

Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy



Hazel Oak School

September 2025

To be reviewed July 2026

Agreed by Governors onDate

Signed by.....Chair of Governors

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1. Aims

Hazel Oak 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 understand that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work with the LAs, 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. 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.

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 our school is responsible for when education is being provided by the local authority (LA)

2. Legislation and guidance

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

It's based on the following DFE Guidance from 2013:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needswho-cannot-attend-school> and is also based on guidance provided by our local authority.

- 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'

The following policies support this policy

- Supporting Children with Medical Needs
- Remote Learning Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Accessing Plan
- Managing Medical Conditions and First Aid Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

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 school 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:** a service that acts 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 (such as The Triple Crown Centre) that provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

3. Responsibilities of the school

Initially, our school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver the same high standard of education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- 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 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 pupils with health needs are appropriately trained.

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- 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 children.
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet pupils' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Appointing named members of staff who are responsible for students with healthcare needs and liaise with parents, students, the LA, key workers and others involved in the pupils' care.
- Ensuring the support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual pupil.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting students with health needs.
- Providing teachers who support students with health needs with suitable information relating to a pupils' health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil.
- Providing reports to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils.
- Notifying the LA when a pupil is likely to be away from school for a significant period of time due to their health needs.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- In Collaboration with pastoral staff, dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying pupils' education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Liaising with the headteacher, education providers and parents to determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from School.
- Providing a link between pupils and their parents, and the LA.

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 pupils' 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 informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in School.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school where possible.
- Work in partnership with school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide 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.

3.2 If the local authority makes the arrangements

If our school cannot 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, Solihull MBC will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.

When the local authority arranges alternative education, the education should begin as soon as possible, and at the latest by the 6th day of the child's absence from school.

Where full-time education is not in the child's best interest for reasons relating to their physical or mental health, the local authority must arrange part-time education on whatever basis it considers to be in the child's best interests.

In cases where the local authority makes the arrangements, our school will:

- Provide to the local authority, at agreed intervals, the full name and address of any pupils of compulsory school age who are not attending school regularly due to their health needs
- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents/carers to ensure the best outcomes for the child
- Collaborate with the local authority to ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum, including making information available about the curriculum.
- Along with the local authority, regularly review the provision offered to ensure it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education.
- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required.
- When a child has complex or long-term health issues, work with the local authority, parents/carers and the relevant health services to decide how best to meet the child's needs (e.g. through individual support, arranging alternative provision or by them remaining at school, being supported at home and back into school after each absence).
- Help make sure that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully.
- When reintegration is anticipated, work with the local authority to:

- Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the child to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible, including through digital resources
- Enable the child to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, digital learning platforms, social media platforms, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school), and, where appropriate, through educational visits.
- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school, which includes extra support to fill any gaps arising from the absence.
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made.

MANAGING ABSENCES

Parents are advised to contact School on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness. Absences due to illness will be authorised unless school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness. School will provide support to students who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the pupils' parents to arrange schoolwork as soon as the pupil is able to cope with it or part-time education at school.

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 relevant person will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the student and their education.

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

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

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

- The pupil 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.
- 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 Medical Officer, even if the LA has become responsible for the pupils' education.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, school will discuss the pupils' needs and how these may be best met with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil. The LA expects 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. School will make reasonable adjustments under pupils' individual healthcare plans in accordance with the Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy and First Aid Policy.

Students 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, school will work with the provider of the pupils' education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

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

- School newsletters
- Emails
- Invitations to school events
- Where appropriate, school will provide the pupils' education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.

To help ensure a student with additional health needs is able to attend school following an extended period of time, 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

REINTEGRATION

When a student is considered well enough to return to school, and medical advice suggests this is appropriate, school will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the LA.

School will work with the LA when reintegration into school is anticipated to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside school. As far as possible, the pupil will be able to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in school.

If appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in the development of the pupils' 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 student. School will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the pupil.

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

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 and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.

INFORMATION SHARING

It is essential that all information about pupils with health needs is kept up-to-date. To protect confidentiality, all teachers, support and supply staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures, via the agreed school procedures.

RECORD KEEPING

In accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to pupils. Proper record keeping protects both staff and pupils and provides evidence that agreed procedures have been followed. All records will be maintained in line with the Records Management Policy.

TRAINING

Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a pupils return to school. Once a pupils' return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training before the pupils anticipated return. Healthcare professionals should be involved in identifying and agreeing with school the type and level of training required. Training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident in their ability to support pupils with additional health needs.

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

4. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be updated by the school and approved annually by the Governing Board or in light of regulatory changes. Any changes in the Policy will be clearly communicated to all members of staff involved in supporting pupils with additional health needs, and to parents and pupils themselves.

5. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions and First Aid policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy