

Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy



Written by Heidi White, SENCo
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To be reviewed October 2024

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 understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the Education Act 1996.

It also based on guidance provided by our local authority.

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-attendance-or-exclusion/>

2.1 Background

From January 2013, statutory guidance has sought to clarify the role of the Local Authority in relation to children who cannot attend school for medical reasons:

Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who - because of illness or other reasons - would not receive suitable education without such provision. This applies to all children of compulsory school age who are resident in the local authority area, whether or not they are on the roll of a school, and whatever type of school they attend.

2.2 Alternative Provision

A guide for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, and Governing Bodies of Schools, Pupil Referral Units and other providers of Alternative Provision - with effect from 1st January 2013.

There will be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the Local Authority - for example

- where the child can still attend school with some support
- where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child or
- where arrangements have been made for the child to be educated in a hospital by an on-site hospital school.

We would not expect the Local Authority to become involved in such arrangements unless it had reason to think that the education being provided to the child was not suitable or, while otherwise suitable, was not full-time or for the number of hours the child could benefit from, without adversely affecting their health. This might be the case where, for example, the child can attend school but only intermittently.

3. Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs. Statutory guidance for local authorities, January 2013

3. The responsibilities of the school

In accordance with paragraphs on alternative provision, it is Buildwas Academy's responsibility to provide suitable education for any child with medical needs in the first instance. This would include students who are absent for longer periods of time. Where possible, this should be full-time educational provision, however, where medical needs dictate, full-time provision may not be appropriate for all students. The Head of School will be responsible for co-ordinating the schoolwork for the child, with the assistance of the relevant class teacher. Shropshire Local Authority can provide advice to the school to help them find suitable support for each child.

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 Head of School, working with the child's class teacher, will

- 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 their class blog)
- Create suitably tailored lessons for the child to complete at home.

Where the school is not providing suitable education, the Local Authority will challenge that school to do so.

3.2 If the local authority makes arrangements

If the school can't make suitable arrangements, Shropshire Council will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.

This applies to:

- Students who are enrolled in schools within Shropshire Council, except those who are in care to another authority, those with an Educational, Health and Care Plan and are resident in another authority
- Students in care to Shropshire Council or Telford and Wrekin Council
- Students resident in Shropshire Council or Telford and Wrekin Council with an Educational, Health and Care Plan and are educated outside of Telford and Wrekin.

The law does not specify the point during a child's illness when it becomes the Local Authority's responsibility to secure suitable full-time education for the child. Schools would usually provide support to children who are absent from school because of illness for a shorter period, for example when experiencing chicken pox or influenza. In some cases, where a child is hospitalised, the hospital may provide education for the child within their setting and the Local Authority would not need to arrange any additional education, provided it is satisfied that the child is receiving education. More generally, Local Authorities should be ready to take responsibility for any child whose illness will prevent them from attending school for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, and where suitable education is not otherwise being arranged.

Furthermore, this guidance also states that, 'the Local Authority should:

- Have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs, and parents should know who that person is.
- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards children with additional health needs. The policy should make links with related services in the area - for example, Special Educational Needs and Disability Services (SEND), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Education Welfare/Attendance Improvement Services, educational psychologists, and, where relevant, school nurses.
- Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education.
- Have clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.'

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

- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil
- Share information with the local authority 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.

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 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 internet links to lessons from their school)
- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made.

4. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by Heidi White, SENCo. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

5. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions