

Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School

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1. Introduction

Our academy aims to support the Local Authority to ensure that all children who are unable to attend the academy due to medical needs continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows. We aim to provide these children with suitable education to enable them to reach their full potential.

Some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision due to their health needs.

Whenever possible, children should receive their education at the academy and our aim is to reintegrate them as soon as they are well enough. We understand that we have a continuing role in children's education whilst they are not attending the academy and will work with the LA, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

2. Legislation and Guidance

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

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2013) 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'
- DfE (2014, updated 2017) 'Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school'
- DfE (2023) Providing Remote Education (non-statutory guidance for schools)
- Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014

3. Definitions

Children who are unable to attend school because 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

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

Hospital School

A specialised provision within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment.

Home Tuition or Tuition within the community

Many Local Authorities have tuition services that act as a communication channel between school and children on occasions where children are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment or intervention for their physical or mental health.

Medical PRUs

These are Local Authority establishments that provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

4. Local Authority Duties

If the academy is unable to make suitable arrangements, or if it is clear that a child will be away from school for 15 days (consecutive or over the course of the year) or more because of their health needs, the Local Authority must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The Academy has a duty to support the Local Authority in doing so. The Local Authority should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a child 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 child.
- Ensure the education children 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 the academy as soon as possible.
- Address the needs of individual children in arranging provision.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs and ensure parents and carers know who this is.
- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards children 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.
- Give clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.

The Local Authority should not:

- Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child from getting the right type of provision and a good education.
- Withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a child because of how much it will cost.
- Have policies based upon the percentage of time a child can attend school rather than whether the child is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.

- Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether they will arrange education for children or inflexible policies which result in children going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in).

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Local Governing Committee are responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for children who cannot attend school because of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- Ensuring the termly review of the arrangements made for children who cannot attend school due to their medical needs.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of children are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents, for both on- and off-site activities.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting children with health needs are appropriately trained as decided and arranged by the principal and the senior team. This training could be awareness raising as to the needs of the returning child provided by parents, carers, members of the medical team and others as appropriate.
- Implementing this policy following review by the board of trustees every year or if the Guidance and/or Legislation changes.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Working with the trustees and local governing committee to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting children with health needs.
- Working collaboratively with parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of children.
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet children' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon, including in contingency and emergency situations.
- Appointing a named member of staff who might be the SENCO who is responsible for children with healthcare needs and liaises with parents, children, the Local Authority, key workers, and others involved in the child's care.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and understand their role in its implementation
- Ensuring that staff are suitably trained to manage the child's health condition when they return to school
- Ensuring the support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual children.
- Arranging appropriate training and or awareness raising for staff with responsibility for supporting children with health needs.
- Providing teachers who support children with health needs with suitable information relating to a child's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the child.
- Providing reports if appropriate to the local governing committee on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of children.

- Notifying the Local Authority when a child is likely to be away from the academy for a significant period due to their health needs.
- Contact the school nursing service in the case of any child who has a medical condition that may require support at school, but who has not yet been brought to the attention of the school nurse.
- Ensure that systems are in place for obtaining information about a child's medical needs and that this information is kept up to date

Academy named member of staff is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance of the child
- Dealing with children who are unable to attend school because of medical needs.
- Ensuring that the child attends any arranged tutoring sessions
- Actively monitoring children's progress and reintegration into the academy.
- Supplying children's education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress, and outcomes.
- Liaising with the principal, education providers and parents and carers to determine children's programmes of study whilst they are absent from the academy.
- Ensure that the child has any necessary equipment needed to allow them to access their learning remotely.
- Keeping children informed about academy events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Ensuring that they are provided with relevant key stage transition information and opportunities, ie, options - including careers advice and guidance (where applicable)
- Providing a link between children and their parents and carers, and the Local Authority.

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of children's health needs.
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate fully and ensuring children are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason.
- Liaising with providers and care teams to share long term and medium-term planning to reflect the child's current learning.
- Understanding their role in supporting children with health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of children through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual children's health needs.
- Ensuring they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and know what to do in an emergency.
- Keeping parents and carers informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the academy.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the academy where possible.
- Ensure that they support their child in attending any allocated tutoring sessions
- Work in partnership with the academy to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the academy of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.

- Provide the academy with sufficient and up-to-date information about the child's medical needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.
- Be involved in the development and review of their child's IHP (individual health plan)
- Carry out any action that has been agreed as part of the implementation of the IHP, ie, providing medicines or equipment, and ensure that they or another nominated adult are contactable at all times

Healthcare professionals are expected to:

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- Notify the academy when a learner has been identified as having a medical condition that will require support
- Support the academy to implement an IHP

6. Equal Opportunities

The academy is clear about the need to actively support learners with medical conditions to participate in school trips and visits, or in sporting activities, and not prevent them from doing so.

The academy will consider what reasonable adjustments need to be made to enable these learners to participate fully and safely on school trips, visits and sporting activities.

