Policy for children with health needs who cannot attend school

The staff responsible for the policy for children with health needs who cannot attend school are:-

Sarah Bradford Katharine Walsh

The Governor responsible for the policy for children with health needs who cannot attend school is:-

The Governor Responsible for Health & Safety

Agreed by Governors: 27th February 2026

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Introduction

Roydon Primary School aims to support the local authority to ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to health 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 children 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 the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into school as soon as they are well enough.

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

Local authority duties

This section is in accordance with the Department for Education statutory guidance 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, 2013.'

Local authorities 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.

Local authorities 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 limit the offer of education to children with a given condition and prevent their access to the right level of educational support that

they are well enough to receive. Strict rules that the offer of education a child receives may also breach statutory requirements.

Provision for siblings

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.

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: a tuition service that acts 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: local authority establishments that provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

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;
- 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 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;
- 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 governors on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils;
- 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:

- dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of health needs;
- 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 while 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 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 while 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.

Managing Absences

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 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 pupils with health needs will notify the local authority, who will take responsibility for the pupil and their education.

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 headteacher/SENDCo will liaise with the 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 that 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 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 a 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 medical officer, even if the local authority has become responsible for the pupil's education.

Support for Pupils

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 headteacher/SENDCo;
- access to additional support in school;
- online access to the curriculum from home;
- movement of lessons to more accessible rooms where possible;
- 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 in collaboration with the local authority.

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

Where appropriate, the school nursing team will be involved in the development of the pupil'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 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 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 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 pupil;
- 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.

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