

Aylesford School

Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

Ratified/Reviewed by...	Date	Date to be reviewed
LGB	September 2024	September 2025

Statement of Intent

Aylesford School aims to work closely with the Local Authority (LA) to ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to health/medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their health/medical condition allows, so that they reach their full potential. Due to the nature of their health/medical needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should experience their education within school and the preferred 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 attending school and will work with the LA, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with health/medical needs receive the right level of support.

Legal Framework

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'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Legislation and Guidance

The statutory guidance from the Department for Education (2013) states that Local Authorities;

- Must arrange suitable full-time education (or as much education as the child's health condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education
- Should provide such education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative.
- They should liaise with appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the child
- Must ensure that the education children receive is of good quality, as defined in the statutory guidance 'Alternative Provision' (2013), allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from slipping behind their peers in school and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.

- Must address the needs of individual children in arranging provision. 'Hard and fast' rules are inappropriate: they may limit the offer of education to children with a given condition and prevent their access to the right level of educational support, which they are well enough to receive.

Strict rules that limit the offer of education a child receives may also breach statutory requirements.

Provision for siblings

When treatment of a child's condition means that his or her family have to move nearer to a hospital, and there is a sibling of compulsory school age, the local authority into whose area the family has moved should seek to ensure that the sibling is offered a place, where provision is available, for example, in a local mainstream school or other appropriate setting.

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 or school refusal
- Progressive conditions
- Terminal illnesses
- Chronic illnesses

Responsibilities of the local authority (LA)

LAs are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. This applies whether or not the child is on the roll of a school and whatever type of school they attend, including pupils in Academies. Where full-time education would not be in the best interests of a particular child, because of 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 Local Authority are responsible for:

- Supporting pupils aged 5-16 who live in Kent and who are temporarily unable to attend school for health-related reasons or severe anxiety for at least 15 days.
- Providing a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs. In Kent this is accessed via the Health Needs Education Service: 01622 696645
- A team of qualified and experienced teachers and teaching assistants working closely with schools to support a suitable education programmes for pupils. Provision should be reviewed regularly and staff liaise with school, health professionals and other supporting agencies to plan and support the pupil's needs.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body Governors are responsible for:

Ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their health 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 health 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.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Working with the Governors 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 a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with healthcare needs and liaising with parents, pupils, the local authority, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care. Chayla Duff (SENCO) and David Wight (DSL lead) are the allocated members of staff.
- Ensuring the support put in place focuses on, and meets the needs of, individual pupils. Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs.
- 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.
- Providing reports to the Governors on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils.
- Notifying the local authority when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs.

Responsibilities of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

The SENCo, alongside the Headteacher, is responsible for:

- Dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of health 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.
- Keeping pupils informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Providing a link between pupils and their parents, and the local authority.

Responsibilities of the Class Teachers and Support Staff

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 informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible.
- Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's health needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

Support for Pupils To help ensure a pupil with additional health needs is able to attend school

Following an extended period of absence, the following adaptations may be considered:

- In response to anxiety-related non-attendance, request support external agencies, such as School Nursing, CAMHs, PIAS, or ABSA consultation with an Educational Psychologist.
- A personalised or part-time timetable drafted in consultation with the Headteacher, SENCo and Class Teacher
- Access to additional support in school, as appropriate
- Online access to the curriculum from home
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms where possible

- Places to rest at school, including playtime provision
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually as recommended by the Department for Education. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Character Education Trust