



Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy

STATUS: NON-STATUTORY

Review Cycle: Annual
School Committee Responsible: School SLT

Date of Last Review: 02/03/2026
Date of Next Review: Spring 2027



1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- The school fulfils its statutory obligation to ensure that suitable education is arranged for students on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs (physical or mental).
- Students, staff and parents/carers understand what the school is responsible for, particularly when education is being transitioned to or provided by the Local Authority (LA).
- The **student's voice** is central to the planning of their education and reintegration.
- Social and emotional links to the school community are maintained to prevent isolation.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of 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 students at school with medical conditions'
- Local Authority (e.g. AfC) guidance.

3. The responsibilities of the school

3.1 Internal School Arrangements

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

- **Coordination:** The SENCo, Head of Year (HoY), and link SLT will liaise with parents/carers, medical practitioners and school staff to put in place arrangements for continuity of learning.
- **Individual Assessment:** Every case is assessed individually. We recognise that "health needs" encompass both physical and mental health conditions.
- **Work Delivery:** The HoY/Tutor will ensure appropriate work is sent home, usually via Google Classroom, or to hospital schools.
- **Wellbeing & Connection:** Beyond academic work, the Tutor will facilitate "social links" (e.g., invitations to events, or messages from staff and peers) to ensure the student feels part of the community.
- **Monitoring:** The HoY and Tutor will monitor engagement and conduct weekly wellbeing checks with the student/family to adjust the workload as health fluctuates.
- **Records:** All communication and interventions will be recorded on CPOMS.
- **Reintegration:** The Senco, link SLT and Head of year will also be responsible for ensuring a supported reintegration of the student back into school after an extended period of illness. Again, this will include close liaison with parents/carers, attendance link SLT, form tutor, Subject Leaders, teachers and the LA. When a student returns to school after an extended period of absence due to ill health, the Head of Year and tutor will closely monitor the student for one school term and support their settling back into their learning and school life.

3.2 Responsibility of the Local Authority

If the school cannot make suitable arrangements, or if the absence is prolonged, the LA becomes responsible under Section 19 for students of compulsory school age.

- **The 15-Day Trigger:** The school will notify the LA when a student has been absent for 10 consecutive days and will formalise the referral once the student has missed 15 days due to health needs.
- **Medical Evidence:** Referrals to the LA/AfC generally require evidence from a senior medical professional (Consultant or Mental Health Practitioner). The school will support

parents in gathering this evidence where GP support alone is deemed insufficient by the LA.

- **Criteria for LA Referral:**

- The young person's health has significantly reduced their ability to access their home school full time and absence exceeds 15 consecutive or cumulative days.
- A change in medical advice or medication has meant that a young person requires increased medical review, intervention, support or flexibility to allow them to attend education full time.
- The student is transitioning back from a Tier 4 Mental Health Service and requires on-going support before full time reintegration to school.

- **Collaborative Working: In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, the school will:**

- share curriculum plans and exam requirements with the LA/Alternative Provider and apply for Exam Access Arrangements (e.g., rest breaks, 25% extra time) as early as possible.
- help make sure that the provision offered to the student is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully.

3.2 Reintegration

We recognise that returning to school after a health crisis is a vulnerable period. When reintegration is anticipated:

- **The Plan:** An Individually Tailored Reintegration Plan will be co-created with the student, parents, and medical professionals.
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** This may include:
 - A phased return (shorter days or fewer subjects).
 - A "Time-Out" card or access to a designated "Safe Space" (e.g., the SEND hub, LRC).
 - Late starts/early finishes to avoid crowded corridors.
- **Post-Return Monitoring:** The HoY and Tutor will closely monitor the student for one full school term after their return.
- **Further Support:** If the student struggles to sustain their return, the school will make referrals to in-school support or outside agencies in consultation with the SENCo and link SLT and consider whether any further reasonable adjustments need to be made.

4. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Headteacher, and approved by SLT.

5. Links to other policies

This policy works alongside the following school policies:

- School Attendance Policy - ensuring medical or AP provision is coded correctly
- Accessibility Policy and Plan
- SEND Policy and Information Report
- Support for Students with Medical Conditions Policy (including First Aid Policy)
- Mental health policy
- Equality Statement and Objectives
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy