



## **Children With Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy**

Prepared by:	Barbara Smith
Date:	December 2021
Review date:	July 2022
Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Trustee Minute No:	0223.5

## Contents

1.0	Statement of intent .....	3
2.0	Roles and responsibilities .....	4
3.0	Managing absence .....	6
4.0	Support for pupils/students .....	7
5.0	Reintegration .....	7
6.0	Examination and assessments .....	8
7.0	Record keeping.....	8
8.0	Training.....	8

## Appendices

Appendix 1 - Supporting Attendance of Children with Additional Health Needs During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.....	9
---	---

**1.0 Statement of intent**

QEGSMAT (the Trust) aims to support its schools and the Local Authorities (LA) to ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical 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 pupils/students may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, children should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate them as soon as they are well enough.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a child's education whilst they are not attending school and will work with all relevant parties to ensure that all children with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

## 2.0 Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board will:

- Ensure that this policy enables provision of effective support for medical conditions in its schools in line with the Statutory guidance “Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions” December 2015 and any other related guidance from the DfE.
- Ensure that the policy complies with its duties under Equality law and the Trust’s Equality Objectives statement and any responsibilities in the SEN Code of Practice.
- Focus on the needs of individuals in ensuring that children and their parents/carers have confidence in the school’s ability to provide effective support.
- Delegate responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and delivery of the policy to the headteacher at each school.
- The Trust Board will be responsible for the regular review and updating of this policy.
- The Trust Board accepts that all employees have rights in relation to supporting children with medical needs as follows:
  - To receive training as appropriate and to work to clear guidelines;
  - To be able to bring to the attention of management any concern or matter relating to supporting children with medical conditions.
- The Trust Board, through the Finance & Operations Director, will ensure that the level of insurance in place reflects the level of risk.

The governing board, through the Headteacher, is responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements are in place for children who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs and that they are effectively implemented.
- Ensuring a termly review takes place of the arrangements made for children who cannot attend school due to their medical needs.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of these children 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 children with additional health needs are appropriately trained.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Working with the governing board to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting children with additional health needs.
- Working collaboratively with parents/carers and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of the child.
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet the child’s health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for children with additional health needs and liaises with parents, carers, pupils, students the LA, key workers and others involved in the child’s care.

- Ensuring the support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of the individual child.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting children with additional health needs.
- Providing teachers who support children with additional health needs with suitable information relating to the child's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on that child.
- Providing annual reports to the governing board on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of children.
- Notifying the LA when a pupil/student is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs.

The named member of staff is responsible for:

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

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

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

Parents and carers should:

- 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 medical needs.

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

### **3.0 Managing absence**

Parents/carers 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/students who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the parents/carers to arrange schoolwork, as soon as the child 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/student, their parents/carers 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 member of staff with responsibility for the child with additional health needs will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the child 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 absence.

For hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the child is in hospital.

The LA will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the pupil/student which will allow the school, the LA and the provider of the child's education to work together.

The school will monitor attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a pupil/student is, or should be, receiving education other than at school.

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

- The child 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/student nor their parent/carer has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

A pupil/student 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 that child's education.

#### **4.0 Support for pupils/students**

Where a child has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss their needs and how these may be best met with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents/carers and, where appropriate, the child.

Pupils/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 school will work with the provider of the child's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

To help ensure a pupil/student with additional health needs is able to attend school following an extended period of absence various adaptations will be considered including a personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with the named staff member, access to additional support in school, places to rest at school, and special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue.

#### **5.0 Reintegration**

When a pupil/student is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with all relevant parties.

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

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/student.

The school is aware that some pupils/students will need gradual reintegration over an extended period of time and will always consult with the child, their parents/carers 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 child.
- 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 school will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage pupils/students and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

## **6.0 Examinations and 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 pupils/students 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 LA if more appropriate, as early as possible.

## **7.0 Record keeping**

In accordance with the Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to pupils/students.

Accurate record keeping will protect both staff and pupils/students and provide evidence that agreed procedures have been followed.

## **8.0 Training**

Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a child's return to school. Healthcare professionals should be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required.

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

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

## **Appendix 1**

### **Supporting Attendance of Children with Additional Health Needs During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

#### **Statement of intent**

At QEGSMAT, we understand that the pandemic is a worrying time for pupils and students with medical conditions and additional health needs, and we aim to do all that we can to support these children and their families to engage in education during this turbulent time.

The information in this appendix is under constant review in line with government guidance and will be updated if any new information is released.

#### **1. Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Coronavirus Act 2020.
- DfE (2021) 'Schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance'.
- DfE (2021) 'SEND and specialist settings – additional operational guidance: coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

#### **2. Roles and responsibilities**

The governing board will:

- Ensure that there are procedures and arrangements in place to minimise the impact of the pandemic on pupils/students with additional health needs that may limit their ability to attend school.

