

June 2024



Supporting Pupils With  
Medical Conditions  
Who Cannot Attend  
School

**HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST  
AMERICAN LANE, HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE. PE29 1TQ**

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## **Contents**

- 1 Policy Statement and Principles
- 2 Legal framework
- 3 Local Authority (LA) duties
- 4 Definitions
- 5 Responsibilities
- 6 Managing absences
- 7 Support for students
- 8 Reintegration
- 9 Record Keeping
- 10 Training
- 11 Examinations and Assessment

# **Children with health needs who cannot attend school Policy**

## **1. Policy Statement and Principles**

Horizons Education Trust aims to support the Local Authority to ensure that all students who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows, to enable them to reach their full potential.

Due to the nature of their health needs, some students may be admitted to hospital or provided education provision supported at home with advice from healthcare professionals. In some cases, Remote Learning may be an option.

We recognize that, whenever possible, students should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into school if they reach a point where they are well enough to do so.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a student's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work with Parents, the local authority, healthcare professionals to ensure that all pupils with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

## **2. 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 school policies:
  - Attendance Policy
  - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
  - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
  - Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and First Aid Policy

## **3. Local Authority (LA) Duties**

- The LA must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The school has a duty to support them in doing so.
- The LA should provide such education as soon as it is clear that a student will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, and liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil.

- Ensure the education students receive is of good quality, allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind their peers in school, and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
  - Address the needs of individual students in arranging provision.
  - Have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs and ensure parents know who this is.
  - Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards children with additional health needs.
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school Policy
- 3. Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education.
  - Give clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.

#### **4. Definitions**

Students who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs may include those with:

- Physical health issues
  - Physical injuries
  - Mental health conditions
    - Emotional difficulties or school refusal
  - Progressive conditions
  - Terminal illnesses.
  - Chronic illnesses
- Students who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend any of the following:
- Hospital school - a special school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment in hospital if this is deemed appropriate.
  - Home tuition - many LAs have home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and pupils on occasions where pupils are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment.
  - Medical PRUs - these are LA establishments that provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

#### **5. Responsibilities**

##### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting students 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 students' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
  - Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for students with healthcare needs and liaises with parents, pupils, the LA, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care.
  - When parents have identified that children are too unwell to attend school, the there will be liaison with the family first, to establish the medical basis for that

opinion. The Head Teacher with consent will liaise with the NHS Community Paediatrician for guidance and gain information relating to a pupil's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil.

- Actively monitoring student progress and reintegration into school.
- Support any education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress and how to measure education outcomes.
  
- Keep pupil's informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.

### **Teachers and support staff responsibilities:**

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- Design and plan lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to support education inclusion as far as possible.
  - Understanding their role in supporting students with health needs and the importance of maintaining training updates.
  - Ensuring the respect for the pupil and parents with confidentiality and information sharing.
- Ensuring they are aware of the health care plan and follow emergency protocols and respond quickly to get an ambulance in an emergency.
- Keep parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school.

### **Parents**

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school when possible.
- Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child both short and longer term.
- 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 medical needs to keep the child safe and the health professional contacts.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

## **6. Managing absences**

Our policy provides a framework of dialogue with parents and sensitivities in relation to absences from school. We treat every pupil as an individual and within our approach try to maximize education delivery.

- Parents are advised to contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.
- Absences due to illness will be authorized unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.
  - For a period of less than 15 school days absence the school will liaise with the parents to arrange schoolwork or activities as soon as the pupil is able to cope with it or part-time education at school. The school will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritized in consultation with the pupil when possible, their family and relevant members of staff.
  - For hospital admissions, the school will liaise with the Case worker for Local Authority regarding the programme that should be followed while the student is in

hospital.

- The school will monitor student attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a student is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school. If required the case may be referred to the Local Authority attendance officer for guidance.

- A Pupil unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent and Paediatrician advice, even if the LA has become responsible for the pupil's education.

## **7. Support for students**

- In cases of complex or long-term health issues, the school will discuss the pupil needs with parents and how these may be best met in discussion with the LA, relevant medical professionals and, where appropriate, the pupil.

- The LA expects the school to support students with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to students' programme of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.

- The school will make reasonable adjustments under students' education healthcare plans (EHCPs) and monitor outcomes as part of that process.

- Pupils admitted to hospital will receive education as deemed appropriate by the medical professionals and in some cases the hospice.

- During a period of absence, the school will work with the provider of the pupil's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

- Whilst a pupil is away from school, the school will consider Remote Learning.

- To help ensure a student with additional health needs is able to attend school following an extended period of absence, the following adaptations will be considered:

- A part-time timetable.

- additional support in school

- Online access to the curriculum from home (Remote Learning- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms

- Places to rest at school / rest breaks

- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue.

## **8. Reintegration back into school**

- When a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a reintegration plan.

- The school will work with the LA when reintegration into school is anticipated to plan for consistent provision.

- If appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in the development of the student's reintegration plan and informed of the timeline of the plan by the school.

- The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to access to the school and the curriculum for the student.

- For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the pupil's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill pupil or their parents in the early stages of absence.

- The school is aware that some pupils will need gradual reintegration and will always consult with the Pupil, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.

The reintegration plan will include:

- Date for planned reintegration, once known.
- Dates of follow up meetings to discuss success of reintegration or issues arising.
- Details of the named member of staff who has responsibility for the pupil.
- Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved.
- Amended EHC Plan with small goals leading up to reintegration.

## **9. Record Keeping**

In accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to students. Staff will follow Administration of medicines training from a health care professional.

## **10. Training**

- Staff will be trained in a timely manner by a health care professional from NHS to assist with a pupil return to school.
  - Once a student's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training and assessed for competence by a health care professional before the student's anticipated return.
  - Healthcare professionals should be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required.
  - Training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident and competent in their ability to support pupils with additional health needs.
  - Parents of students with additional health needs may provide specific advice but cannot be the sole trainer of school staff for insurance purposes on a school site for a regulated school activity on or off a school site.

## **11. Examinations and Assessment**

- The named member of staff will liaise with the alternative provision provider over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate.
- Relevant assessment information will be provided to the alternative provision provider if required.
- Awarding bodies may make special arrangements for students with permanent or long-term disabilities and learning difficulties, or temporary disabilities and illnesses. Applications for such arrangements will be assessed and submitted by the school.



Policy agreed on: June 2024

Signed on behalf of the Trustees Kim Taylor

Committee: Teaching, Learning & Welfare

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Website Y/N