**MEDICALLY FRAGILE DEFINITION**

According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s Office of Curriculum and School Reform School Attendance and Student Accounting Manual 2010-2011, students who are medically fragile are frequently absent from school, and their absences are directly related to their severe or life threatening physical condition.

A **medically fragile** student is identified as follows:

A student who qualifies for special education in one of the existing categories of disability and for whom a licensed medical doctor has provided documentation that an associated or accompanying chronic illness is so severe as to affect the student’s school attendance. A medically fragile student is one whose illness frequently places him/her in life threatening situations. In addition, he/she may be technology-dependent for life support systems, i.e., tracheotomy, gastrostomy, etc.

Rare instances may exist in which a child does not qualify for special education as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, the child would unquestionably meet the definition of disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and thus would be eligible for consideration as a medically fragile student.

**PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR**

**MEDICALLY FRAGILE STATUS**

1. Requests for Medically Fragile status are immediately submitted to School Nurse
2. School nurse follows up with obtaining Medical Release for Confidential Information
3. School nurse follows up with physician with Medically Fragile Verification Form
4. School Nurse initiates IEP or Section 504 meeting – must be IEP / Section 504 / attendance committee team member for medically fragile students
5. School nurse trains NCWISE Coordinator
6. Parents must write a note within five school days following the students return to school regarding the reason for each absence for which coding as medically fragile is being requested. The reason for the absence must be related to the medically fragile status.
7. NCWISE Coordinator alerts school nurse if medically fragile related absences begin to exceed expectation as per Medically Fragile Verification Form
8. School Nurse periodically checks parent excuses and absence history and collaborates with attendance committees, IEP case managers, and Section 504 case managers
9. Should absences exceed what should reasonably be expected according to the Medically Fragile Verification Form, the School Nurse will follow up with the parents/guardian, physician, and team or committee.