Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

Policy Details	
Policy Title:	Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy
Last amendment date:	June 2026
Owner:	Director of Inclusion
Approved by:	Standards Committee and LGBs (Individual school policies)
Next review date:	July 2027

Rationale and Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for pupils who cannot attend school due to health needs
- Pupils, staff and parents/guardians understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority
- This policy reflects the requirements of the Education Act 1996.
- It is also based on guidance provided by each local authority; Bexley, Lewisham, Southwark

Scope

This is an aligned policy; it applies to all Haberdashers' Academies Trust South schools. The scope of the term "Health needs" refers to:

- "Physical health needs"
- "Severe mental health needs"
- "Medical conditions"
- "Chronic illness"
- "Intermittent absence due to medical treatment"
- "Hospitalisation"
- "Recovery and rehabilitation"

Implementation

Responsibilities of the school

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide alternative provision when a pupil is not able to attend school due to medical needs. This is applicable to students who are of statutory school age who cannot attend school due to their medical needs and have missed 15 days or more of school.

In the first instance, it is the school's responsibility to work with families where a student has a medical need to make appropriate arrangements for learning to continue. This could be temporary and managed between school and family or through an alternative provider.

1. The education setting should consider developing an Individual Healthcare Plan
2. The education setting should consider whether an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) is needed if the child/young person has Special Educational Needs arising from a medical condition. If so this should be coordinated with an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP).
3. If the child/young person has a disability, the education setting should consider what reasonable adjustments may need to be made
4. The education setting should assess whether further staff training is needed

If the child or young person is likely to be absent for 15 days or more:

- The education setting should inform the Local Authority and discuss arrangements for education in an alternative setting (for example hospital or home education)
- The child/young person must not be removed from the roll without parental or medical consent

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.

This could involve a number of strategies in collaboration between school and home. For example:

- Part time timetables introduced to reduce the workload of a full school week
- Work could be arranged to be sent home for students to maintain pace with work in school
- Students could access lesson resources via the Virtual Learning Environment
- A blended learning package may be considered

If school and home are able to come to short term, local arrangements, this will be organised in communication between the two. This will only be the case if the need for some form of remote learning was temporary.

When students are ready to return to school, reintegration and phased return timetables could be considered. This could involve a gradual increase in the amount of time spent in school proportionate to the needs of the student.

Enquiries regarding alternative provision for students who have a medical need should be directed to the school.

- The Inclusion Lead will be responsible for managing and maintaining the needs
- The school would consider sending work home/contact the local authority to discuss hospital school
- We will arrange a meeting with parents to communicate the plan
- The Inclusion Lead will arrange a reintegration meeting to discuss the reintegration plan when the child comes back to school

If the Local Authority makes arrangements

If the school cannot make suitable arrangements, *the Local Authority* will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children. Provision will be made in accordance with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996." Suitable education means efficient education suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs.

The school will make a referral to the Local Authority with a copy of the student's attendance record, medical evidence and any other required documentation. A referral will be considered if a student has been absent from school for 15 days or longer.

Alternative providers may deliver tuition directly to the pupil in groups or on a one to one basis. This may be in the home or other suitable location, or online. School work delivered is usually provided by the child's school and a reintegration plan is coordinated in partnership with health professionals.

In cases where the Local Authority makes arrangements, the school will:

- Work constructively with the Local Authority providers, relevant agencies and parents/guardians 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
- Liaise with external providers (e.g. Hospital School) to monitor pupil attendance and progress.

Safeguarding responsibilities remain in place during periods of absence in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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.

Communication

This policy will be available publicly on all school and Trust websites. It is also available on the Trust's Habs Hub staff intranet, which is accessible by all Trust employees.

School leaders will ensure that relevant staff are made aware of these procedures at the start of each academic year.

Monitoring and evaluation

All arrangements made will be recorded on Arbor and retained in line with the Trust's Data Retention policy.

The fair application of this policy will be monitored through the approving committee.

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- School Accessibility Plans
- Medical Policy
- SEND Policy

- SEND Information Report
- Curriculum Policies
- Keeping Children Safe in Education