CHILDREN WITH NEEDS THAT CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL POLICY 2026- 2027

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School	Headteacher	October 2026	October 2027
Approved By Local Governing Body			

Statement of Intent

Wrotham School aims to work closely with the Local Authority (LA) to ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to health/medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their health/medical condition allows, so that they reach their full potential. Due to the nature of their health/medical needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should experience their education within school, and the preferred 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 school and will work with the LA, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with health/medical needs receive the right level of support.

The school will make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 to support pupils with disabilities or long-term medical conditions.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, 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 pupils at school with medical conditions'
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Safeguarding

Pupils who cannot attend school due to health needs may be at increased risk of social isolation, mental health difficulties or safeguarding concerns. The school will continue to fulfil its safeguarding duties in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and maintain regular welfare contact with pupils and families throughout any period of absence.

Legislation and Guidance

The statutory guidance from the Department for Education (2013) states that Local Authorities;

- Must arrange suitable full-time education (or as much education as the child's health condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education
- Should provide such education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative.
- They should liaise with appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the child
- Must ensure that the education children receive is of good quality, as defined in the statutory guidance 'Alternative Provision' (2013), allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from slipping behind their peers in school and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- Must address the needs of individual children in arranging provision. 'Hard and fast' 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.

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

The school will work with examination boards, the Local Authority and healthcare professionals to ensure pupils working towards GCSE or other public examinations receive appropriate support and access arrangements where applicable.

Provision for siblings

When treatment of a child's condition means that his or her family have to move nearer to a hospital, and there is a sibling of compulsory school age, the local authority into whose area the family has moved should seek to ensure that the sibling is offered a place, where provision is available, for example, in a local mainstream school or other appropriate setting.

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
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) or anxiety-related non-attendance.
- Progressive conditions
- Terminal illnesses
- Chronic illnesses

Mental health conditions will be afforded the same level of consideration as physical health conditions when determining educational support.

Responsibilities of the local authority (LA)

LAs are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. This applies whether or not the child is on the roll of a school and whatever type of school they attend, including pupils in Academies. 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, LAs should provide part-time education on a basis they consider to be in the child's best interests.

The Local Authority are responsible for:

- Supporting pupils aged 5-16 who live in Kent and who are temporarily unable to attend school for health-related reasons or severe anxiety for at least 15 days.
- Providing a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs. In Kent this is accessed via the Health Needs Education Service: 01622 696645
- A team of qualified and experienced teachers and teaching assistants working closely with schools to support a suitable education programmes for pupils. Provision should be reviewed regularly and staff liaise with school, health professionals and other supporting agencies to plan and support the pupil's needs.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body:

- Ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their health needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- Ensuring the termly review of the arrangements made for pupils who cannot attend school due to their health needs.
- 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.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs are appropriately trained.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Working with the Governors to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils with health needs.
- Working collaboratively with parents 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 liaising with parents, pupils, the local authority, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care. The SENCo and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or nominated senior leader).
- Ensuring the support put in place focuses 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.
- Providing reports to the Governors on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils.
- Notifying the local authority when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs.
- ensuring referrals are made promptly to the Health Needs Education Service;
- monitoring educational provision during absence;

- ensuring reintegration plans are implemented;
- ensuring attendance coding is accurate.

Responsibilities of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

The SENCo, alongside the Headteacher, is responsible for:

- Dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of health needs.
- 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 Headteacher, education providers and parents to determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school.
- Keeping pupils informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Providing a link between pupils and their parents, and the local authority.
- coordinating Individual Healthcare Plans where appropriate;
- liaising with SEND services;
- ensuring provision aligns with EHCP outcomes where applicable.

Responsibilities of the Class Teachers and Support Staff 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.
- 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.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers Parents and 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 health needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

Support for Pupils to help ensure a pupil with additional health needs is able to attend school

Following an extended period of absence, the following adaptations may be considered:

- In response to anxiety-related non-attendance, request support external agencies, such as School Nursing, CAMHs or an Educational Psychologist.
- A personalised or part-time timetable drafted in consultation with the Headteacher, SENCo and Class Teacher
- Access to additional support in school, as appropriate
- Online access to the curriculum from home
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms where possible
- Places to rest at school, including break time provision
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue

Communication

During periods of absence the school will maintain regular communication with:

- parents;
- the pupil;
- healthcare professionals;
- the Local Authority;
- alternative education providers.

Reintegration

Before returning to school, a reintegration meeting will normally be held with parents, the pupil and relevant professionals.

A phased return, timetable adjustments, pastoral support and reasonable adjustments may be implemented where appropriate.

Monitoring Arrangements

Attendance registers will be completed in accordance with statutory attendance guidance and the school's Attendance Policy while educational provision is arranged.

Governors receive anonymised information on:

- number of pupils supported;
- duration of absence;
- reintegration outcomes;
- attendance after return;
- any recurring themes.

Educational provision for pupils unable to attend school will be reviewed at least every six weeks, or sooner where the pupil's circumstances change.

This policy will be reviewed annually as recommended by the Department for Education. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Governing Body or the Character Education Trust.

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