

Staffordshire University Academies Trust		Trust Policy Document			
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Children with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent

Staffordshire University Academies Trust aims to ensure that all pupil/students and students who are unable to attend school due to medical needs continue to receive the same high standard of education, including physical education, and attend as many educational visits as their medical condition allows.

Due to the nature of their health needs, however, some pupil/students and students may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision and unable to attend school as normal. We recognise that, whenever possible, pupil/students and students should receive their education within their Academy and the aim of the provision will be to help reintegrate pupil/students and students back into school as soon as they are well enough.

We understand that each Academy has a continuing role in children's education whilst they are not attending their Academy, and will work with the LA, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all pupil/students and students with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their Academy.

1. Legal Framework

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
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2023) 'Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupil/students at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

2. Definitions

"Children with health needs" are children of compulsory school age who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs. These medical needs include:

- Physical health issues.
- Physical injuries.
- Mental health problems, including anxiety issues.
- Emotional difficulties or school refusal.
- Progressive conditions.

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- Terminal illnesses.
- Chronic illnesses.

Children who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend or participate in any of the following:

- **Hospital school** – a school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment.
- **Home tuition** – many LAs have home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and pupil/students on occasions where pupil/students are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment.
- **Medical PRUs** – these are LA establishments that provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

For the purpose of this policy, “**school-based support**” in relation to supporting pupil/students/students with additional health needs may include:

- Day-to-day support offered at school where the pupil/student/student is able to attend as normal.
- Support given to pupil/students/students who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days, whether consecutive or cumulative.
- Any educational or extra-curricular provision as requested by the LA as part of its arrangements for pupil/students/students who cannot attend school full-time, e.g. where the pupil/student/student attends school part-time as an arranged part of their full-time education provision.
- As part of their reintegration into normal school attendance following a period of absence or part-time attendance due to health needs.

“**LA-arranged education**”, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as education provision arranged by the LA where the pupil/student cannot attend school full time due to medical reasons for a period of 15 school days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative.

3. LA Duties

For the purpose of this policy, the LA’s duties when pupil/students/students are unable to attend school due to health needs are outlined below. These duties have been included so as to differentiate the responsibilities that lie with each Academy, and those that will be carried out by the LA. Academies are not responsible for ensuring that the LA meets its responsibilities; Academy responsibilities are outlined in the [‘Roles and Responsibilities’](#) section of this policy.

The LA will be responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. Each Academy will fulfil its duty to effectively collaborate and communicate with the LA as required.

In line with statutory guidance, it will be the LA’s responsibility to:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a pupil/student will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutively or cumulatively.
- Liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil/student.

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- Ensure that the education pupils/students 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/students in arranging provision.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of pupils/students with additional health needs and ensure that 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 each pupil/student and that it provides suitable education.
- Have clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.
- Maintain good links with the schools in its area and put systems in place to promote co-operation between them when children cannot attend due to ill health.

To comply with statutory guidance, the LA will be expected to not:

- Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child from getting the right type of provision and a good education.
- Withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a child because of how much it will cost.
- Have policies based upon the percentage of time a pupil/student is able to attend school rather than whether the pupil/student is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.
- Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not they will arrange education for children or inflexible policies which result in children going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in).

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board is Responsible for:

- Ensuring the Local Academy Councils fulfil their responsibilities as outlined below.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those throughout the Trust involved in the arrangements to support the needs of pupils/students are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring systems across the Trust for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents are robust and fit for purpose.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place across the Trust to implement and quality assure the training of staff with responsibility for supporting pupils and students with health needs.
- Approving this policy and subsequent versions.

The Local Academy Council will be responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a schedule of regular updates on the arrangements made for pupil/students who cannot attend the school due to their medical needs, in their setting.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in any school-based arrangements to support the needs of pupils/students are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents where a pupil/student with health needs is able to, or partially able to, attend school and/or extra-curricular activities.

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- Ensuring a suitable member of staff is assigned responsibility for the education of pupils/students with additional health needs to be a point of contact for the LA and parents.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting pupils/students with additional health needs are appropriately trained.

