



Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Statement

Harrow High School aims to ensure that all learners 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 children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We understand that we have a continuing role in a child's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work with the LAs, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education. Individual cases, which can be complex, will be discussed with Education Welfare Officers (within the local authority or attached to hospitals) who can provide additional support and guidance. We recognise that, whenever possible, children should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate learners back into school as soon as they are well enough.

1.2 Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- the school fulfils its statutory obligation to ensure that suitable education is arranged for learners on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs.
- children, staff and parents/carers understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority.

1.3 Definition

Learners who are unable to attend school because 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.

Learners 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 service that acts as a communication channel between schools and learners on occasions where learners are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment (e.g. Academy 21)
- **Medical PRUs:** these are LA establishments that provide education for learners unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

1.4 Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of 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*
- Harrow Council Education Services (2018) *Education Support for Children unable to attend school because of medical needs.*

2. Roles and responsibilities

There will be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the Local Authority – for example, where the child can still attend school with some support; where the school has decided to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child; or where arrangements have been made for the child to be educated in a hospital by an on-site hospital school. The Local Authority would not become involved in such arrangements unless it had reason to think that the education being provided to the child was not suitable or, while otherwise suitable, was not full-time or for the number of hours the child could benefit from without adversely affecting their health. This might be the case where, for example, the child can attend school but only intermittently.

Local Authorities are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for learners who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision. This means that where a child cannot attend school because of health problems, which have been confirmed by an appropriate professional, and would not otherwise receive a suitable full-time education, the Local Authority is responsible for arranging provision.

The law does not define full time education but learners with health needs should have provision which is equivalent to the education they would receive at school. Where full time education would not be in the best interests of a child because of reasons relating to their

physical or mental health, local authorities should provide part time education on a basis they consider to be in the child's best interests.

2.1 School

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for learners with health needs who cannot attend school.

- The child's Head of Year (HoY), Assistant Head of Year (AHoY) or SENDCO will liaise with parents/carers to put in place suitable arrangements to ensure the best continuity of learning possible.
- The Head of Year (HoY), Assistant Head of Year (AHoY) or SENDCO will monitor arrangements between home and school, including liaison with Subject Leaders and Teachers.
- The Head of Year (HoY), Assistant Head of Year (AHoY) or SENDCO may delegate some tasks related to homeschooling to a Family Support Worker.
- The school will ensure that appropriate work is sent home or sent to hospital schools where this is relevant. 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 will provide the child's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources. It may be decided that a remote offer of education either via video or live lessons can be provided by the school. In those cases the school will make use of the remote learning platforms that have been successfully used previously.
- The school will monitor the child's engagement with the work and liaise with the child's parents/carers and teachers where necessary.
- Where a child is not attending due to ill health, it is important that they feel supported in their learning. It is also important that each child's situation is assessed on an individual basis and that the child's needs are met accordingly.
- The Head of Year (HoY), Assistant Head of Year (AHoY) or SENDCO will also be responsible for ensuring a supported reintegration of the child back into school after an extended period of illness. Again, this will include close liaison with parents/carers, the school Welfare Officer (if applicable), Attendance Officer, Subject Leaders, teachers and the Local Authority.
- When a child returns to school after an extended period of absence due to ill health, the school will closely monitor the child for one school term and support their settling back into their learning and school life.
- Should the child require further support, the school leaders will make the necessary referrals, either to in-school support programmes or outside agencies. Again, this will be done in consultation with parents/carers.
- While a learner is away from school, the school will work with the Local Authority to ensure the learner can successfully remain in touch with their school and may use the following methods:
 - school newsletters

- emails
- invitations to school events
- platforms such as Sparx, Seneca, etc.

2.2 Local Authority

If the school cannot make suitable arrangements, the LA will become responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for learners of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision.

The school will make a referral to the Local Authority's Education Service. This service should accept and act on their following criteria:

Medical needs are such that the young person has missed **15 days of schooling** (consecutive or cumulative).

- The young person's health has significantly reduced their ability to access their home school full time and this is reflected in their attendance record.
- A senior medical professional (such as a consultant, mental health practitioner etc) is providing support, diagnosis and/or advice. This applies to learners whose cases are managed by hospitals within the locality as well as in more specialist hospitals across the country. **Please note: a GP referral is not sufficient.**
- A change in medical advice or medication has meant that a young person requires increased medical review, intervention, support or flexibility to allow them to attend education full time.
- Health need can mean either physical health need, or mental health condition meaning it is disrupting the young person's ability to attend school full time
- A young person has been discharged from tier 4 Mental Health Service services and requires on-going support before full time reintegration to school.
- When further dialogue post-referral is required there may be the need for further discussion with medical professionals to ensure correct decisions are reached in the best interest of all young people.

In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, the school will:

- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the child.
- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required.
- Liaise with the alternative provider over planning examinations and examination course requirements where appropriate. (Awarding bodies may make special arrangements for learners 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 soon as possible).

- Help make sure that the provision offered to the child is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully.

When reintegration is anticipated, school will work with the local authority to:

- Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the child to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible.
- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school.
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made:
 - Access to additional support in school
 - Online access to some of the curriculum from home
 - Places to rest at school
 - Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
 - Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue
 - Part-time timetable
 - Learning through virtual presence.

For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the child's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill child or their parents/carers in the early stages of their absence. The school is aware that some learners will need gradual reintegration over a long 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.

2.3 Training

Where necessary, school 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 that may be required. Training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident in their ability to support learners with additional health needs.

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

3. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be approved by the Board of Governors.

4. Links to other policies

This policy works alongside the following school policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting children with medical conditions
- Attendance policy

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy

Local authorities have policies and procedures linked to this policy. Schools and families are advised to contact their own responsible LA for further details.