



inspiring the journey for
independence together

Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy

Reviewed Annually

Statutory

Signed:

(Chair of the Trust)

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Policy and practice document for children and young people unable to attend school because of medical needs

1. Aim

This policy and practice document aims to ensure that all pupils within a school within the Rivermead Inclusive Trust on roll aged 5 – 19 who are unable to attend school, because of medical needs and would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows, so that they are able to maintain the momentum of their education and to keep up with their studies. It should be read alongside the statutory guidance produced by the DfE. 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs. Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities - January 2013'.

[Additional health needs guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/269812/Ensuring_a_good_education_for_children_who_cannot_attend_school_because_of_health_needs.pdf)

Educational provision for children who are not in hospitals and unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs is provided by home tutors via the Local Authority. Pupils are usually taught in small groups or at home depending on the child's individual needs. Hospital Tuition is provided during a child's admission to hospital if they are well enough to receive it.

Children and young people who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs will include those with:

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

2. General Principles

- Schools within the Trust will continue to support and provide a suitable Education for children with health needs whenever possible.
- Schools within the Trust will work in partnership with the Rivermead Inclusive Trust to ensure the child's academic needs are met.

- Schools will have a named member of staff who will work with the Trust representatives to agree a timetable and to support their reintegration back into their originating school.
- The primary aim of the Local Authority's policy and practice is to minimise, as far as possible, who are unable to attend school, the disruption to normal schooling that can be experienced by children and young people with medical needs by continuing education as normally as their needs allow.
- Where a pupil is educated at home, the minimum entitlement will again be for 5 hours individual tuition per week. This may be increased where it is necessary to enable the pupil to keep up with their studies. This is particularly important when a pupil is approaching public examinations. The decision over the amount and nature of provision will be based on medical advice, the judgement of the teacher and home school and the expressed views of the child/young person and their parents/carers.
- Children and young people admitted to hospital will receive education in hospital as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital school/tuition team for the hospital concerned.
- We will work with parents/carers, schools, the Local Authority and Community Paediatricians to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

3. Expectations on the Local Authority

Medway Local Authority must ensure that:

- A pupil who is unable to attend school because of medical needs is not at home without access to education for more than 15 working days.
- Pupils who have a chronic condition or illness which is likely to result in prolonged or recurring periods of absence from school, whether at home or in hospital, should have access to education from day one of the absence so far as is possible.
- Pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs receive a suitable full time education.
- The education provided should be of a similar quality to that available in school, including a broad and balanced curriculum.
- The costs of hospital tuition for children and young people admitted to hospital are funded.

4. Expectations on schools

DfE Statutory Guidance January 2013 indicates that schools should:

- Ensure that there is a named person who is responsible for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs.
- Establish a written policy statement and clear procedures which may stand alone or be incorporated into the school's SEN policy. The DfES Guidance outlines the information that should be included in the policy at paragraph 2.7.
- In the case of a pupil who is expected to be absent for 15 working days or less, and where this is not part of a pattern of absence related to a chronic or recurring illness, make arrangements in liaison with the pupil's parents to provide the pupil with homework as soon as they become able to cope with it.
- Ensure that pupils who are not attending school because of medical needs where the absence is expected to last for more than 15 days are referred promptly so that alternative education can be provided in a timely way and within the 15 working days.
- Work closely with the staff in the hospital school/tuition service
- Ensure that information about the pupil's curriculum, their achievements and any special educational needs that they may have is provided promptly
- Provide appropriate work and materials promptly and regularly
- Be active in the monitoring of progress and in the smooth reintegration into school, liaising with other agencies as necessary
- Ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs are kept informed about school social events, and are able to participate in homework clubs, study support and other activities as appropriate.
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers, for example through visits and videos.
- Schools should promote co-operation between them when children cannot attend school because of ill health.

5. Funding

The Local Authority budget provides for:

- The funding of hospital tuition is funded directly via the Education Funding Agency)

6. Monitoring and evaluation

The progress of pupils receiving tuition because they are unable to attend school due to their medical needs will be monitored by the staff of the hospital school/tuition service in conjunction with the named member of school staff.

7. Practice

7.1 Arranging tuition

7.1.1 For absences that are expected to last for 15 working days or less and are not part of a recurring illness

- Liaison between the school and pupil's parents to arrange homework as soon as the pupil is able to cope with it or part time education at school.

7.1.2 For absences that are expected to last for more than 15 working days

- For a pupil where the medical need involves a physical or medical condition, the school will seek the advice of the Community Paediatrician or relevant Consultant. The Community Paediatrician/Consultant will be asked to:

Confirm the pupil's medical condition

- Indicate whether the pupil's absence is likely to last for more than 15 working days
- Comment on the pupil's ability to cope with educational provision, i.e. whether the pupil is medically unfit to attend school
- Comment on the kind of arrangements that would be needed to ensure the pupil's continued access to education
- Comment on the length of time that the pupil is likely to be absent and therefore in need of support
- Comment on whether the illness is chronic and therefore whether future absences are likely and tuition will be needed without the need to re-refer
- Indicate the review arrangements to ensure that the pupil returns to school as soon as they are medically able to do so and any reintegration arrangements that should be considered, e.g. a phased return with reducing input from Throop Learning Centre
- Indicate the treatment or support that the pupil is to receive through the Health Service to support their return to health and mainstream schooling
- For a pupil where the medical needs involves a psychological or mental health difficulty or emotional difficulties/school refusal, the school will refer to CAMHS/MYPWS for a view of the pupils needs and reason why TLC is required. A referral to an Education Psychologist may be appropriate. NB The School should undertake a risk management plan for pupils who are at significant risk of self harm and implement a support plan if deemed appropriate.

The services consulted will be asked to:

- Provide confirmation from a relevant health consultant e.g. Community paediatrician, hospital consultant or consultant psychiatrist of the pupil's psychological or mental health difficulty and need for TLC and provide an estimated timescale that the provision will be required.
- Indicate whether the pupil's absence is likely to last for more than 15 working days
- Comment on the pupil's ability to cope with educational provision
- Comment on the kind of arrangements that would be needed to ensure the pupil's continued access to education
- Comment on the length of time that the pupil is likely to be absent and therefore in need of support
- Indicate the review arrangements to ensure that the pupil returns to school as soon as they are able to do so and any reintegration arrangements that should be considered, e.g. a phased return
- Indicate the treatment or support that the pupil is to receive to support their return to health and mainstream schooling
- Contact the parent of the pupil to arrange tuition or liaise with the pupil's schools – named link worker over curriculum content and the pupil's specific needs
- Draw up a programme of support for the pupil
- Consider the pupil's social needs and contact with peers
- Liaise with the Health Service, Locality Team and/or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service/MYPWS as appropriate to clarify the support being provided to assist the pupil to return to mainstream education

7.1.3 For absences that are linked to a chronic/recurrent illness or condition

- As indicated above, the Community Paediatrician/Consultant will be asked to comment on the nature of the pupil's medical condition and indicate whether the condition is chronic and therefore whether there is likely to be a recurring need for tuition.
- In such cases it should not be necessary to wait for further confirmation of the condition and that tuition is required each time the pupil is unwell and unable to attend school.

8. Public Examinations

Efficient and effective liaison is important when children with health needs are approaching public examinations. The hospital school or TLC should be able to arrange a suitable focus on the child's education at this stage in order to minimise the impact of the time lost

while a child is unable to attend school. Awarding bodies will make special arrangements for children with permanent or long term illnesses or indispositions when taking public examinations and the school supported by TLC should submit applications for special arrangements as early as possible.

9. SEN

Children with Special Education Needs (SEN) should have SEN Support Plans in place and should continue to receive Person Centered Annual Reviews organised by the school. The schools Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator should be regularly involved in liaison with the school and the SEN team.

10. Review and reintegration

Decisions about when and how a pupil should return to school following illness need to take account of a wide range of views, including those of the pupil, their parents/carers, and the pupil's school, the Community Paediatrician, and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service/MYPWS.

It is essential that each pupil receiving tuition because they are unable to attend school due to their medical needs is reviewed at least half termly liaising with the relevant Community Paediatrician and/or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service/or GP to determine.

Referrals are accepted on the understanding that the referrer or named contact maintain an overview of each child's situation. The named contact will arrange the date/time/venue of review and invite relevant professionals and parent/carer.

- Whether the pupil continues to need tuition (unless the advice received previously has indicated a need for longer term tuition, for example in the case of a pupil who is terminally ill).
- Whether plans need to be made to reintegrate the pupil into mainstream school, and if so, whether there are factors that need to be taken into account.
- When the pupil is considered well enough to return to school, staff will develop an individually tailored reintegration plan in liaison with the pupil, their parents/carers, the school and other agencies who are actively involved.
- Where the pupil might benefit from a phased return to school the staff may plan to reduce their own input by the number of hours that the pupil is expected to attend school.

11. Equal Opportunities

- We will strive to ensure that equal opportunities are fundamental to our assessment of circumstances and to the service provided, recognising strengths and addressing areas of difficulty on an individual basis.
- We aim to provide an education comparable to that available in school, including a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils with long-term or recurring medical conditions will have a Support Plan.
- We will ensure that all pupils with protected rights such as:
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage or civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Sex (gender)
 - Age

Will be taken into account in relation to pupils whose characteristics may influence their ability to be able to attend school.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.