Risk assessments will be carried out so that planning arrangements take account of any steps needed to ensure that learners with medical conditions are included. In doing so, learners, their parents/carers and any relevant healthcare professionals will be consulted.

7. Individual Health Plans (IHPs)

The Principal has overall responsibility for the development of IHPs for learners with medical conditions however they will delegate this responsibility to the nominated person named in the policy.

Plans will be reviewed at least annually, or earlier if there is evidence that the learner's needs have changed.

Plans will be developed with the learners best interests in mind and will set out:

- What needs to be done
- When
- By whom

Not all learners with a medical condition will require an IHP. It will be agreed with a healthcare professional and the parents/carers when an IHP would be inappropriate or disproportionate. This will be based on evidence. If there is no consensus, the Principal will make the final decision.

Plans will be drawn up in partnership with the academy, parents/carers and a relevant healthcare professional, such as the school nurse, specialist or paediatrician, who can best advise on the learners specific needs. The learner will be involved wherever appropriate.

IHPs will be linked to, or become part of, any education, health and care (EHC) plan. If a learner has special educational needs (SEN) but does not have an EHC plan, the SEN will be mentioned in the IHP.

The level of detail in the plan will depend on the complexity of the child's condition and how much support is needed. The following will be considered when deciding what information to record on IHPs:

- The medical condition, its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments
- The learners resulting needs, including medication (dose, side effects and storage) and other treatments, time, facilities, equipment, testing, access to food and drink where this is used to manage their condition, dietary requirements and environmental issues, e.g. crowded corridors, travel time between lessons
- Specific support for the learners educational, social and emotional needs. For example, how absences will be managed, requirements for extra time to complete exams, use of rest periods or additional support in catching up with lessons, counselling sessions
- The level of support needed, including in emergencies. If a learner is self-managing their medication, this will be clearly stated with appropriate arrangements for monitoring
- Who will provide this support, their training needs, expectations of their role and confirmation of proficiency to provide support for the learners medical condition from a healthcare professional, and cover arrangements for when they are unavailable
- Who in the academy needs to be aware of the learners condition and the support required
- Separate arrangements or procedures required for trips or other activities outside of the normal academy timetable that will ensure the learner can participate, e.g. risk assessments
- Where confidentiality issues are raised by the parent/carer or learner, the designated individuals to be entrusted with information about the learners condition
- What to do in an emergency, including who to contact and contingency arrangements

8. Managing Absence

Parents and carers should contact the academy on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness. This also includes any absence to any tutoring session which has been arranged.

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

The academy will provide support to children who are absent from the academy because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with their parents and carers to arrange work as soon as the child is able to cope with it or part-time education in the academy. The academy will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the child, their family and relevant members of staff. A laptop may be offered to support the child's learning needs. For periods of absence that are expected to last for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a academic year, the named

person with responsibility for children with health needs will notify the Local Authority, who will take responsibility for the child and their education.

Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the academy will liaise with the Local Authority to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the absence.

For hospital admissions, the appointed member of staff will liaise with the Local Authority regarding the programme that should be followed while the child is in hospital.

The Local Authority will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the child which will allow the academy, the Local Authority, and the provider of the child's education to work together.

The academy will monitor the child's attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a child is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than in the academy.

The academy will only remove a child who is unable to attend because of additional health needs from the academy roll where the child has been deemed unfit by the school medical officer and is unlikely to return before ceasing to be of compulsory school age and neither the child nor his parents have indicated an intention to continue at the school thereafter. A child unable to attend the academy because of their health needs will not be removed from the academy register without parental consent and certification from the Medical Officer, even if the Local Authority has become responsible for the child's education.

9. Support for children

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

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

The academy will make reasonable adjustments under individual healthcare plans.

Children 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 academy will work with the provider of the child's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

The academy will work with the Local Authority whilst a child is away to ensure they can successfully remain in touch with the academy using the following methods:

- Newsletters
- Emails
- Invitations to academy events
- Cards or letters from peers and staff

Where appropriate, the academy will provide the child's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources, including the use of a device where appropriate.

To help ensure a child with additional health needs can attend the academy 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
- Access to additional support at the academy
- Online access to the curriculum from home
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at the academy
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue

10. Reintegration

When a child is considered well enough to return to the academy, a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the Local Authority will be developed.

The Academy will work with the Local Authority when reintegration into the academy is anticipated, to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of outside education.

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

Staff identified as being involved in the development of the child's reintegration plan will be informed of the timeline of the plan by the appointed member of staff, to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the child.

The academy will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access for the child to the premises and curriculum. For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the child's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on a sick child, or their parents or carers in the early stages of their absence.

The academy is aware that some children will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the child, their parents and 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 of staff with responsibility for the child.
- 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.

The academy will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage children and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period. Following reintegration, the academy will support the Local Authority in seeking feedback from the child, and parents and carers, regarding the effectiveness of the process.

11. Links with other Policies and Procedures

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) report and policy
- First Aid and Medicines Policy
- Accessibility plan
- Equality Statement and Objectives
- Health and Safety Policy

Appendix 1: Being notified a child has a medical condition



