



Dr. Heath Cates, a pediatrician at Baptist Health Paducah, said parents can get the medication consent form during a routine physical.

Doctor’s note needed for OTC meds at school

Leaders say new policy aims to protect students’ safety

BY CARLY DICK
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Starting this upcoming school year, Kentucky students will be required to have a medical practitioner’s order and signed parental consent to receive over-the-counter medications from school staff.

The Kentucky Department of Education said it updated the policy to prioritize student safety and ensure consistency in all school health practices.

According to the KDE, “it is imperative that school nurses do not accept parent notes requesting the administration of over-the-counter or prescription medications without a medical provider’s order.”

Dr. Heath Cates, a pediatrician at Baptist Health Paducah, said the precautionary measure is for the safety of students.

“I think the reason for that is we want to make sure that anything that’s being administered, again, is safe and effective for that patient,” he said.

McCracken County Public Schools is encouraging parents and their doctors to fill out the consent forms prior to the 2025-2026 school year.

The consent form requires a list of medi-



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cations students may be allergic to, whether the student is allowed to carry certain medications during school and if the student can administer the medication themselves.

Cates said in some instances, students may be allergic to or experience adverse effects from certain medications, and the form will indicate to school nurses and personnel of those possibilities.

“Some of our children are [fine taking], you know, Tylenol, ibuprofen, those safe over-the-counter medications, but certain patient populations, that’s not a good choice for them, depending on certain medical conditions,” Cates explained.

He said while the consent form may add to a seemingly long list of parental duties when preparing a student for the school year, it is important to be overly cautious when it comes

to children.

“We always want to do our due diligence with these most at-risk populations, one of them being children. It’s our job to help protect them. They’re minors. So with that in mind, you know, keeping in mind drug allergies, drug exposures, things of that nature, we want to make sure that we’re being overly cautious in that regard,” Cates said.

He suggested parents take their children to their doctors’ offices for physicals this summer to prepare for the school year.

“Our office works really hard to make sure that every patient, when they leave the door, have the things in hand that they need to be successful for the coming school year,” Cates said. “Things like routine school physicals as well as sports physicals for those patients, and this will just be another one of those checkboxes.”

KYTC engineer notes drop in highway deaths

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Kentucky highway deaths appear to be trending down this year, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet District 1 Chief Engineer Kyle Poat said Thursday, speaking at the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce’s June Power in Partnership Breakfast.

“I don’t want to jinx this, but...every day we get a highway fatality report — a lot of us in the management team across the state — and one of the things that we’re seeing right now is that our highway fatalities are really downward, and that’s a good thing. One is too many,” he said.

Addressing the crowd of business leaders and local officials at the Paducah-McCracken County Convention Center, Poat said the fatal crash figures he’s seen so far this year are “numbers that we haven’t seen, really, in my entire time here, that’s always a good sign for us.”

He said if the trend holds firm, the state is projected to have about 500 highway crash deaths by the end of 2025. To put that figure into perspective, Poat said “generally, we’ve been up in the upper-600s/lower-700s numbers, so we’re talking 200-plus down.”

The engineer said he believes an upward trend in seatbelt use is one of



Kentucky Transportation Cabinet District 1 Chief Engineer Kyle Poat addresses the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce during the group’s Power in Partnership Breakfast on June 5 at the Paducah-McCracken County Convention Center.

the factors behind the decrease in deaths, and emphasized that “we know that seatbelts save lives.”

Poat also said KYTC is monitoring Interstate 24 closely, alongside the Illinois Department of Transportation, due to the ongoing rehabilitation project on the I-24 Ohio River Bridge connecting Paducah and Metropolis, Illinois. Lane restrictions are in place due to the project, and Poat said so far the only crashes in the area have been minor fender benders.

Additionally, he said crashes are down overall across west Kentucky.

“We’re seeing our numbers as much as 65% down in total crashes and as much as 71% decrease in collisions with injuries, so we’re trending even better than the national average,” he said.

Poat also touched on future road projects driv-

ers can expect to see, noting that several roundabouts are in the works for District 1 — as many as 16 in the next five years.

In 2024, Western Kentucky University conducted a survey on behalf of KYTC to get public feedback on roundabouts. In an interview with The Sun in February of that year, then KYTC District 1 spokesman Keith Todd said roundabouts have fewer “conflict points” that can lead to crashes.

“If you have a regular intersection, particularly where you have people making left turns, you have an obvious conflict point of, the people turning have a conflict with the people that are trying to go straight,” Todd said. “If there is a crash at the intersection, it goes from being a T-bone type crash, which are the ones that are most often fatal, to a side-glancing blow crash [in a roundabout].”



GRAVES COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT LEGAL NOTICE OF BID

Tim Road Bridge Sheet Pile

Graves County Fiscal Court will be accepting sealed bids for installation of sheet pile. Site location 0.96 miles northeast of KY 301.

Scope of Work:

- Install 188 LF of 18-foot 5-gauge sheet pile on both west and east side abutment. Disposal of demolition debris shall be the responsibility of Contractor.
- Construct a minimum 150-foot asphalt patch on west and east side of bridge.
- Erosion Control and granular backfill for installation and Rip Rap for ditches and creek banks shall be responsibility of the contractor.

The Fiscal Court reserves the option to use tax exempt status to purchase major materials to be deducted from the contract after award. All materials and construction methods shall be governed by the current KYTC Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction. Landowner Agreements for any and all work conducted off County Right of Way is responsibility of Contractor.

The Fiscal Court reserves the right to reject any or all bids in the best interest of the Graves County Fiscal Court.

All permits, bonding, and insurance, etc., will be the responsibility of the contractor.

Sealed bids will be due by 10 am CST Friday, June 20, 2025 located at the Graves County Judge Executive Office, 1102 Paris Road, Suite 2, Mayfield, KY 42066. Questions regarding the bid should contact Scotty Smith at the Graves County Road Department 270-247-5805



GRAVES COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT LEGAL NOTICE OF BID

Rudy Road Bridge Sheet Pile

Graves County Fiscal Court will be accepting sealed bids for installation of sheet pile. Site location 0.35 miles north of Johnnie Road.

Scope of Work:

- Install 88 LF of 18-foot 5-gauge sheet pile on both west and east side abutment. Disposal of demolition debris shall be the responsibility of Contractor.
- Construct a minimum 150-foot asphalt patch on west and east side of bridge.
- Erosion Control and granular backfill for installation and Rip Rap for ditches and creek banks shall be responsibility of the contractor.

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GRAVES COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT LEGAL NOTICE OF BID

Works Road Bridge Sheet Pile

Graves County Fiscal Court will be accepting sealed bids for installation of sheet pile. Site location 0.71 miles east of KY 129.

Scope of Work:

- Install 80 LF of 18-foot 5-gauge sheet pile on both west and east side abutment. Disposal of demolition debris shall be the responsibility of Contractor.
- Construct a minimum 150-foot asphalt patch on west and east side of bridge.
- Erosion Control and granular backfill for installation and Rip Rap for ditches and creek banks shall be responsibility of the contractor.

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