

Staffordshire University Academies Trust		Trust Policy Document			
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## Children with Health Needs that Cannot Attend School

### Policy

#### 1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for pupils and students on roll who cannot attend their Academy due to health needs.
- Pupils, students, staff and parents understand what the Academy is responsible for when this education is being provided during periods of absence from school due to health needs.

#### 2. Statement of Intent

Staffordshire University Academies Trust and the academies aim to ensure that all children, regardless of circumstance or setting receive a high-quality education to enable them to achieve better outcomes. We will follow Department of Education Guidance and aim to support and work closely with the Local Authority (Staffordshire County Council) to ensure that all pupils and students who are unable to attend their Academy due to health/medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as full an 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, pupils/students should receive and experience their education within their Academy.

The aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils/students back into school as soon as they are well enough and where this is not possible, the academies will work to provide an appropriate level of education remotely, while alternative provision is established. Academies have a continuing role in a pupil's/student's education whilst they are not attending their Academy and will work with the LA, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all pupils/students with health needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

There will be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their requirements without the intervention of the Local Authority, for example, where the child can still attend school with some support. Pupils/students may be absent from their Academy for a number of health reasons, for example:

- Physical health issues
- Physical injuries
- Mental health problems
- Emotional difficulties or school refusal
- Progressive conditions
- Terminal illnesses
- Chronic illnesses

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## 2. Legislation and guidance

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

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The 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'

It also based on guidance provided by our local authority - [Guidance Document for Children Absent from School Due to Health Conditions](#) and [Protocol for Children Absent from School Due to Health Conditions](#) and [Guidance for Children Missing out on Education](#).

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 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.

3.2 Local Academy Councils are responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for pupils/students who cannot attend their Academy as a result of their health needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- Ensuring the regular review of the arrangements made for pupils/students who cannot attend their Academy due to their medical needs.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those within the Academy involved in the arrangements to support the needs of students are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents within the Academy, for both on- and off-site activities.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility within the Academy for supporting students with health needs are appropriately trained.

3.3 The Principal / Head Teacher (and the Senior Leadership Team) is responsible for:

- Working with the LAC to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils/students with health needs.
- Working collaboratively with parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of pupils/students.
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet pupils'/students' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.

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- Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils/students with healthcare needs and liaises with parents, 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 individual students.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils/students with health needs.
- Providing teachers who support students with health needs with suitable information relating to a pupil's/student's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil/student.
- Providing reports to the LAC on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils/students.
- Notifying the LA when a pupil/student is likely to be away from the Academy for a significant period of time (more than 15 days in one instance or throughout an academic year) due to their health needs.

3.4 Each Academy will have a named member of staff. They are responsible for:

- Managing, supporting and dealing with pupils/students who are unable to attend because of health needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil/student progress and reintegration into the Academy.
- Supplying pupils'/students' education providers with information about their capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Liaising with the Principal/ Head Teacher, education providers and parents to determine pupils' /students' programmes of study whilst they are absent from the Academy.
- Keeping pupils/students informed about Academy events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Supporting/monitoring the mental health and wellbeing of children absent from the Academy.
- Providing a link between pupils/students and their parents, and the LA.

3.5 Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils'/students' health needs.
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with 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.
- Understanding their role in supporting pupils/students with health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their pupils/students through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual pupil's/student'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 the Academy.

3.6 Parents are expected to:

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the Academy where possible and in accordance with the Attendance Policy.
- Work in partnership with the Academy to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.

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- Notify the Academy of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide the Academy 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.

#### 4. Academy Duties

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

The Principal/Head Teacher and designated staff member will be responsible for making and monitoring the effectiveness of these arrangements, including where the education progresses to be delivered by the Local Authority.

The Academy will make alternative arrangements for learning, based on what is most appropriate for the child and the location that they will be learning from (e.g. home, hospital). The designated person at the Academy will consult with parents and children about these arrangements, via the appropriate means.

Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on proprietors of academies to make arrangements for supporting pupils / students with medical conditions, who attend their Academy.

Each Academy must ensure that:

- Pupils/students at school with medical conditions are properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education.
- Arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils/students at school with medical conditions.
- School leaders consult health and social care professionals, pupils/students and parent/carers to ensure that the needs of children with medical conditions are effectively supported.
- Safeguarding arrangements are implemented at the point of the child's first absence and are subject to regular review.
- The impact on the child is considered and a plan to manage this is implemented; this includes mental health and wellbeing, educational progress, peer relationships, relationship with their family.
- Considerations are made as to agencies that can provide family support, if needed.
- There is a clear plan to co-ordinate work with the child and family, which is agreed by all parties, sets out each individual's responsibilities and records their agreement to co-operate.
- Dates for review and re-integration are established through the implementation and review of the plan. This may be sooner should there be concerns surrounding achievement or safeguarding.
- A lead person is accountable for the review of the provision and plans associated with the alternative education.
- That parents are clear about their role and responsibilities, and that parents are engaged and in agreement with plans.
- They understand what other agencies are involved with the child and their family, and what their roles and responsibilities are. They should be involved in planning where required.
- It is important that the Academy makes regular contact with the child (daily) to ensure that the child is safe, and this must be recorded in school.
- The absence is recorded under correct registration codes.

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

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

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- 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

Academies shall implement a Care Plan which involves a team around the child which may include, as relevant: Academy representatives, the school nurse, a hospital liaison representative, parents/carers, the Local Authority, an Inclusion representative, the GP and health professionals.

Each setting will agree on how the Academy will keep in touch with the child and their family whilst absent from school, for example, providing a teacher/TA to visit or conduct Teams meetings on a regular basis to work with the child, subject to risk assessments, E-Safety arrangements and virtual meeting protocols. Communication between the class and the absent child is encouraged.

All absences must be supported and monitored. Attendance records shall take note of the reason for absence and the work that has been provided for home learning, in accordance with absence and attendance policies and procedures.

## 5. Local Authority Duties

If the Academy can't make suitable arrangements, Staffordshire County Council will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children. Where a child cannot attend school because of health problems, and would not otherwise receive a suitable full-time education, the LA is responsible for arranging provision and must have regard to government guidance. Academies must make contact with the Local Authority to discuss arrangements.

The LA must arrange suitable education for pupils/students of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The Academy has a duty to support the LA in doing so.

The law does not define full-time education but children with health needs should have provision which is equivalent to the education they would receive in school. If they receive one-to-one tuition, for example, the hours of face-to-face provision could be fewer as the provision is more concentrated.

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 LA – for example, where the child can still attend school with some support; where the Academy has made arrangements 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 DfE guidance details that it would not expect the LA to 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.

The LA should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a pupil/student will be away from school for 15 days or more, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, and where suitable education is not otherwise being arranged.
- Liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil/student.
- Ensure 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. Stringent 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 which they are well enough to receive.

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Such rules that limit the offer of education a child receives may also breach statutory requirements.

- Have a named officer responsible for the education of pupils/students with additional health needs and ensure 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 the pupil/student and that it is providing suitable education.
- Give clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.
- Ensure that where full-time education would not be in the best interests of a particular child because of reasons relating to their physical or mental health, that part-time education on a basis they consider to be in the child's best interests is provided. Full and part-time education should still aim to achieve good academic attainment.
- Ensure that the provision is responsive to the demands of what may be a changing health status.
- Where appropriate, use electronic media to provide access to a broader curriculum, but this should generally be used to complement face-to-face education, rather than as sole provision (though in some cases, the child's health needs may make it advisable to use only virtual education for a time).
- That teachers who provide education for children with health needs receive suitable training and support and are kept aware of curriculum developments. They should also be given suitable information relating to a child's health condition, and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the child.
- Set up a personal education plan, which should ensure that the school, the Local Authority, hospital school or other provider can work together.
- Ensure effective collaboration between all relevant services (LAs, CAMHS, NHS, schools and, where relevant, school nurses) in delivering effective education for children with additional health needs.

The LA should not:

- Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child or young person 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 child is able to attend school rather than whether the child 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).

## 6. Absence and Attendance Management

Parents are advised to contact the Academy on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness, in accordance with the Academy's Attendance and Absence policies and procedures. Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the Academy has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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The Academy will provide support to pupils/students who are absent because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the pupil's/student's parents to arrange for remote school work to be provided 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 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 designated person with responsibility for pupils/students with health needs, or the Senior Leadership Team, in their absence, will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the pupil/student and their education.

The Academy will continue to support the pupil/student in liaison with the LA as part of their overall plan. Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the Academy will liaise with the LA to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's/student's absence. Effective collaboration between all relevant services (LAs, CAMHS, NHS, the student's Academy and, where relevant, school nurses) is essential to delivering effective education for pupils/students with additional health needs. This applies whether the student is in hospital or at home.

When a student is in hospital, liaison between hospital teaching staff, the LA's alternative provision/home tuition service and the pupil's/student's Academy can ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum. It can ensure that the Academy can make information available about the curriculum and work that the pupil/student may miss, helping the pupil/student to keep up, rather than having to catch up.

The LA will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the pupil/student which will allow the 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 otherwise than at their Academy. The Academy will only remove a pupil/student who is unable to attend because of additional health needs from the school roll where:

- The pupil/student has been certified by a Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend the Academy, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and
- Neither the pupil/student nor their parent has indicated to the Academy the intention to continue to attend the Academy, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age. A pupil/student unable to attend the Academy because of their health needs will not be removed from the Academy register without parental consent and certification from the Medical Officer, even if the LA has become responsible for the pupil's/student's education.

## 7. Support for Pupils / Students

Where a pupil/student has a complex or long-term health issue, the 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. The LA expects all academies to support pupils/students with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the Academy to make reasonable adjustments to pupils'/students' programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.

The Academy will make reasonable adjustments under pupils'/students' individual healthcare plans and risk assessments, in accordance with the Supporting 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.

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

- Academy newsletters

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- Emails
- Invitations to Academy events
- Cards or letters from peers and staff
- Where appropriate, the Academy will provide the pupil's/student's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.
- Electronic meetings such as Teams / Zoom, following remote meeting and safeguarding protocols

## 8. Reintegration

When a pupil/student is considered well enough to return to school, the Academy will develop a tailored reintegration plan, in collaboration with the LA, where they have arranged educational provision. The aim of the plan is to ensure consistent provision during and after the period of education outside of the Academy.

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

The Academy will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the Academy and the curriculum for the pupil/student. This should be accompanied by an individual health care plan and risk assessment, which document the adjustments, where required.

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
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration
- Follow up procedures and responsibilities.

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, the Academy will support the LA in seeking feedback from the pupil/student regarding the effectiveness of the process, where appropriate to do so.

To help ensure that a pupil/student with additional health needs is able to attend their Academy 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 the Academy
- Online access to the curriculum from home



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- Access to electronic devices
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at the Academy
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue
- Arrangements for break times
- Mental health and wellbeing support

## 9. Information Sharing

It is essential that all information about pupils/students with health needs is kept up-to-date. In order to protect confidentiality, information-sharing techniques will be agreed with the pupil/student and their parent in advance of being used, as far as possible. Information will be shared in accordance with Data Protection, Data Sharing and Information Security Policies.

As relevant to their roles and responsibilities. Teachers, TAs, supply, first aid and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aid requirements and emergency protocols, via the agreed Academy procedures.

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

## 10. Records Management

In accordance with the Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to pupils/students, Proper record keeping protects both staff and pupils/students and provides evidence that agreed procedures have been followed. All records will be maintained in line with the Compliant Records Management Policy.

## 11. Training

Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a pupil's / student's return to school. Once a pupil's/student's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training before the pupil's/student's anticipated return. This will include any support for mobility and medication related matters.

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

Records of training will be maintained on staff members' personnel files.

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## 12. 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 Academy, or LA if more appropriate, as early as possible.

## 13. 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

## 14. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies (this is not an exhaustive list):

- The Accessibility Plan
- Supporting Pupils/Students with Medical Conditions
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Compliant Records Management Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Data Sharing Policy