Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

Redbourn Park School

Approved by	Richard McCabe
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Applies to	All registered pupils aged 7–16 at Grovehill and Gaddesden
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Proprietor/chair signature	

Related policies
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
First Aid Policy
Home–School Communication Policy

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1. Aims

Guided by Safety, Empathy and Ambition, this policy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs
- Pupils, staff and parents/carers understand what our school is responsible for when education is being provided by the local authority (LA)

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the following legislation:

- The Education Act 1996
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

It also takes account of the following Department for Education guidance. The statutory duty to arrange education for children who cannot attend because of health needs rests with the local authority; the school will co-operate with the local authority and help maintain continuity of education:

- Alternative provision
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school

This policy also takes account of guidance issued by the local authority responsible for the pupil and by the local authority in whose area the school is situated, where their functions differ.

This policy is prepared in accordance with the Independent School Standards and Redbourn Park's governance arrangements. The proprietor/chair provides strategic assurance; the Headteacher is responsible for implementation at Grovehill and Gaddesden.

3. Responsibilities of the school

3.1 If our school makes the arrangements

From the start of an absence, the school will work with the pupil, family and relevant professionals to remove barriers to attendance and maintain suitable, high-quality education. School-led arrangements are an interim or complementary response and do not replace the responsible local authority's duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

- The Headteacher and the SENDCO are responsible for coordinating and monitoring these arrangements.
- Where appropriate, we will provide accessible work for completion at home, in hospital or another agreed setting through physical resources and/or Google Classroom. The Headteacher owns Google Classroom use. Access will use approved accounts, include only the minimum necessary personal information, comply with the Online Safety and Data Protection policies, and provide non-digital alternatives where required.
- Arrangements will be agreed with the pupil, using their preferred communication or AAC where needed, their parents/carers, and the team around the child. The plan will record the pupil's views, outcomes, provision, contacts, review dates, information-sharing arrangements and any reasonable adjustments.
- We will personalise and regularly review the reintegration plan with the pupil, using their preferred communication or AAC where needed, their family, the responsible local authority and health or social care professionals as relevant.

3.2 If the local authority makes the arrangements

The statutory duty to arrange suitable education rests with the local authority responsible for the pupil under section 19 of the Education Act 1996; this may not be Hertfordshire County Council. The school will identify and contact the responsible local authority promptly and will not wait for the absence threshold where it is

already clear that alternative provision will be required. Separately, the school will make the statutory sickness return to the local authority in whose area the school is situated when it has reasonable grounds to believe that a compulsory-school-age pupil will miss, or has missed, at least 15 school days because of sickness, whether consecutive or cumulative during the school year.

The responsible local authority should arrange suitable education as soon as it is clear that the pupil will be away from school for 15 school days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, and earlier where the pattern of absence or the pupil's circumstances indicate that this is necessary. The school will continue reasonable educational support while the local authority assesses and arranges provision.

Where full-time education is not in the child's best interests for reasons relating to their physical or mental health, the local authority must arrange part-time education on whatever basis it considers to be in the child's best interests.

- Suitability will be determined case by case through a multi-agency review involving the pupil, parents/carers, the school, the responsible local authority and relevant health or social care professionals. Any reduced or part-time provision must be based on the pupil's best interests and health needs, be time-limited and reviewed regularly.
- The SENDCO and the Headteacher will coordinate with the responsible local authority.

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

- Make the required attendance and sickness returns to the appropriate local authority within the statutory timescales and share only the information necessary through approved secure channels
- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents/carers to ensure the best outcomes for the child
- Collaborate with the local authority to ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum, including making information available about the curriculum
- Along with the local authority, regularly review the provision offered to ensure it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education
- Share only necessary, accurate information with the responsible local authority and relevant health services through approved secure channels, in line with data protection law, safeguarding duties and the school's privacy notices
- When a child has complex or long-term health issues, work with the local authority, parents/carers and the relevant health services to decide how best to meet the child's needs (e.g. through individual support, arranging alternative provision or by them remaining at school, being supported at home and back into school after each absence)
- Where possible, allow the child to take examinations at the same time as their peers, and work with the local authority to support this
- Help make sure that the child can be reintegrated into school successfully
- When reintegration is anticipated, 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, including through digital resources
- Enable the pupil to stay in touch with school life through agreed, secure and accessible channels—such as the school newsletter, official email, Google Classroom, supervised contact with peers and invitations to events—subject to safeguarding, privacy, health advice, consent and the pupil's preferences
- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school, which include extra support to fill any gaps arising from the absence
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made

4. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and the SENDCO, with input from other professionals where appropriate. The proprietor/chair will approve each review.

5. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- First Aid Policy; Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Home–School Communication Policy; Online Safety Policy; and Data Protection Policy.