



Children with Health Needs Not Attending School Policy

Date of Policy	October 2024
Next Review Date	October 2025

Aims

Dovecot Primary School aims 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.

Due to the nature of their health needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within the school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into school as soon as they are well enough.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not in school and will work with the LA, 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.

Legislation and guidance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including:

- Education Act 1996;
- Safeguarding Children in whom illness is fabricated or induced (DfE 2008);
- Equality Act 2010;
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (statutory guidance for local authorities DfE January 2013);
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015);
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- School Attendance (DfE September 2018).

Definition of children with health needs not attending school

Children who are unable to attend school as a result 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.

Children 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

The responsibilities of the school.

The school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school. The SENCO will be responsible for making and monitoring arrangements for working from home or hospital with parents/carers. Arrangements could include:

- Sending work home;
- Attending a hospital school;
- A member of the Support for Learning Team working directly with the family in support of activities prepared by class teachers;
- Blended learning arrangements.

Pupils admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital concerned.

Pupils will be slowly integrated back into school by using alternative arrangements, such as alternative provision at break or lunch times, or a reduced timetable to meet their health needs.

The LA will make arrangements if the school can't make suitable arrangements. In this case the LA will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.

The role of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

- Coordinating with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs;

- Notifying the LA when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs;
- Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the SENCO will liaise with the LA to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence;
- Liaising with pupils' education providers, regarding information about the child;
- For hospital admissions, the SENCO will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital;
- Communicating the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of pupils and checking these are understood by all;
- Ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented;
- Monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school;
- Providing appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs;
- Sharing suitable information relating to a pupil's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication has on the pupil with teachers.

2. The role of teachers and support staff.

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs;
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their pupils through the health needs information from the SENCO;
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate and ensuring pupils are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason;
- Understanding their role in supporting pupils with health needs and ensuring they attend the required training;
- Ensuring they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of the medical condition and know what to do in an emergency.

3. The responsibilities of the Local Authority (LA).

It is the responsibility of the LA to provide education as soon as it is clear that a pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. The LA should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil.

The LA should ensure the education is of good quality, allows pupils to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind their peers in school, and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school.

When reintegration is anticipated, the school will work constructively with the LA to:

- Plan for consistent provision, including the curriculum and materials used in school as far as possible;

- Enable the pupil to stay in touch with school life through newsletters, emails, or internet links to lessons from the school as far as possible;
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made.