



**CHILDREN WITH HEALTH NEEDS THAT
CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL**

OLD PALACE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Children with Health Needs that Cannot Attend School Policy

1. Introduction

Old Palace Primary School aims to support the local authority and ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to health needs, continue to have access to as full an education as their medical condition allows.

Some children, due to the nature of their health needs, may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their school and will work with the provision to reintegrate pupils back into school, as soon as their health allows.

The school will continue to have a role in the pupil's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work with the local authority, healthcare partners and families to ensure that they receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

2. 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.

3. Role of the School and Local Authority

The Department for Education (DfE, 2013) specifies that schools should usually provide support to children who are absent because of illness for a shorter period, for example when experiencing chicken pox or influenza. Where a child is hospitalised, the hospital will normally provide education for the child within the hospital and the Local authority (LA) will not need to arrange any additional education provided that it is satisfied that the child is receiving suitable education.

When a child's ill health prevents them attending school for 15 or more school days - whether consecutively in one absence or intermittently over the course of a school year - and where suitable education is not otherwise being arranged, the LA is required to take responsibility.

4. The Role and Responsibilities of the Local Authority

The Local Authority must:

Arrange suitable full-time education (or as much education as the child's health condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Unless the pupil's condition means that full-time provision would not be in his or her best interests.

The Local authority should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the child.

- Ensure that the education children receive is of good quality, as defined in the statutory guidance Alternative Provision (2013), allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from slipping behind their peers in school and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- Address the needs of individual children in arranging provision. 'Hard and fast' rules are inappropriate: they may not limit the offer of education to children with a given condition and prevent their access to the right level of educational support which they are well enough to receive. Strict rules that limit the offer of education a child receives may also breach statutory requirements.
- When treatment of a child's condition means that his or her family have to move nearer to a hospital, and there is a sibling of compulsory school age, the local authority into whose area the family has moved should seek to ensure that the sibling is offered a place, where provision is available, for example, in a local mainstream school or other appropriate setting

The Local authority should also:

- 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.
- Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education.

The LA employs a Primary Advisor for Children with Disabilities and/or Complex Medical Conditions. They should be consulted about how education could be maintained in a mainstream context when a child has a health condition. They can help by:

- Advising on how to access aids and technological support
- Arranging training for staff
- Sharing best practice and experiences of other schools
- Overseeing a programme of mainstream support that addresses any health concerns
- Overseeing a programme of mainstream support following reintegration from hospital or alternative provision while health concerns persist.
- Ensuring that there are good links between the hospital school, relevant health care professionals and LBTH schools where necessary

The Role of the School Nurse and Attendance & Welfare Service

The school nursing service provides advice to schools, children and their families on health issues, and individual interventions with children who have chronic illness or health problems. The service includes promoting the physical, social and emotional health of all children and the identification, monitoring and support of vulnerable children, including those whose welfare and safety may be at risk.

Sometimes reasons for absence are not clear-cut. If there is an apparent health issue, a referral will be made to the School Nurse, who will carry out a health assessment with the consent of the parents.

In accordance with Local Authority criteria, schools must refer children who are absent for a period of 10 school days for illness and medical reasons to the Attendance & Welfare Advisor (AWA) who will then seek to further investigate the reasons for the child's absence.

Upon being alerted that a child has been absent from school or has ongoing poor punctuality due to

having additional health needs, the AWA will explore the support that the school may be able to offer. In those cases where the additional needs cannot be met by the school, the AWA will undertake an assessment using the Early Help Assessment(EHA) form or a review (if the child already has one in place) in partnership with the child, their parents/carers, the school and other agencies/professionals involved with the child, including medical practitioners.

Following this, the completed EHA Form will be submitted to the Social Inclusion Panel (SIP) for consideration for appropriate provision and/or support for the child in light of their additional health needs in order to seek to minimise the impact upon their education. The AWA will continue to be involved in reviewing and supporting the child's progress for as long as is required.

Pupils with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP)

Educational provision for children with EHCPs who cannot attend school because of illness is arranged by the Special Educational Needs panel. This provision would normally be home tuition provided by the PRU, but the panel also has access to other types of provision.

In the case of illness lasting longer than 15 days, the school should hold an Interim Review and submit the review report to the SEN panel. In the case of planned hospital admissions where a period of home tuition is requested, the interim review meeting should be held and a request submitted to the panel in advance of the expected admission; it should include the dates of hospital admission and expected length of the period of home tuition, so as to enable planning to take place in advance of the child's admission.

