Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

Senior Leader responsible	Ms E Webb
Date approved by LGB	02/07/2026
Next review date	Summer 2027

1.Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Pupils, staff and parents understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of Education Act 1996 and guidance contained in the Department for Education's Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (December 2023).

It is also based on guidance provided by our local authority: https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/40721/Supporting-young-people-with-medical-conditions

3. Responsibilities of the school

3.1 If the school makes arrangements

The school recognises that children and young people with physical or mental health needs should have access to suitable, high-quality education that is as consistent as their health condition allows. We are committed to working collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers, health professionals, and the local authority to minimise disruption to education and support successful outcomes.

The school will not automatically provide work to pupils where health needs are cited as the reason for absence by the parent/carer. The school may need to request medical evidence that a pupil is unable to attend school (for example in the form of a hospital letter, call from the nursing team, GP letter), prior to putting in place any plans for education off site.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because of a health need, the school will:

- Maintain regular contact with the pupil, parents/carers, relevant professionals, and the local authority, as appropriate
- Work proactively with parents/carers and medical professionals to understand the impact of the pupil's health needs on their education and school attendance
- Share information about the pupil's curriculum, progress, attainment, and support needs with any alternative education provider commissioned by the local authority
- Contribute to the planning, implementation, and review of any education arranged by the local authority for pupils who are unable to attend school for health reasons
- Ensure that pupils remain connected to school life wherever possible, including through pastoral support, communication with staff and peers, and participation in suitable school activities

- Consider reasonable adjustments and support in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the school's policies for supporting pupils with medical conditions and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Monitor the pupil's academic progress and emotional wellbeing throughout any period of absence
- Work with the pupil, parents/carers, health professionals, and the local authority to plan and support a successful reintegration to school when the pupil's health permits
- Develop, where appropriate, an individual reintegration plan which may include a phased return, adapted timetable, pastoral support, and reasonable adjustments to meet the pupil's needs.

Attendance registers will be maintained in accordance with statutory requirements.

Where it becomes evident that a pupil is likely to be absent from school for 15 school days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, due to health needs, the school will liaise with the local authority promptly to ensure that appropriate educational provision is considered and arranged where required.

All decisions regarding educational provision and reintegration will be made in the best interests of the pupil, taking account of their health needs, educational needs, and views, together with those of their parents/carers and relevant professionals.

For shorter term absences, such as broken limbs, and longer absences, such as hospitalisations, the school Health Care Practitioner will work closely with any medical professionals associated in the healthcare of a pupil. They will put in place any appropriate arrangements such as arranging for work to be provided to the home, use of hospital school, and liaise with pastoral support in school, home and medical professionals. The Health Care Practitioner will also coordinate the reintegration of the pupil back into school, agreeing arrangements with the attendance team and the Deputy Head Teacher. If the absence is due to other health concerns the Pastoral Team in school will then lead on support provided and reintegration after absence.

3.2 If the local authority (LA) makes arrangements

If the school can’t make suitable arrangements, or the pupil will be absent for more than 15 days due to health needs, Norfolk County Council will become involved in supporting education for these pupils. The 15 days may be consecutive or over the course of a school year.

- The LA Medical Needs Team are provided with medical evidence and decide on whether they will become involved. The school is still responsible for education and checking the wellbeing of the pupil.

  In cases where the local authority is involved, the school will:

- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil

- Share information with the local authority 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
- When reintegration is anticipated, the school will work with the local authority 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 possible
    - Enable the pupil to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, invitations to school events)
    - Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school
    - Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made
    - Where possible, allow the pupil to take examinations at the same time as their peers, and work with the local authority to support this

4. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Ms E Webb – Deputy Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

5. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- NCC Medical Needs Service https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/schools/files/pupil-needs/medical-needs-service/medical-needs-service-policy.pdf