

Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

Tewkesbury C of E Primary School & Pre-School



Approved by:	Governing Board
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Where the terms 'organisation' or 'school' are used throughout this policy, they include Tewkesbury C of E School and Tewkesbury C of E Pre-School. They also include the school's own extended services of Breakfast Club and Afterschool Club.

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

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

Tewkesbury C of E Primary School aims to ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows, to enable them to reach their full potential.

Due to the nature of their health needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into school as soon as they are well enough.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not in school 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
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2013) 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'

3. The responsibilities of the school

3.1 If the school makes arrangements

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

The headteacher and SENDCo will be responsible for making and monitoring these arrangements. A meeting will be made with parents/carers to discuss arrangements for working from home or hospital. A plan will be drawn up detailing agreed actions from the discussion, the plan will be signed by school and parents/carers. The plan will then be carried out to deliver education to the child.

Arrangements could include sending work home, attending a hospital school or a Teaching Assistant may attend the home to deliver lessons. Work will be prepared by class teachers.

The pupil will be slowly integrated back into school, with special arrangements to make it possible – such as alternative provision for break or lunch times, or a reduced timetable – until the pupil's health needs have been met.

3.2 If the Local Authority (LA) makes arrangements

If the school cannot make suitable arrangements, Gloucestershire LA will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.

Where a child cannot attend school because of health problems which have been confirmed by an appropriate professional, and that child would not otherwise receive a suitable full-time education, the LA is responsible for arranging such an education.

The law does not define full-time education but children with health needs should have provision which is equivalent to the education they would receive at school. Where full time education would not be in the best interests of a child for reasons relating to their physical or mental health, LAs should provide part time education on a basis they consider to be in the child's best interests.

The LA should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a pupil 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 pupils 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 pupils in arranging provision
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs and ensure parents/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
- Regularly 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 LA 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 is able to attend school rather than whether the child is receiving a suitable education during that attendance
- Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not 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)

In cases where the LA makes arrangements, the school will:

- Work constructively with the LA, providers, relevant agencies and parents/carers to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil
- Share information with the LA and relevant health services as required
- Help make sure that the provision offered to the pupil is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully
- Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the pupil to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible
- Enable the pupil to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, invitations to school events or work that is set on Showbie)
- Create an individually tailored reintegration plan for each child returning to school
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made

When a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the LA.

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

The school is aware that some pupils will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time, and will always consult with the pupil, 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 of staff who has responsibility for the pupil
- 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 school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the pupil. These may include the following adaptations:

- A personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with the named staff member
- Access to additional support in school
- Online access to some of the curriculum from home
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at school
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue

The school will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage pupils and staff to be encouraging and proactive during the reintegration period.

Following reintegration, the school will:

- Support the LA in seeking feedback from the pupil regarding the effectiveness of the process

3.3 The Governing Board and Headteacher are responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements are in place, and are effectively implemented, for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs
- Ensuring the termly review of the arrangements made for pupils 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 pupils are clear and understood by all
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs are appropriately trained
- Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with healthcare needs, and who liaises with parents/carers, pupils, the LA, key workers and others involved in such pupil's care. This role is fulfilled by the Pastoral Lead (or other designated members of staff).
- Providing teachers who support pupils with health needs with suitable information relating to a pupil's health condition, and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil
- Notifying the LA when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs

3.4 The SENDCo is responsible for:

- Dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school
- Supplying pupil's education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress and outcomes
- Liaising with the headteacher, education providers and parents/carers to determine pupil's programmes of study whilst they are absent from school

The Pastoral Lead will provide a link between pupils and their parents/carers, and the LA

3.5 Teachers and Support Staff are responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate fully and ensuring pupils are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason
- Understanding their role in supporting pupils with health needs and ensuring they attend the required training
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their pupils through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual pupil'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/carers informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in school

4. Absences

- Parents/carers 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/carers to arrange schoolwork as soon as the pupil is able to cope with it, or part-time education at school. 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.
- 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 school year, the named person with responsibility for pupils with health needs (Pastoral Lead) will notify the LA (Education Inclusion team), who will take responsibility for the pupil and their education.
- Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the LA (the Education Inclusion team), to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence.
- For hospital admissions, the SENDCo or Headteacher 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 pupil's education to work together.
- The school will monitor pupil 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 pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where: the pupil has been certified by the school's medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to resume attending school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and neither the pupil nor their parent/carer has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- A pupil unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent and certification from the school's medical officer, even if the LA has become responsible for the pupil's education.

5. Support for pupils

Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the pupil's needs and how these may be best met, with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil. The LA expects the school to support pupils with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to pupils' programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.

- The school will make reasonable adjustments under pupil's individual healthcare plans (IHCPs), in accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

- Pupils 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 pupil's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.
- Whilst a pupil 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, invitations to school events, cards or letters from peers and staff.
- Where appropriate, the school will provide the pupil's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.
- To help ensure a pupil 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;
 - ◊ 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;
 - ◊ Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue.

6. Training

Where necessary, staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a pupil's return to school. Healthcare professionals should be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required that may be required.

Training from the school nursing team or other medical professionals will ensure that staff are confident in their ability to support pupils with additional health needs.

Parents/carers of pupils with additional health needs may provide specific advice but will not be the sole trainer of staff.

LAs have policies and procedures linked to this policy. Schools and families are advised to contact their own responsible LA for further details.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SENDCo. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

Any changes in the policy will be communicated to all members of staff involved in supporting pupils with additional health needs, and to parents/carers and pupils themselves.

8. Definitions

Children who are 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, including Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).
- 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 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 children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

9. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Attendance policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy
- Data protection policy