



Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

Autumn 2025

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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/carers understand what our school is responsible for when education is being provided by the local authority (LA)

2. Legislation and 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 (2023) Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
- Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014
- Alternative provision Statutory Guidance 2025
- Working together to improve school attendance 2024

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Supporting children with medical conditions in schools
- First Aid policy
- Health and safety policy

3. 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:

- Nottingham HOPE Academy
- receiving 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. This is arranged through Nottingham City Local Authority Complex Case Panel

4. Responsibilities of the school

The School Governing Body is responsible for ensuring:

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

- staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs are appropriately trained

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- working with the Governing Body to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils 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 pupils' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon
- appointing 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
- ensuring the support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual pupils
- arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs
- 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
- providing reports to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils
- notifying the Local Authority (LA) when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs

Named member of staff

Southglade Primary and Nursery School have named member of staff who is the SENCo. They are responsible for:

- dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs
- overseeing the use of Individual Healthcare Plans
- actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school
- supplying pupils' education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress and outcomes
- liaising with the Headteacher, education providers and parents to determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school
- keeping pupils informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers
- providing a link between pupils and their parents, and the LA

Staff

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

Parents are expected to:

- ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school where possible
- work in partnership with school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child
- notify school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay
- provide 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

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school, until we can ascertain the anticipated length of absence and the complexity of the illness. The types of education we would look to put in place would include:

- sending work home
- live remote lessons/ virtual sessions
- recorded lessons
- at least weekly check-in with SEND staff
- weekly check-ins with parents/carers
- home welfare visits by SEND staff and/ or attendance staff

When the child has recovered sufficiently and is therefore able to return to school, we will carefully plan the transition using an Individual Healthcare Plan (see Supporting Pupils at school with Medical Conditions policy)

5. Local Authority Duties

The Local Authority must arrange suitable, up to 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 the Local Authority 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. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate 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 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 provides suitable education
- give clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age

If the school can't make suitable arrangements, or the illness is having a longer-term impact, the school will make a referral to Nottingham City Council Complex Case Panel who are commissioned by the Local Authority to provide suitable education for these pupils. If the child becomes dual registered with Nottingham HOPE Academy, then the school will:

- work constructively with Nottingham HOPE Academy relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil
- share information with the Nottingham HOPE Academy 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 and as soon as possible

6. Managing absences

Parents are advised to contact 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 pupil, their parents/carers and relevant members of staff.

Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the Local Authority to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence. For hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the hospital/Local Authority regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital.

The Local Authority will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the pupil which will allow the school, the Local Authority 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 elsewhere.

The school cannot remove a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll without explicit permission from their parents/carers and the Local Authority and where:

- the pupil has been certified by a suitably qualified medical professional as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before 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 suitably qualified medical professional even if the Local Authority has become responsible for the pupil's education.

7. Support for pupils

- Where a pupil has a complex or a long-term health issue, the school will discuss the pupil's needs and how these may be best met with the Local Authority, relevant medical professionals, parents/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil
- The Local Authority 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' individual healthcare plans (HCPs), 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 Local Authority to ensure the pupil can successfully remain in touch with their school

8. Reintegration

When a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the Local Authority and Nottingham HOPE Academy. When reintegration is anticipated, the school will work with Nottingham HOPE Academy 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 reasonably practicable
- 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 which may take the form of an Individual Healthcare Plan
- consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made in line with Equality requirements
- consider whether any reasonable adjustments and control measures are needed to be in place to provide access to the school and the curriculum for the pupil as far as reasonably practicable. As necessary, the school will complete a "Individual Pupil- Site & Curriculum access" risk assessment and refer to the "Medical Needs - Supporting pupils with" risk assessment and school policy on this subject
- 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/carers in the early stages of their absence. The school is aware that some pupils will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the pupil, their parents/carers and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.

9. Information sharing

It is essential that all information about pupils with health needs is kept up-to-date and are confidential. All school staff will have access to relevant information, including high risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures, via the agreed school procedures.

10. Record keeping

In accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to pupils. Effective record keeping protects both staff and pupils and provides evidence that agreed procedures have been followed. All records will be maintained in line with the Records Management and Retention Policy.

11. Training

Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a pupil's return to school. Healthcare professionals will be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required. Parents/carers of pupils with additional health needs may provide specific advice but will not be the sole trainer of staff.

12. Examinations and assessments

The named member of staff will liaise with Nottingham HOPE Academy 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, or Local Authority if more appropriate, as early as possible.

13. Review and Monitoring Arrangements

This policy is reviewed annually by the school and Governing Body.