



Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy 2026

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Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll who cannot attend school due to ongoing diagnosed medical needs;
- Pupils, staff and parents understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the **Education Act 1996**.

It is also based on guidance provided by our local authority, which can be found on the MNERS (Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service) page:

<https://rightchoice.wiltshire.gov.uk/Services/4757>

This guidance also draws on the following Department for Education guidance documents:

- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2015);
- Mental health and Behaviour in Schools (2018) – departmental advice document;
- The Equality Act 2010 and schools (2014) – departmental advice document;
- Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities (published May 2022 applies from September 2022)

3. Responsibilities of the school

At all times, the pupil remains the responsibility of the school where they are on roll. In accordance with statutory and other advisory guidance, Wiltshire schools must:

- Keep the pupil on roll and include them in any planning;
- Retain a full safeguarding responsibility for all pupils on their school's roll. Schools should ensure they carry out any necessary welfare checks. Schools must decide how to fulfil this responsibility, based upon their knowledge of the child and family;
- Provide work and materials if pupils are absent for up to 15 school days due to a diagnosed medical need;
- Co-ordinate, implement and regularly review Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP) / Personal or Medical Education Plans (MEP); be active in the monitoring of pupils who may attend school for partial days; monitor the progress and reintegration into school of those who have been absent because of their medical needs, liaising with other agencies (including the Local Authority (LA) and Education Welfare Service) as necessary;
- Where appropriate, complete and register a Reduced Educational Provision (REP) Plan;
- Where appropriate, consider any additional 'first line' adjustments and support to assist. This may include alternative provision and/or online learning arrangements, for example. Where schools have arranged alternative provision,

the pupil's attendance and progress at the AP setting/intervention remains the responsibility of the 'home' or registered school and should be regularly reviewed;

- Draw up an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) / Personal or Medical Education Plan (MEP) for any pupil with diagnosed medical conditions impacting on education to be reviewed at least annually in continuing partnership with the pupil, parents and professionals;
- Understand the school's duties under the Equalities Act with regard to reasonable adjustments for pupils who have a disability;
- Ensure that pupils who have SEN but do not have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have their SEN mentioned in their IHCP or MEP;
- Ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school because of diagnosed medical needs are kept informed about school social events and can participate. Examples of these are homework clubs, study support and other activities;
- Ensure that arrangements are made for pupils who are due to undertake public examinations, including entrance arrangements and any assistance requirements such as help with scribing, alternative venue and/or invigilation needs and the submission of mitigation or special consideration requirements, where appropriate;
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers for example through visits, use of Information Technology and social events.

3.1 If the school makes arrangements

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with diagnosed health needs who cannot attend school for up to 15 days.

The child's Progress Leader will liaise with parents in the first instance.

Depending on the circumstance of the medical need, the Progress Leader may suggest provision such as;

- Directing the student to online learning
- Providing the student with a work pack /textbooks
- Research tasks

Before a pupil returns to school, a re-integration meeting will be held with parents/carers in attendance. A clear plan will be put into place of how the pupil will be re-integrated back into school. This may be on a phased return or set days/hours. The plan will be documented and monitored by the Progress Leader/Pastoral manager.

Any part-time timetable should seek to maximise face-to-face school time as much as possible and have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, and have formal arrangements in place for reviewing the timetable.

The school will only consider providing remote education to help pupils stay on track with the education they would normally receive if the pupil is considered well enough and able to learn.

3.2 If the local authority makes arrangements

If the school can't make suitable arrangements, Wiltshire LA will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these pupils.

In accordance with statutory guidance, Wiltshire LA has a designated senior officer with responsibility for access to education for children and young people with medical needs. This Officer is: Lydia Thomas – Team Manager, Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service lydia.thomas@wiltshire.gov.uk

The expectation of Wiltshire LA is that all absence from school for medical reasons which may necessitate alternative educational provision or arrangements being requested via the LA is supported by confirmation at Consultant clinician level of the young person's condition and consequent inability to attend school due to a diagnosed medical need. Referral to the MNERS Team is made by the pupil's enrolled school using the Diagnostic Assessment and Referral Tool (DART) system and is subject to referral criteria.

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

- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil;
- 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;
- 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 pupil to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible;
 - Enable the pupil to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school);
 - Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school;
 - Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made.

4. Monitoring arrangements

The overall responsibility for children with medical needs who cannot attend school lies with the Deputy Headteacher in charge of behaviour and attendance. This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

5. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies which can be found on the school website here <https://www.stonehenge.wilts.sch.uk/our-school/school-policies/> :

- Accessibility Plan
- Supporting Pupils With Medical Conditions Policy
- Attendance Policy