

## VAUGHAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

**Date of Policy:** Summer 2021

**Date of Review:** Summer 2022

**Next Review:** To be reviewed annually

#### Policy Review Dates

Review Date	Changes made	Shared with staff
Summer 2021	New policy	Summer 2021

#### Other related policies and guidelines:

Attendance policy, Supporting children with Medical Needs/Conditions policy, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy, Accessibility policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Attendance policy, Complaints Procedure, Data Protection policy, Equalities policy, Teachers' Standards, Department for Education guidance available on GOV.UK website

## **Rationale**

Vaughan Primary School aims to support the Local Authority (LA) and 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, 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 or may only attend school intermittently.

We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their 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 attending the school and will work with the LA, healthcare professionals 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.

## **Aims**

**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 understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority
- 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 their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into Vaughan as soon as they are well enough.
- We understand that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not attending Vaughan and will work with the Local Authority, healthcare professionals 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 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 students at school with medical conditions'
- It also based on guidance provided by Harrow 'Education Support for Children unable to attend school because of medical needs, 2018'.

## **Definitions**

**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, including emotionally based school refusal
- Progressive conditions.
- Terminal illnesses.
- Chronic illnesses.

## **The responsibilities of Vaughan Primary School:**

- The LA expects the school to support pupils with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to pupils' programmes of study in line with their individual healthcare plans and where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.
- Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.
- Pupils 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 school will work with the provider of the pupil's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

## **The Governing Body is responsible for:**

- Having a nominated Governor who will take responsibility for monitoring the arrangements in place.
- Ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- Reviewing termly the arrangements made for pupils who cannot attend school due to their medical needs and that staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs are appropriately trained.
- Authorising funding for any alternative provision where applicable.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of pupils are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents, for both on- and off-site activities.
- Approving and reviewing this policy on an annual basis

**The Head teacher is responsible for:**

- Working with the Governing Body to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils with health needs.
- Working collaboratively with parents/carers and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of children.
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet pupils' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with healthcare needs and liaises with parents, pupils, the LA, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care.
- Ensuring the support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual pupils.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs.
- Providing teachers who support pupils with health needs with suitable information relating to a pupil's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil.

**The class teacher is responsible for:**

- Providing work on a weekly basis to the child's home (if they are at home) or sent to the hospital school if they are still accessing this provision. In the case of the child accessing the hospital school provision, the class teacher will liaise with the hospital teacher to support the learning.
- Weekly check-ins with the family; this will be offered to ensure that the work is pitched at the correct level and that it is supporting the well-being of the child.
- Liaising with relevant professions to ensure a steady and successful re-integration back to school. This will be agreed by parents, school, medical staff and the child. It will be reviewed at regular intervals.
- Contributing to a plan of how best to support a pupil where there are complex or long-term health issues.
- Exploring opportunities for the pupil to successfully remain in touch with their school and friendship groups and peers.

**The SENCo is responsible for:**

- Supporting the class teacher who leads communications with the pupil and family.
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying pupils' education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Liaising with the Head teacher, education providers and parents to determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent and to provide a link between pupils and their parents, and the LA.
- Providing information to the relevant Governor undertaking termly review and providing information to the Governing Body as required.

**Parents/carers are expected to:**

- Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Provide the school 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.

**Reintegration:****When reintegration is anticipated, the class teacher and SENCo will work with the local authority (where applicable) and appropriate medical professionals to:**

- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school. If appropriate, the school nurse and other appropriate professionals, will be involved in the development of the pupil'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.
- The school is aware that some pupils will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the pupil, their parents/carers 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.
- 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.
- The school will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage pupils and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.
- Following reintegration, the school will seek feedback from the pupil regarding the effectiveness of the process.

**To help ensure a pupil 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 as appropriate
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at school
- Special test arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue
- This list is not exhaustive as the adaptations required / phased return to school will be highly individualized for each child.

**Teachers and support staff are responsible for:**

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate fully 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.
- Being trained in a timely manner to assist with a pupil's return to school.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their pupils through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual pupil'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 school.

**Parents/carers are expected to:**

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible.
- Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide the school 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.

### **Managing Absences during reintegration:**

- Parents/carers are advised to contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.
- Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- The school will provide support to pupils who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the pupil's parents/carers to arrange schoolwork as soon as the pupil is able to cope with it or part-time education at school. The school will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the pupil, 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 SENCo will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the pupil and their education.
- Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the LA to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence.
- For hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital.
- The LA will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the pupil which will allow the school and the LA to work together.
  
- The school will monitor pupil attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a pupil is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school.

### **The school will only remove a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where:**

- The pupil has been certified by an appropriate medical professional 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 nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
  
- A pupil unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent and certification from an appropriate medical professional, even if the LA has become responsible for the pupil's education.

## **Role and responsibilities of the local authority:**

- If the school are unable to, or can't make suitable arrangements, Harrow Council (the LA) will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.
- Sec. 19 Education Act 1996 provides that 'each [local authority] shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable [...] education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.'
- The statutory guidance makes clear that there will be a wide range of circumstances where a child has health needs but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the Local Authority (LA), for example where a child can still attend school with some support or where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child. It is not expected that the LA would need to be involved in such arrangements unless it has 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.
- It is a statutory requirement that the LA have a named person responsible for the education of children with additional health needs. In Harrow Council the named person is: Patrick O'Dwyer, Divisional Director Education Services.
- The LA and schools should work together in partnership with parents / primary carers, social services, health professionals and other agencies as appropriate, to plan and provide suitable alternative provision for children with additional health needs.
- The LA will intervene where it is apparent that a child's health needs is preventing them from attending school for 15 or more school days, either for one block of 15 or more days absence or over the course of a school year, and where suitable education is not otherwise being arranged. Intervention may include supporting the child's school to comply with its duties in relation to managing the child's medical condition and / or arranging provision for a temporary period.
- Whilst the LA may be responsible for ensuring that alternative education arrangements are made, children with additional health needs must remain on the roll of their school throughout their absence and the school retain their duty to support such pupils.



## **Referral and Intervention**

- If a school, health professional, social worker or other professional working with a child becomes aware that a child has missed or is likely to miss 15 days of school due to health reasons, a notification via a referral should be made to Harrow Children's Services (Harrow MASH – Duty & Assess) for allocation to Education Services' attendance officers. A notification needs to be sent to the LA even in cases where the school is making alternative provision for the child's education needs.
- Once a referral is received, Education Services' attendance officers will contact the relevant school and the parent/carer of the child is contacted to discuss the referral.
- If relevant medical evidence has not been sent with the notification the officer will seek consent to contact the family GP or Health professional for medical evidence to verify the child's condition. Such evidence would usually be expected from the treating consultant / professional but where specific medical evidence is not available quickly, the LA will liaise with other medical professionals (e.g. the child's GP) so that provision of education is not delayed. Normally the medical professional cannot be privately commissioned and must be UK based.
- Once a child's health condition is verified and where a school does not appear to be making alternative provision for the child's educational needs, Education Services' attendance officers will assess whether agreement can be reached with the parents and the school regarding the most suitable provision to be offered having liaised with the appropriate health professionals and the school.
- Where agreement cannot be reached, an Education Services' attendance officer will refer the matter to the School Attendance Intervention Panel (SAIP) who will meet to agree a suitable provision. The agreed provision should commence as quickly as possible taking into account the child's health needs so as to avoid unnecessary disruption to the child's education. Where it is agreed that a school will send home work to the child as a short term measure, this should be appropriately supervised by the school.

## **Information Sharing**

**It is essential that all information about pupils with health needs is kept up-to-date:**

- To protect confidentiality, all information-sharing techniques will be agreed with the pupil and their parent/carer in advance of being used.
- All teachers, supply and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures.
- Parents/carers will be made aware of their own rights and responsibilities regarding confidentiality and information sharing. To help achieve this, the school will ensure this policy and other relevant policies are easily available and accessible.
- Parents/carers will be 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.
- When a pupil is discharged from hospital or is returning from other education provision, the school 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.

## **Record Keeping**

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