



Moorlands Schools Federation

# Children With Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

Date of approval – January 2026

Date of review – January 2027

Approval level - LGB

Responsibility for preparation – Headteacher/SENDCo and Inclusion Lead

Review Date	Summary of amendments made
28.01.26	No amendments required.

## **Policy Statement and Principles**

Moorlands Schools Federation aims to ensure that all pupils 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 pupils may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision.

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

We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within 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.

## **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:

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

## **Definitions**

Pupils 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

Pupils 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
- Home tuition – many Local Authorities 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. In BANES this service is provided by HERS (Hospital Education and Reintegration Service).

## **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 pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, and liaise with the appropriate medical professional to ensure minimal delay in arranging provision for the pupil.
- Ensure the education pupils 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 pupils 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 arrangement to comply with their legal duty towards children with additional health needs.
- 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.

## **Responsibilities**

Headteacher:

- Work collaboratively with parents and other professional to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of children.
- Ensure the arrangements put in place to meet pupils' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.

- Appoint a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with healthcare needs and liaises with parents, pupils, the LA, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care.

Teachers and support staff, with the support from the Inclusion Lead:

- Understand confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- Design 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.
- Understand their role in supporting pupils with health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Ensure they are aware of the needs of their pupils through appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual pupil's health needs.
- Ensure they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and know what to do 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 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 medical needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

## **Managing absences**

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 authorised unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The Deputy Head and Inclusion Lead will arrange support for pupils who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the pupil's parents to arrange schoolwork 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 prioritised in consultation with the pupil, their family and relevant members of staff.

Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the LA enabling education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence.

For hospital admissions, the Inclusion Lead/delegated member of staff will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital.

The school will monitor pupil attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a pupil is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school.

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

## **Support for pupils**

Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the pupil's needs and how these may be best met with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil. These will be recorded in a Medical Health Care Plan.

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

The school will make reasonable adjustments under pupils' Education, Health and Care Plans, where appropriate.

Pupils admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital concerned.

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 work using methods which meet the individual pupil's learning needs, including but not limited to Class Dojo and Zoom, along with phone calls and home visits, as appropriate.

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

- A personalised or part-time timetable drafted in consultation with the named staff member
- Access to additional support in school
- Online access to the curriculum from home
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at school
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue.

## **Reintegration**

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

The school will work with the LA when reintegration into school is anticipated to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside school.

As far as possible, the child will be able to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in school.

If appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in the development of the pupil's reintegration plan and informed of the timeline plan by the Inclusion Lead, to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the pupil.

The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the pupil.

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 their absence.

The reintegration plan will include:

- The date for the planned reintegration, once known
- Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration
- Details of the named member of staff who has responsibility for the pupil
- Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration
- Follow up procedures.

The school will promote a welcoming environment and encourage pupils and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration process.

## **Record Keeping**

In accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to pupils.

## **Training**

Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a pupil's return to school.

Once a pupil's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training before the pupil'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 in their ability to support pupils with additional health needs.

Parents of pupils with additional health needs may provide specific advice but will not be sole trainer of staff.

## **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 pupils with permanent or long-term disabilities and learning difficulties, or temporary disabilities and illnesses. Applications for such arrangements will be submitted by the school.