

CHILDREN WITH HEALTH NEEDS WHO CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL POLICY



April 2021

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for students on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs
- Students, staff and parents/carers (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 Worcestershire Children First (WCF/Local Authority).

This policy complies with our funding agreement.

3. The responsibilities of the school

3.1 If the school makes arrangements

Initially, Broadway First School will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

Arrangements which the school could make include:

- Creation of an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP)
- Sending work home
- Making a referral to the Medical Education Team (MET)
- Liaising with hospital schools and other agencies such as CAMHS, Early Help and Social Care
- Agreeing a time limited reduced timetable, following the school's agreed protocols
- Creation of a Reintegration Support Plan
- Providing online lessons via Class Dojo

In the first instance, parents will be invited in to meet key staff and an Individual Health Care Plan will be drawn up in accordance with the school's 'Supporting children with medical conditions policy'. Where possible the student will be involved in this process. At this meeting, a plan for reintegration back into school will be discussed with agreed review times. Issues around ensuring the child is being safeguarded will be discussed at this meeting. Parents are always 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 students who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the student's parents to arrange school work as soon as the student 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 student, 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 school will notify the Local Authority (LA), who will take responsibility for the student 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 student's absence.
- For hospital admissions, an appointed member of the school's staff will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the student is in hospital.
- The school will monitor student attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a student is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school.
- The school will only remove a student who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where: the student has been certified by a Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to ever attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and neither the student 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 student unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent and certification from the Medical Officer, even if the LA has become responsible for the student's education.

Alternative Provision

Alternative provision can be defined as education for students who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education (DfE, 2013). Alternative provision for children with medical difficulties can be arranged by the school or by the Local Authority. In cases where the child's medical difficulties are likely to be short term (typically less than 15 days) or result in only small amounts of school being missed, it is often simpler for the school to make these arrangements. To ensure the wellbeing and safety of students accessing off-site provision, with the exception of the Worcestershire Local Authority's Medical Education Team (MET), the school will only send students to providers who are registered with Ofsted. In cases where the child is not able to attend school for long periods it may be more appropriate for the Local Authority to make arrangements.

Medical Education Team (MET)

In Worcestershire, the statutory duties for children unable to attend the school because of medical difficulties are discharged by the Medical Education Team. The Medical Education Team ensure that arrangements are in place for children and young people who are unable to attend school because of their medical needs so that they have appropriate and ongoing access to education. The Team consists of qualified teachers and teaching assistants who are skilled in teaching children /young people of statutory school age with a wide range of physical, emotional and psychological health needs.

The Medical Education Team service level agreement and referral form can be found on the Worcestershire Children First website:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/WCFEducationServices/info/1/support-services/22/medical-education>

Where it is not appropriate or possible for the needs of children with medical difficulties to be met by the Medical Education Team and the school has not made alternative arrangements, Worcestershire Children First will work with schools and families to agree provision. The school will alert Worcestershire Children First when there is evidence to suggest that a child is unable to attend school and alternative provision is not yet in place to ensure they access full time education.

Contact will be made with the Local Authority as a matter of utmost priority to ensure there is no delay in provision being made for the child.

Escalating Welfare Concerns

If an assessment has been undertaken and there are needs that cannot be met by the early help arrangements in school then a referral to Level 2 or 3 services may be appropriate.

Worcestershire's Levels of Need Guidance (2019) describes the indicators which may suggest that a child is in need of additional or targeted support from services providing intervention at these levels.

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7962/levels_of_need_guidance_formerly_threshold_guidance

As with all children, if there is a risk of significant harm to a child with medical difficulties, an immediate referral will be made to the Family Front Door:

9.00am-5.00pm – Monday to Thursday

9.00am-4.30pm – Friday

01905 822666

Out of hours or at weekends: 01905 768020

Fabricated and/or Induced Illness

In a very small number of cases there may be concerns that a child's medical difficulties may be fabricated or induced.

Parents/carers may fabricate or induce illness in a number of ways:

- Fabrication of signs and symptoms. This may include fabrication of past medical history
- Fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts and records, and specimens of bodily fluids, including falsification of letters and documents
- Induction of illness by a variety of means

As with any other form of abuse, where schools are concerned that a child may be experiencing or be at risk of harm, advice will be sought from the Family Front Door. In cases where Fabricated and/or Induced Illness is a consideration, evidence of medical difficulties such as medical appointment letters and multiagency working as part of the child's IHP will be key.

3.2 If the local authority makes arrangements

If the school can't make suitable arrangements, Worcestershire Children First will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children. 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 student

- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required
- Help make sure that the provision offered to the student 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 student to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible
 - Enable the student 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**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the Full Governing Board.

5. **Links to other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility Plan
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions