

# Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy



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<b>Signed by:</b>	<b>Position:</b>
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## 1. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Suitable education is arranged for learners on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs
- Learners, staff and parents/carers understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Department for Education's (2013) 'Ensuring a good education for pupils who cannot attend school because of health needs'
- Department for Education's (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'

## 3. Local authority duties

The Local Authority (LA) must arrange suitable full-time education for pupils of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The school has a duty to support the LA in doing so.

The LA should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a learner will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil.
- Ensure the education learners receive is of good quality, allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind their peers in school, and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- Address the needs of individual learners in arranging provision.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of learners with additional health needs and ensure parents know who this is.
- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards pupils with additional health needs.
- Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education.

## 4. Definitions

Learners unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs may include those with:

- Physical health issues
- Physical injuries
- Mental health problems, including anxiety issues
- Emotional difficulties or school refusal
- Progressive conditions
- Terminal illnesses
- Chronic illnesses

Learners who are unable to attend mainstream or special education for health reasons may attend any of the following:

- Hospital school: a special school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment.
- Home tuition: many LAs have home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and pupils on occasions where pupils are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment.
- Medical PRUs: these are LA establishments that provide education for pupils unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for learners who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of pupils are clear and understood by all
- Approving and reviewing this policy annually

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Notifying the LA when a learner is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs.
- Working with the Governing Body to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils with health needs.
- Working collaboratively with parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of the learner.
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet learners' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Ensuring the termly review of the arrangements made for pupils who cannot attend school due to their medical needs.
- Appointing a member of staff who is responsible for learners with healthcare needs and liaises with parents, pupils, the LA, key workers and others involved in the learner's care.
- Providing an annual report to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of learners.

The appointed member of staff is the Assistant Headteacher/SENCo. They are responsible for:

- Dealing with learners who are unable to attend school because of medical needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying learners' education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Liaising with the Headteacher, education providers and parents to determine learners' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school.
- Keeping learners informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.

- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their pupils through the appropriate sharing of the individual pupil's health needs
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate as fully as possible during reintegration.
- Understanding their role in supporting learners with health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible.
- Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned

## **6. Managing absence**

Parents are advised to contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.

Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school will provide support to pupils who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the pupil's parents to arrange schoolwork where appropriate. The school will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the pupil, their family and relevant members of staff.

Absence patterns are monitored by the strategic lead for attendance and the safeguarding under the supervision of the Headteacher. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be notified if there are concerns about a learner's attendance (for example, for periods of absence that last 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of the school year). If appropriate, they will inform the LA, who will take responsibility for the learner and their education.

Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the LA to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the learner's absence.

For hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital.

The LA will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the pupil which will allow the school, the LA and the provider of the learner's education to work together.

The school will monitor learner attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a pupil is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school.

The school will only remove a learner who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where:

- The learner has been certified by a Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and

- Neither the learner nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

A learner unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent and certification from the Medical Officer, even if the LA has become responsible for the learner's education.

## 7. Support for learners

Where a learner has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the learner's needs and how these may be best met with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the learner.

The LA expects the school to support learners with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to learners' programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.

The school will make reasonable adjustments under pupils' individual healthcare plans (IHCPs), reviewed annually.

Learners admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital concerned.

During a period of absence, the school will work with the provider of the learner's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

Whilst a learner is away from school, the school will work with the LA to ensure the pupil can successfully remain in touch with their school using the following methods:

- School newsletters
- Emails and messages
- Invitations to school events
- Cards, letters and phone calls from peers and staff including the Form tutor, Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner and any other member of staff at the learner's request, Head of Section

Where appropriate, the school will provide the pupil's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.

To help ensure a learner with additional health needs is able to attend school following an extended period of absence, the following adaptations will be considered:

- A personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with the named staff member, learner and their family
- Access to additional support in school
- Online access to the curriculum from home
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at school
- Time in Quiet Spaces
- Increased Wellbeing sessions
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue

## **8. Reintegration**

When a learner is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a personalised 'return to education' plan.

As far as possible, the learner will be able to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in school.

If appropriate, a trained medication professional should be involved in the development of the learner's reintegration plan and informed of the timeline of the plan by the appointed named member of staff, to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the pupil and to provide relevant staff training.

The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the learner.

For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the learner's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill learner or their parents/carers in the early stages of their absence.

The school is aware that some learners will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the learner, their parents/carers and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.

The reintegration plan will include:

- The date for planned reintegration, once known
- Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration
- Details of the named member(s) of staff who has responsibility for the learners
- Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved
- Details of social contacts, including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration
- Follow up procedures
- Strategies to support the wellbeing of learners when back at school

The school will ensure a welcoming, positive, nurturing environment is in place for the learner and that it is proactive to the learner's needs during the reintegration period.

## **9. Training**

Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a learner's return to school.

Once a learner's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training before the pupil's anticipated return.

Healthcare professionals should be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required.

## **10. Examinations and assessments**

The named member of staff will liaise with the alternative provision provider over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate.

Relevant assessment information will be provided to the alternative provision provider if required.

Awarding bodies may make special arrangements for pupils with permanent or long-term

disabilities and learning difficulties, or temporary disabilities and illnesses. Applications for such arrangements will be submitted by the school, as early as possible by the Examinations Officer in discussion with Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher/SENCo.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our:

- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy