Aylesford School

Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

Ratified/Reviewed by…	Date	Date to be reviewed
Local Governing Committee	July 2026	July 2027

1. Statement of Intent

Aylesford School is committed to ensuring that all pupils who are unable to attend school due to health or medical needs continue to receive a suitable education. We work closely with the Local Authority (LA), healthcare professionals, parents, and carers to ensure that appropriate educational provision is made for pupils absent for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. Provision will be provided as early as possible, ideally by the sixth day of absence, and will be tailored to the child's individual health and learning needs. We aim to reintegrate pupils into school as soon as they are well enough, with suitable reintegration support.

2. Legal Framework

This policy complies with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2023) 'Ensuring a good education for children with health needs who cannot attend school'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Aylesford School policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

3. Definitions

Children unable to attend school due to health needs may include those with:

- Physical health issues
- Physical injuries
- Mental health conditions, including anxiety or depression
- Emotional difficulties or school refusal
- Progressive or chronic conditions
- Terminal illnesses

4. Responsibilities of the Local Authority (Kent County Council)

- Has a statutory duty under **Section 19 of the Education Act 1996** to arrange suitable education for children unable to attend school due to illness or health needs.
- Ensures education is appropriate to the child's **age, ability, aptitude, and any SEND**, and is full-time where health allows.
- Maintains oversight of pupils absent for **15 school days or more** (consecutive or cumulative) due to health needs and determines whether LA intervention is required.

- Ensures designated officers are responsible for arranging education for children unable to attend school because of health needs.
- Assesses whether the school is providing suitable education and arranges alternative provision where this is not possible.
- Commissions and oversees appropriate alternative provision, including specialist services where required for medical or health reasons.
- Works collaboratively with schools, parents/carers, health professionals and relevant agencies to ensure provision meets the child's changing needs.
- Arranges educational provision as quickly as possible to minimise disruption to learning during periods of extended absence.
- Regularly reviews educational arrangements to ensure they remain suitable, proportionate and in the child's best interests, while supporting reintegration when appropriate.
- Ensures children with **Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)** receive appropriate consideration, including arranging an early annual review where prolonged absence makes this necessary.

5. Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring suitable arrangements are in place to support pupils unable to attend school due to health needs
- Reviewing the effectiveness of these arrangements at least termly
- Ensuring clarity in the roles and responsibilities of all staff involved
- Overseeing reintegration planning for pupils returning after absence
- Ensuring robust systems are in place for managing medical emergencies both on and off site
- Ensuring staff supporting pupils with health needs are appropriately trained

6. Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring statutory compliance with duties to support pupils with health needs
- Appointing named members of staff to coordinate support (currently: SENCo and Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Liaising with the LA, families, and medical professionals to initiate timely educational provision
- Ensuring arrangements are clearly communicated to and understood by all stakeholders
- Ensuring the needs of individual pupils guide the support put in place
- Arranging appropriate training for staff
- Providing relevant information to teaching staff about pupils' health conditions, including impacts on learning or medication effects
- Reporting to the governing body on the effectiveness of provision
- Notifying the LA when a pupil is likely to be absent long-term due to health needs

7. Responsibilities of the SENCo and pastoral teams

The SENCo is responsible for:

- Coordinating support for pupils with health needs
- Monitoring academic progress and readiness for reintegration
- Ensuring Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) or support plans are developed where needed
- Liaising with external providers, families, and staff regarding educational provision
- Facilitating peer contact and inclusion in school life while absent
- Acting as a link between home, school, and the LA

8. Responsibilities of Class Teachers and Support Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Understanding and maintaining confidentiality regarding pupils' health needs
- Making reasonable adjustments to lessons and activities
- Ensuring inclusion in school life wherever possible
- Attending training on medical conditions and relevant support strategies
- Being alert to the needs of pupils and how their condition may affect learning
- Contributing to reintegration plans upon a pupil's return
- Maintaining communication with families regarding pupil progress and wellbeing

9. Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Support their child's regular attendance when well enough
- Notify the school promptly of absences and medical updates
- Provide medical evidence or updates as requested
- Engage with the school and LA to plan support and reintegration
- Attend meetings and reviews related to their child's education and health provision

10. Educational Support and Provision

Where a child is absent for health reasons:

- The school will liaise with the Health Needs Education Service (HNES) to facilitate provision
- Work will be coordinated between the school and LA tutors
- Access to online learning platforms may be offered
- Reasonable adjustments (e.g. part-time timetables, flexible seating, reduced curriculum) will be implemented as appropriate
- The school will maintain regular contact with the pupil and their family

11. Reintegration Support

To support reintegration, the school may:

- Use a phased return with a reduced timetable
- Provide designated rest areas and pastoral support

- Offer emotional support or counselling
- Arrange movement of classes to accessible rooms if needed
- Use IHPs to coordinate support from staff and external agencies
- Implement special arrangements for assessments and exams (in line with JCQ guidelines)

12. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy is reviewed annually by the SENCo and Headteacher. The governing body will approve the policy and monitor its implementation. The school will maintain records of:

- The number of pupils referred for support
- The type and quality of provision arranged
- Outcomes, including progress and reintegration success