The headteacher will:

- Ensure that there are effective communication channels in place between the school and pupils/students with additional health needs, and their parents/carers, during the pandemic.
- Facilitate effective conversation with relevant healthcare professionals and any other relevant services to ensure that pupils/students remain supported during the pandemic.

#### **3. Managing attendance**

As under normal circumstances, the school will be sensitive and understanding in its approach to managing attendance of children whose health needs limit their ability to attend school, whether due to temporary illness or injury or a long-term condition.

The school will liaise with the parents/carers of these children regarding their expected attendance at school and will remain aware of where these children are receiving education, e.g. through remote learning or from the LA, at all times.

The school will record attendance and absence as normal, unless they are absent for reasons related to coronavirus, in which case absences will be recorded using Code 'X'.

The school will conduct an individual risk assessment for children with additional health needs to identify and mitigate potential risks to their safety if they attend school during the pandemic – this risk assessment will assess their vulnerability to infection, as well as whether the school will be able to continue to meet provisions laid out in the pupil's IHP, where relevant, under organisational challenges presented by the pandemic.

The school will work to implement any control measures illuminated within this risk assessment that will help the child to safely attend school and will maintain regular communication with parents/carers to ensure that concerns surrounding their child's safety are considered.

Where, upon completion of this risk assessment, the school cannot guarantee a child's safety with regard to coronavirus or cannot guarantee that certain provisions in their IHP that are pivotal to their ability to attend school safely can be consistently met, the school will not expect the child to attend.

Where a pupil/student cannot attend school following a risk assessment, the school will work with their parents/carers and the LA to ensure that a plan for the child's engagement in education is in place.

#### **4. Remote education**

Where a pupil/student cannot attend school on site due to their health needs, the child will be provided with remote education from the first day of their absence, provided they are well enough and not receiving education elsewhere, e.g. an alternative provision setting or the LA.

Where a child is seriously unwell, has been absent for a long period of time, or has been admitted to hospital, the school will work with the LA to identify the remote learning provision that can be offered to the child in line with any existing PEP or hospital tuition in place.

Where a pupil/student is attending temporary alternative provision, e.g. a hospital school for the duration of hospital admission, the school will liaise with parents/carers, the alternative provider and the LA to determine whether the child's educational, medical and social needs would be best met by participating in remote education alongside their peers.

Where a child is to engage in remote education, the school will work with all relevant parties, including the pupil/student, their parents/carers, the LA, relevant healthcare specialists, and any alternative provision settings the child attends, to work out a plan

for engaging in remote education during the pandemic that is tailored specifically to their needs.

Where a child who cannot attend school due to their additional health needs cannot access remote education, the school will work with the LA to ensure that they have the appropriate technology and support to access remote education, e.g. by providing them with a laptop.

The appointed named member of staff will work with the child, where necessary, to establish whether they need any additional help, support or equipment to engage in their education effectively.

The school will work with child and their parents/carers to set reasonable goals and expectations, tailored to their individual health needs, for virtual attendance and engagement with remote learning.

## **5. Support for pupils/students**

The school will recognise that children who are absent due to their health needs may feel increased levels of isolation during the pandemic due to government restrictions inhibiting their ability to socialise or receive visitors. The school will, thus, ensure that these children are offered pastoral and wellbeing support where appropriate.

The school will liaise with the parents/carers of an absent child to determine an appropriate and non-intrusive schedule of contact between the pupil/student and the school, including with the named member of staff and peers.

The school will ensure that absent children are aware of the support available to them regarding their mental health, wellbeing and educational needs, and how to access that support during the pandemic.

The school will use all reasonable endeavours to maintain the full provisions outlined in IHPs or other support plans, particularly if these provisions are vital to the child's ability to attend school and will inform the child and their parents/carers in advance if certain provisions cannot be met under the current circumstances.

The headteacher, working with relevant parties including the child, parents/carers and the LA, where appropriate, to facilitate eventual reintegration into the school community for children who are absent during the pandemic.

## **6. Examinations and assessments**

The headteacher will ensure they are up to date with the latest guidance released regarding examinations and will consider children with additional health needs when formulating plans for the school's exam provision.

Children will be supported in preparing for any examinations by their named member of staff, who will maintain communication with them even when they are not attending school to ensure their readiness for completing their qualifications.

## **7. Shielding**

Where a child with additional health needs is classified as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), the school will support the child to resume shielding, where advised by a clinician or national health advice. The school will work with the parents/carers and the LA, where appropriate, to engage the child in remote education.

Where a CEV pupil/student is advised to attend school, either by a clinician or because shielding recommendations have been paused, the school expects them to do so. In this case, the school discusses with the child, their parents/carers and the LA how the child's educational needs will be best met when attending school on site.

The headteacher ensures that they are always aware of whether children with additional health needs are expected to be attending school during the pandemic and maintains communication with these children and their parents/carers to ensure they accurately record each child's attendance.