p><b>NURSE PRACTICE ACTS</b></p>	<p>Nurse Practice Acts (NPAs) are guiding and governing laws that determine the lawful scope of practice of nursing. NPAs have authority to develop rules and regulations for the practice and licensing of nursing to protect the health of society. Nurses must follow the NPAs of their state, commonwealth, or territory (National Council of State Boards of Nursing, n.d.). It is NPAs and state guidelines that determine if nursing delegation can occur, and they greatly impact the framework’s principle of Care Coordination.</p>

## SCOPE OF STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Scope and Standards of Practice define the practices that school nurses are expected to perform competently. The scope affirms the broad range, essence, and evolving boundaries of school nursing practice. The standards of practice describe the level of competency expected for each step of the nursing process. The standards of professional performance describe the competent level of behavior in the professional school nurse role (ANA & NASN, 2017).

\*Definitions of the framework principles and components were taken from the original articles that developed the Framework for 21st Century School Nursing Practice™ (NASN, 2016a; Maughan, Duff, et al., 2016). Where applicable the original source is cited. Permission to use granted by the National Association of School Nurses. Reprinted with permission by the National Association of School Nurses.

### IDEAS: How can I use this principle in my practice?

- **Clinical guidelines:** Resource for school nurse practice. Collaboration and partner with multiple agencies health and education related facilitates inter-disciplinary sharing and use of guidelines.
- **Code of ethics:** Education administration and school staff on confidentiality and privacy related to HIPAA and FERPA. Fosters collegial relationships with school staff and advances ethical role of the school nurse in safeguarding student privacy.
- **Evidence-based practice:** Obesity prevention. Community research that supports community engagement through partnering with outside resources.
- **NASN position statements:** Facilitate broad use of NASN practice standards throughout the state by targeting school nurses, administrators and parents.
- **Nurse practice act:** Disseminate most current information to all school nurses. Improves student care and outcomes, promotes professionalism and competency.
- **Scope and standards of practice:** Develop guidelines for private physical exam of minors. Uniform standards developed in collaboration with multiple agencies and stakeholders promotes education and communication of school nurse responsibilities to advocate for student safety, privacy and confidentiality.