



Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School

December 2023

Next Review: December 2024

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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 (LA).

The Beyond Schools Trust aims to support the Local Authority (LA) and ensure that all students who are unable to attend their Academy due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as full an 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 placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, students should receive their education within their Academy and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate students back into school as soon as they are well enough. Where this is not possible, we will work to provide an appropriate level of education remotely while alternative provision is established.

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

2. Legislation & Guidance

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 Trust policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy

3. Local Authority Duties

The LA must arrange suitable full-time education for students of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The Trust/Academy has a duty to support the LA 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, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, and where suitable education is not otherwise being arranged. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the student.
- 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. Reviewed June 2022
- Address the needs of individual students in arranging provision. 'Hard and fast' rules are inappropriate: they may 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.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of students 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.
- Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the student 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.

The LA should not:

- Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child or young person from getting the right type of provision and a good education.
- Withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a child because of how much it will cost.
- Have policies based upon the percentage of time a child is able to attend school rather than whether the child is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.
- Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not they will arrange education for children or inflexible policies which result in children going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in)

4. Definitions

Students who are unable to attend their Academy 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.

Covid-19 - An underlying condition which would not normally prevent their attendance at school but which causes a particular vulnerability in a time of Covid-19 outbreak.

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 student is receiving treatment.
- **Home tuition:** many LAs have home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and students on occasions where students are too ill to attend their Academy and are receiving specialist medical treatment.
- **Medical PRUs:** these are LA establishments that provide education for students unable to attend their registered school or Academy due to their medical needs. Reviewed June 2022
- **Remote Education:** Provision through the student's own Academy or other provider which is accessed online. This can either take the form of live teaching/tutoring or remotely accessed learning resources.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

The Trust Board is Responsible for:

- Ensuring the Local Governing Body (LGB) fulfil their responsibilities as outlined below.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those throughout the Trust involved in the arrangements to support the needs of students are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring systems across the Trust for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents are robust and fit for purpose.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place across the Trust to implement and quality assure the training of staff with responsibility for supporting students with health needs.
- Approving and reviewing this policy.

The Local Governing Board (LGB) is responsible for:

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

Academy: The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Working with the Local Governing Body (LGB) to ensure 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 students.
- 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, students, the LA, key workers and others involved in the student's care.
- Ensuring the support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual students.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting students with health needs.
- Providing teachers who support students with health needs with suitable information relating to a student's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the student.
- Providing reports to the LGB on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of students.
- Notifying the LA when a student is likely to be away from the Academy for a significant period of time (more than 15 days in one instance or throughout an academic year) due to their health needs

Each Academy will have a named member of staff. They are responsible for:

- Dealing with students who are unable to attend because of medical needs.
- Actively monitoring student progress and reintegration into the Academy.
- Supplying students' education providers with information about their capabilities, progress, and outcomes.
- Liaising with the Headteacher, education providers and parents to determine students' programmes of study whilst they are absent from the Academy.
- Keeping students informed about Academy events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Providing a link between students and their parents, and the LA.

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of students' health needs.
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate fully and ensuring students are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason.
- Understanding their role in supporting students with health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their students through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual student'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 Academy.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the Academy where possible.
- Work in partnership with the Academy to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the Academy of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide the Academy 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.

6. Managing Absences

Parents are advised to contact the Academy on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.

Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the Academy has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The Academy will provide support to students who are absent because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the student's parents to arrange schoolwork remotely as soon as the student is able to cope with it or part-time education at the Academy. The Academy will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the student, their family 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 named person with responsibility for students with health needs will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the student and their education. The Academy will continue to support the student in liaison with the LA as part of their overall plan. Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the Academy will liaise with the LA to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the student's absence.

Effective collaboration between all relevant services (LAs, CAMHS, NHS, the student's Academy and, where relevant, school nurses) is essential to delivering effective education for students with additional health needs. This applies whether the student is in hospital or at home.

When a student is in hospital, liaison between hospital teaching staff, the LA's alternative provision/home tuition service and the student's Academy can ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum. It can ensure that the Academy can make information available about the curriculum and work the student may miss, helping the student to keep up, rather than having to catch up.

The LA will set up a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for the student which will allow the Academy, the LA and the provider of the student's education to work together.

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

The Academy will only remove a student who is unable to attend because of additional health needs from the school roll where:

- The student has been certified by a Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend the Academy, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and
- Neither the student nor their parent has indicated to the Academy the intention to continue to attend the Academy, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

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

7. Support for Students

Where a student has a complex or long-term health issue, the Academy will discuss the student's needs and how these may be best met with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the student.

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

The Academy will make reasonable adjustments under students' Individual Health Care Plans (IHCPs), in accordance with the Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy.

Students 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 Academy will work with the provider of the student's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

Whilst a student is away from their Academy, the Academy will work with the LA to ensure the student can successfully remain in touch with the school using the following methods:

- Academy newsletters
- Emails
- Invitations to Academy events
- Cards or letters from peers and staff.

Where appropriate, the Academy will provide the student's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.

To help ensure a student with additional health needs is able to attend their Academy 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 the Academy
- Online access to the curriculum from home
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at the Academy
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue

8. Reintegration

When a student is considered well enough to return to school, the Academy will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the LA.

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

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

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 appointed named member of staff, to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the student.

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

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

The Academy is aware that some students will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the student, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.

The reintegration plan will include:

- The date for planned reintegration, once known.
- Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration.
- Details of the named member of staff who has responsibility for the student.
- Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved.
- Details of social contacts, including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period.
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration.
- Follow up procedures.

The Academy will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage students and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

Following reintegration, the Academy will support the LA in seeking feedback from the student regarding the effectiveness of the process.

9. Information Sharing

It is essential that all information about students with health needs is kept up to date.

In order to protect confidentiality, all information-sharing techniques, e.g. staff noticeboards/medical files, will be agreed with the student and their parent in advance of being used.

All teachers, TAs, supply, and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures, via the agreed Academy procedures.

Parents will be made aware of their own rights and responsibilities regarding confidentiality and information sharing. To help achieve this, the Academy will:

- Ensure this policy and other relevant policies are easily available and accessible.
- Provide the student and their parents with a copy of the policy on information sharing.
- Ask parents to sign a consent form which clearly details the organisations and individuals that their child's health information will be shared with and which methods of sharing will be used.
- Consider how friendship groups and peers may be able to assist students with health needs.

When a student is discharged from hospital or is returning from other education provision, the Academy will ensure the appropriate information is received to allow for a smooth return to the school. The named member of staff will liaise with the hospital or other tuition service as appropriate.

10. Record Keeping

In accordance with the Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy and Administration of Medicines Policy, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to students.

Proper record keeping protects both staff and students and provides evidence that agreed procedures have been followed.

All records will be maintained in line with the Records Management Policy

11. Training

Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a student's return to school. Once a student's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training before the student's anticipated return.

Healthcare professionals should be involved in identifying and agreeing with the Academy the type and level of training required.

Training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident in their ability to support students with additional health needs.

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

12. Examinations & Assessments

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 submitted by the Academy, or LA if more appropriate, as early as possible.