The Principal / Headteacher (and Senior Leadership Team) will be responsible for:

- Working with the LAC to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils/students with additional health needs.
- Working collaboratively with the LA, parents and other professionals, as necessary, to develop any school-based arrangements to meet the needs of pupils/students.
- Ensuring any school-based arrangements put in place to meet pupils'/students' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils/students with additional health needs and liaises with parents, pupils/students, the LA, key workers and others involved in the pupil's/student's care.
- Ensuring any school-based support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual pupils/students.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils/students with additional health needs who are attending school, or attend school part-time.
- Providing teachers who support pupil/students with additional health needs with suitable information relating to a pupil/student's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil/student.
- Providing annual reports to the LAC on the effectiveness of any school-based arrangements in place to meet the needs of pupil/students of pupil/students who cannot attend school due to health needs.
- 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.

Each Academy will have a named member of staff. This member of staff will be responsible for:

- The management of any pupils/students registered at the Academy who are unable to fully attend school because of their health needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil/student progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying any LA-arranged education providers with information about pupils'/students' capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Liaising with the Principal / Headteacher, LA-arranged education providers, and parents to help determine pupils'/students' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school, where necessary.
- Keeping pupils/students who are being educated by LA-arranged education providers informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Providing a link between pupil/students and their parents, the Academy, and LA where necessary.

Teachers and support staff will be responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils'/students' health needs.
- Designing school-based activities, including lessons, in a way that allows pupils/students with additional health needs to participate fully and ensuring pupils/students are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason.

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- Understanding their role in any school-based support for pupils/students with additional health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Ensuring that they are aware of the needs of their pupils/students through the appropriate and lawful sharing of individual pupils'/students' health needs.
- Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in school-based education.

Parents will be expected to:

- Ensure, where school-based provision is in place, the regular and punctual attendance of their child at their Academy where possible.
- Work in partnership with the Academy that their child attends, LA and any LA-arranged provision to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
Notify the Academy that their child attends (or other education provider) of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide the Academy that their child attends with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how any Academy-based support, including reintegration, for their child should be planned.

5. Managing Absence

Parents will be required to contact the Academy that their child attends on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness. Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the Academy has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Each Academy will provide support to pupil/students who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days, whether consecutive or cumulative, by liaising with the pupil's/student's parents to arrange schoolwork, as soon as the pupil/student is able to cope with it, or part-time education at the Academy. The Academy will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the pupil/student, their parents 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 pupils/students with additional health needs will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the pupil/student and their education.

Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, each Academy will liaise with the LA to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's/student's absence.

For planned hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the LA and the hospital education provider as early as possible to discuss the likely admission date and expected length. Plans will be made, where possible, for the educational programme to be followed while the pupil/student is in hospital.

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

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

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

- The pupil/student has been certified by the Academy’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 has indicated to their Academy the intention to continue to attend the Academy, 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 Academy’s medical officer, even if the LA has become responsible for the pupil’s/student’s education.

Staff will be alert to the fact that missing education can put pupil/students at risk of harm and may be an indicator of a safeguarding issue. Concerns will be handled in line with the Safeguarding Policy and Children Missing from Education Policy. Staff will also be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for pupils/students with additional health needs.

The Academy will provide to the LA, at agreed intervals, the full name and address of any pupils/students who are not attending school regularly, including if this is due to any additional health needs.

6. Support for Pupils/Students

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

Pupils/students with continuing health needs will have an IHP which is subject to regular review and assessment. Where a pupil’s/student’s needs amount to ongoing SEND, an EHC plan may be more appropriate to meet their long-term needs. Where a pupil/student has an EHC plan and an IHP, both plans will be reviewed alongside each other.

Medical evidence will be used where available to best understand a pupil’s/student’s needs and identify the most suitable provision. Where specific medical evidence is not readily available, the Academy will consider liaising with other medical practitioners and other sources of evidence to ensure appropriate provision can be arranged as soon as possible.

The LA expects each Academy to support pupils/students with additional health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the Academy to make reasonable adjustments to pupil/students’ programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments. Each Academy will make reasonable adjustments under pupil’s/students’ IHPs, in accordance with the Supporting Pupils / Students with Medical Conditions Policy.

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 Academy will work with the provider of the pupil’s/student’s education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

The use of digital resources will be considered to support learning and complement face-to-face education, where appropriate and digital resources will only be used in accordance with the

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pupil's/student's needs. Staff will follow procedures set out in the Remote Learning and Online Safety Policies.

Whilst a pupil/student is away from school, their Academy will work with the LA to ensure the pupil/student can successfully remain in touch with the school using the following methods:

- Digital learning platforms
- Academy newsletters
- Social media platforms
- Emails
- Invitations to Academy events
- Cards or letters from peers and staff
- Remote meetings

Where appropriate, academies will provide the pupil's/student's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources. Academies will strive to achieve effective collaboration between relevant services to ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum.

Provision for pupils/students will support their individual needs to overcome barriers to attainment and achievement, giving equal consideration to their pastoral needs to allow them to prosper in the education system. Consideration will be given to the pupil's/student's personal, social and emotional needs to allow them to feel fully included in the school community, maintain contacts with classmates and have access to the same opportunities.

Each Academy will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and will encourage pupils/students and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period. To help ensure a pupil/student 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 named staff member
- Access to additional support in school
- Online access to the curriculum from home
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at school
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue
- Access to electronic devices
- Arrangements for breaktime

The school will ensure that pupil/students are involved in decision-making as much as possible, in accordance with the pupil/student's age and maturity, to help ensure that the right provision is offered and encourage their commitment and engagement.

Alongside the LA, the provision offered to a pupil/student will be regularly reviewed by the school to ensure it continues to be appropriate for the pupil/student's needs and that suitable education is being provided. The review process will seek input from:

- The pupil/student.
- Parents.
- Relevant agencies and medical practitioners, where possible.
- The LA SEND team, where the pupil/student has an EHC plan.

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7. Reintegration

When a pupil/student is considered well enough to return to school, their Academy will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the LA.

During a lengthy absence, a reintegration plan will be developed near to the likely date of return to avoid putting unsuitable pressure on an ill pupil/student in the early stages of their absence. Their Academy will work with the LA when reintegration into school is anticipated to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside school.

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

If appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in the development of the pupil's/student'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/student.

Their Academy will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the pupil/student.

For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the pupil's/student's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill pupil/student or their parents in the early stages of their absence.

Each Academy is aware that some pupils/students will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the pupil/student, 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/student.
- 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.
- The support available to the pupil/student.
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration.
- Follow-up procedures.

Each Academy will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage pupils/students and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

Following reintegration, academies will support the LA in seeking feedback from the pupil/student regarding the effectiveness of the process.

8. Information Sharing

It is essential that all information about pupils/students with additional health needs is kept up-to-date. To protect confidentiality, all information-sharing techniques, e.g. staff noticeboards, will be agreed with the pupil/student and their parent in advance of being used, in accordance with the Data Protection and Information Sharing policies.

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All teachers, TAs, supply and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures, via an Academy's secure channels of communication.

Parents will be made aware of their own rights and responsibilities regarding confidentiality and information sharing. To help achieve this, each Academy will:

- Ensure this policy and other relevant policies are easily available and accessible
- Provide the pupil/student and their parents with a copy of the policy on information sharing
- Ensure that parents are asked to sign a consent form which clearly details the organisations and individuals that their child's health information will be shared with and which methods of sharing will be used, where consent is required for data sharing activities. Academies must consult the DPO for advice where required, prior to sharing the data
- Consider how friendship groups and peers may be able to assist pupils/students with health needs
- When a pupil/student is discharged from hospital or is returning from other education provision, the Academy will ensure the appropriate information is received to allow for a smooth return to the school. The named member of staff will liaise with the hospital or other tuition service as appropriate.

When a pupil/student is discharged from hospital or is returning from other education provision, academies will ensure the appropriate information is received to allow for a smooth return to the Academy. The named member of staff will liaise with the hospital or other tuition service as appropriate.

9. Record Keeping

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

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

All records will be maintained in line with the Retention and Records Management Policy.

10. Training

Healthcare professionals will be involved in identifying and agreeing with the Academy the type and level of training required. Training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident in their ability to support pupils/students with additional health needs.

Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a pupil's/student's return to school. Once a pupil/student's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training at least one week before the pupil's/student's anticipated return.

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

11. Examinations and Assessments

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Staff will follow procedures set out in the Exam Access Arrangements Policy to identify and apply for access arrangements or reasonable adjustments before an exam to ensure pupils/students with additional health needs are not put at a disadvantage, where applicable. 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.

12. Academy Specific Arrangements

Each Academy will document their own specific arrangements, procedures and points of contact in circumstances for pupils/students who have health needs and cannot attend school on these grounds. This will include:

- Academy specific roles and staff responsibilities
- Points of contact and key contact information
- Communication arrangements
- Procedures for making referrals to the Local Authority, including those where the Academy is unable to make suitable arrangements for pupils / students
- Arrangements to support pupils / students, including mental health and wellbeing support
- Reintegration arrangements
- The production of Care Plans and Risk Assessments