Requests should be submitted to the school's SEN caseworker and will be given priority.

The Role of the PRU (London East Alternative Provision)

Once the SIP or SEN panel has agreed that alternative provision is necessary, Pupil Admissions will commissioned provision with the PRU.

Tower Hamlets PRU is a multi-site school providing alternative provision for children who, for a variety of reasons, are not attending mainstream school place. This includes the school at the Royal London Hospital, which works with over 500 children in a year, and a tuition service for children who, for health reasons (including mental health) are unable to attend schools.

The PRU is responsible for overseeing the education of children unable to attend school for health reasons and for ensuring that staff providing education for children with health needs have suitable training and support and are properly briefed on the condition and its impact.

The PRU's Individual Tuition Coordinator will:

- Allocate a tutor
- Assume the role of Lead Practitioner
- Consult with the child's home school on a suitable programme of study, one which maintains continuity and enables progress
- Consult with the child's family on most appropriate venues for the tuition
- Ensure delivery of tuition and assure its quality
- Report the child's progress to both the family and the home school and other involved professionals
- Maintain awareness of the child's state of health, in consultation with the PRU school nurse, with a view to supporting their eventual return to their home school or whatever other destination becomes necessary

5. 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 school will provide support to 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 parents and relevant members of staff.
- For periods of absence that are expected to last for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, the SENDCo will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the pupil and their education.
- Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the LA to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence.
- For hospital admissions, the SENDCo will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital.
- The LA will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the pupil which will allow the school, the LA and the provider of the pupil's education to work together.
- 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.
- The school will only remove a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where: The pupil has been certified by the school's medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and Neither the pupil nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- 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 school's medical officer, even if the LA has become responsible for the pupil's education.

6. 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.
- The school will make reasonable adjustments under pupils' individual healthcare plans (IHCPs), in accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.
- 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 with the LA to ensure the pupil can successfully remain in touch with their school using the following methods: School newsletters, Emails, Invitations to school events, cards or letters from peers and staff.
- Where appropriate, the school will provide the pupil's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.
- 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 SENDCo;
 - 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 testing arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue.

7. Reintegration

When medical practitioners, or CAMHS staff in respect of mental health concerns, agree that a child receiving individual tuition is ready to return to their home school (or to an alternative placement) for full time provision, the PRU Individual Tuition Coordinator will provide a detailed written report on the child's engagement with learning and their progress. Where a child has been in the RLH for more than 10 days and medical practitioners discharge them directly to their home school, staff at the RLH School will send to the home school a detailed report on their learning and progress.

A reintegration plan, taking account of any residual impact of the illness or follow up treatment, will be agreed for the child. This will include details of any reasonable adjustments to be made. The school nurse and Advisor for Disabilities and/or Complex Medical Conditions should be informed at this stage so they can offer advice and support where appropriate.

For some pupils, a gradual reintegration over a long period of time may be required and the school will consult with the pupil, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their health needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- Ensuring the termly review of the arrangements made for pupils who cannot attend school due to their health needs.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of pupils are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents, for both on- and off-site activities.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs are appropriately trained.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Working with the Governors to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils with health needs.
- Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with healthcare needs and who will be responsible for liaising with parents, pupils, the local authority, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care.
- Ensuring the support put in place focuses on and meets the needs of individual pupils.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs.
- Notifying the local authority when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs.

The SENDCo is responsible for:

- Liaising with the Headteacher, Phase Leaders, education providers and parents to determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school.
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet pupils' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Providing teachers who support pupils with health needs with suitable information relating to a pupil's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil.
- Supplying pupils' education providers with information about the child's capabilities,

progress and outcomes.

- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school.
- Keeping pupils informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Providing a link between pupils and their parents, and the local authority.

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- Designing 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.
- Understanding their role in supporting pupils with health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their pupils through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual pupil's health needs.
- Ensuring they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and know what to do in an emergency.
- Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school

Parents are expected to:

- 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 health needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be monitored by the SENDCo.

Any changes in the policy will be clearly communicated to all members of staff involved in supporting pupils with additional health needs, and to parents.

10. Definitions

Children 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

Children 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 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.

11. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Attendance policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy