




POLICY DOCUMENT

Supporting Children Unable to Attend School due to Health Needs Policy

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Document Control	
Title	Supporting children unable to attend school due to health needs policy
Date	28 th September 2023
Purpose	To ensure that all pupils on roll at our academies, aged 3 – 11 who are unable to attend school, because of medical needs and would not receive suitable education without such provision
Supersedes	Previous version
Amendments	Link updated for 'Supporting schools with medical conditions' as previous link directed reader to the withdrawn guidance. Policy amended to state 'Wise Owl Trust schools' rather than each schools being named individually.
Related Policies/Guidance	Supporting pupils with medical needs. SEND Policy
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Signature of Chair	

Wise Owl Trust

is a Multi Academy Trust

Registered in England and Wales number 8053288

Registered Office: Trust House, c/o Seymour Road Academy, Seymour Road South, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4PR

The Wise Owl trust has a number of Trust-wide policies which are adopted by all the academies in the Trust to ensure an equitable and consistent delivery of provision. The Trust Board has responsibility for the operation of all academies and the outcomes of all students; however, responsibility is delegated to the Local Governing Body of each school via the Scheme of Delegation.

Within our policies reference to:

- Governing Body/Governors relate to the members of the Local Governing Body representing the Trust Board, known at Wise Owl Trust as Local School Committee Boards.
- School includes a reference to school or academy unless otherwise stated.
- Headteacher includes a reference to Headteacher, Principal or Head of School of a school or academy.

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1. Introduction

An increasing number of children and young people with health needs, including long-term conditions and highly complex needs, are attending mainstream school. Some of these pupils have short-term needs for support, such as being helped to take prescription medicines. However, many require continuous and ongoing care and intervention while at school, including intimate or invasive care procedures.

The Children and Families Act 2014 brought with it a change in the law meaning that from September 2014, Wise Owl Trust schools have to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. The Department for Education (England) published new statutory guidance to accompany this change, called “Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions”, and Wise Owl Trust schools must have regard to this. The guidance can be found online:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf

The statutory guidance contains detailed information about what a school policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions should contain, and the roles and responsibilities of governors, staff, health professionals and parents. It is important to refer to this guidance in full when dealing with issues in this area.

2. Aim

This policy and practice document aims to ensure that all pupils on roll at our academies, aged 3 – 11 who are unable to attend school, because of medical needs and would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows, so that they are able to maintain the momentum of their education and to keep up with their studies.

It should be read alongside the statutory guidance produced by the DfE. ‘Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs. Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities - January 2013’.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

Manchester Hospital School is our main link. The Head Teacher is Janet Doherty:

Manchester Hospital School provides education for children and young people who cannot attend their usual school because of their medical or mental health needs.

We are a unique school with a national and international reputation for excellence in our field. As a Hospital School, we are classed as a community special school because all of our young people have ill health; physical, mental or both.

Our schools operate across a number of sites, teaching children of all ages and abilities. We also work with schools across Manchester and beyond, offering advice and practical assistance on how they can best support any of their students who can no longer attend school for health reasons.

Children and young people who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs will include those with:

- Physical health issues
- Physical injuries
- Mental health problems, including anxiety issues
- Emotional difficulties/school refusal
- Progressive conditions
- Terminal illness
- Chronic illnesses

3. General Principles

Wise Owl Trust schools will continue to support and provide a suitable education for children with health needs whenever possible.

Please also, refer to our Remote Learning Policy.

Wise Owl Trust schools will work in partnership with parents / carers, health professionals and hospital schools. The SENDCO at each academy will be the point of contact for all health and education related issues. The SENDCO will also liaise with teachers and nurses at the hospital schools and other health professionals, to agree a timetable and to support a child's reintegration back into their originating academy.

The primary aim of this policy and practice is to minimise, as far as possible, the number of children who are unable to attend school. We also aim to minimise the disruption to normal education that can be experienced by children with medical needs by continuing education as normally as their needs allow.

A timetable will be drafted in consultation with the SENDCO at Wise Owl Trust schools.

Where a pupil is educated at Manchester Hospital School, the aim will be for full time education as quickly as possible. However, the number of hours offered will be dependent upon the individual child's needs. It is expected that the originating academy will continue to offer some hours of education whenever possible to facilitate the child's full time return.

Where a pupil is educated at home, work, activities, reading books and resources will be sent home weekly. This may be increased where it is necessary to enable the pupil to keep up with their studies. This is particularly important when a pupil is approaching public examinations, such as SATs. The decision over the amount and nature of provision will be based on medical advice, the judgement of the teacher and the expressed views of the child/young person and their parents/carers.

Children and young people admitted to hospital will receive education in hospital as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital school/tuition team for the hospital concerned.

We will work with parents/carers, Wise Owl Trust schools and Community Paediatricians to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

Manchester Local Authority must:

Arrange suitable (point 1 – page 6), full-time (point 2 & 3 – page 6) 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.

Manchester Local Authority 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.

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.

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.

Local authorities should not:

Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child from getting the right type of provision and a good education.

Withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a child because of how much it will cost (meeting the child's needs and providing a good education must be the determining factors).

For further guidance on providing a good education to pupils in alternative provision, see 'Alternative Provision: a guide for local authorities, head teachers and governing bodies of schools, pupil referral units and other providers of alternative provision'.

Have policies based upon the percentage of time a child is able to attend school rather than whether the child is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.

Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not they will arrange education for children or inflexible policies which result in children going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in).

1. "suitable" means suitable to the child's age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs that he or she may have.
2. Unless the pupil's condition means that full-time provision would not be in his or her best interests.
3. "Full-time education" is not defined in law but it should equate to what the pupil would normally have in school
4. Full-time education in a school would usually be 25 hours a week

The family is responsible for:

- Ensuring school is made aware of any changes to the treatment plan.
- Keeping school updated about absences.
- Attending meetings to discuss how support should be planned.
- Providing any medication in line with the school's medicines policy.
- Working with school to ensure the best possible outcomes for the child or young

The school is responsible for:



- Ensuring arrangements are in place to support pupils with medical conditions.
- Ensuring the school has a policy for working with pupils who have medical conditions that clearly identifies roles and responsibilities and is implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to protected characteristics: ethnicity/national/ origin, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, disability or sexual orientation.
- Ensuring the policy covers arrangements for pupils who are competent to manage their own health needs.
- Ensuring that all pupils with medical conditions are able to play a full and active role in all aspects of school life, participate in school visits / trips/ sporting activities, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.
- Ensuring that relevant training is delivered to a sufficient number of staff who will have responsibility to support children with medical conditions and that they are competent to do so. Staff to have access to information, resources and materials.
- Ensuring written records are kept of, any and all, medicines administered to pupils.
- Ensuring the policy sets out procedures in place for emergency situations.
- Ensuring the level of insurance in place reflects the level of risk.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.

Role of the governing bodies, proprietors and management committees:

- The statutory guidance applies to governing bodies of all academies. It does not apply to the governing bodies of maintained nursery academies.
- Governing bodies are legally responsible under Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions and must have regard to the new guidance.
- The governing body must ensure that arrangements are in place to support pupils with medical conditions and those policies, plans, procedures and systems are properly and effectively implemented.

Role and responsibilities of the Local Authority:

- 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 the type of school they attend. It applies to children who are pupils in Academies, Free Schools, special schools and independent schools as well as those in maintained schools.
- The law does not define full-time education but children with health needs should have provision which is equivalent to the education they would receive in school. If they receive one-to-one tuition, for example, the hours of face-to-face provision could be fewer as the provision is more concentrated.
- 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. Full and part-time education should still aim to achieve good academic attainment particularly in English, Maths and Science.

- Have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs, and parents should know who that person is.
- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards children with additional health needs. The policy should make links with related services in the area - for example, Special Educational Needs and Disability Services (SEND), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Education Welfare/Attendance Improvement Services, educational psychologists, and, where relevant, school nurses.
- Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education.
- Have clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.

Expectations of Wise Owl Trust schools

DfE Statutory Guidance January 2013 indicates that Wise Owl Trust schools should:

- Ensure that there is a named person who is responsible for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs. This is the SENDCO at each academy.
- Establish a written policy statement and clear procedures which may stand alone or be incorporated into the school's SEND policy.
- In the case of a pupil who is expected to be absent for 15 working days or less, and where this is not part of a pattern of absence related to a chronic or recurring illness, make arrangements in liaison with the pupil's parents to provide the pupil with homework as soon as they become able to cope with it.
- Work closely with the staff in Manchester's Hospital School.
- Ensure that information about the pupil's curriculum, their achievements and any special educational needs that they may have is provided promptly.
- Provide appropriate work and materials promptly and regularly.
- Be active in the monitoring of progress and in the smooth reintegration into school, liaising with other agencies as necessary.
- Ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs are kept informed about school social events, and are able to participate in homework clubs, study support and other activities as appropriate.
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers, for example through visits, post cards and letters.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The progress of pupils receiving tuition because they are unable to attend school due to their medical needs will be monitored by staff at both Wise Owl Trust academies and Manchester Hospital School.

5. Practice

Arranging tuition

For absences that are expected to last for 15 working days or less and are not part of a recurring illness

- Liaison between the school and pupil's parents to arrange homework as soon as the pupil is able to cope with it or part time education at school.

For absences that are expected to last for more than 15 working days

- For a pupil where the medical need involves a physical or medical condition, the school will seek the advice of the Community Paediatrician or relevant Consultant. The Community Paediatrician/Consultant will be asked to:
 - Confirm the pupil's medical condition
 - Indicate whether the pupil's absence is likely to last for more than 15 working days
 - Comment on the pupil's ability to cope with educational provision, i.e. whether the pupil is medically unfit to attend school
 - Comment on the kind of arrangements that would be needed to ensure the pupil's continued access to education
 - Comment on the length of time that the pupil is likely to be absent and therefore in need of support
 - Comment on whether the illness is chronic and therefore whether future absences are likely and tuition will be needed without the need to re-refer
 - Indicate the review arrangements to ensure that the pupil returns to school as soon as they are medically able to do so and any reintegration arrangements that should be considered, e.g. a phased return
 - Indicate the treatment or support that the pupil is to receive through the Health Service to support their return to health and mainstream schooling
 - For a pupil where the medical needs involve a psychological or mental health difficulty or emotional difficulties/school refusal, the school will refer to CAMHS for a view of the pupil's needs. A referral to an Education Psychologist may be appropriate. NB The school should undertake a risk management plan for pupils who are at significant risk of self-harm.

SEND

- Children with Special Education Needs (SEN) should have individual Education Plans (IEP's) and should continue to receive Annual Reviews organised by the school. The Wise Owl Trust schools Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator should be regularly involved in liaison with the school and the SEN team.

Equal Opportunities

- We will strive to ensure that equal opportunities are fundamental to our assessment of circumstances and to the service provided, recognising strengths and addressing areas of difficulty on an individual basis.
- We aim to provide an education comparable to that available in school, including a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils with long-term or recurring medical conditions will have an Individual Education Plan.

The Role of Health:

Health professionals have a vital role in liaising with education staff to ensure that the planned provision is appropriate and that all the needs of the child, health, social, education and emotional are being addressed.

Health should:

- Ensure that a holistic approach is taken regarding the welfare of the child by facilitating timely access to appropriate advice and to effective services which address their health, social, education and emotional needs throughout the period of their illness

- Establish clear procedures for staff which enable children who are in their care to participate in education
- Make arrangements at a strategic level for co-operation and planning between the health service and the education service
- Have agreed protocols for sharing information about children who are ill between the health service and the education service
- Make arrangements for a health professional to participate in multi-agency meetings to plan and
- monitor the child's education and return to school once educational provision has been agreed
- In some cases, the nature of a child's illness may be unclear. Mental health problems in particular can involve frequent or long absence from school. A mental health condition may for example manifest itself in truancy, school refusal or disruptive behavior. Medical needs of this kind include conduct or hyperactivity
- disorders, emotional disorders such as depression, anxiety and in some cases psychosis. In such cases, mental health professionals should:
- Make every effort to provide the medical evidence necessary for the child to secure eligibility for educational support as quickly as possible

6. Additional Support

In line with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 the Local Authority (LA) have a duty to: "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, or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them."

This applies to children and young people:

- who are of statutory school age and
- who are permanently resident in Manchester and
- who are not in school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative due to ill health and
- where the health need and necessity for absence has been validated as necessary by a medical doctor and
- will not receive a suitable full-time education unless the local authority makes arrangements for this

Health problems include physical illnesses, injuries and clinically defined mental health problems. Suitable medical evidence will be required. This would include details of the health problem, how long the condition is expected to last and the likely outcome, and a treatment plan. This must be provided by a suitable medical professional, normally a hospital consultant. However, where specific medical evidence is not available quickly, the local authority will liaise with other medical professionals (eg the child's GP), so that provision of education is not delayed.

Arrangements for alternative education will not normally be made for children and young people below or above compulsory school age. Arrangements for alternative provision will be made as soon as it is known that a child has not attended school for 15 days for health reasons or as soon as it is clear that a health-related absence from school will be 15 days or longer, verified by a medical doctor. The 15 days may be consecutive or cumulative. The provision will commence as quickly as possible. There may be circumstances in which suitable alternative education is already in place eg if the school has made arrangements for a pupil or the child is receiving education at a hospital

school. In such circumstances, the local authority will intervene only if it has reason to think that the education provision being made is unsuitable or insufficient.

7. Ensuring Successful Reintegration

Returning to school after a period of illness can be an emotional hurdle for a child or young person. Friendships can be damaged by a long absence and peer group contact during an absence, for example cards, letters, invitations to school events, are as important as formal contact. Our academies will provide a welcoming environment and encourage pupils and staff to be as positive and proactive as possible during the transition period. Consultation with the child and parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and pace of return is important. If a child can attend school part time this is preferable to teaching at home and usually enables speedier and more successful reintegration and monitoring of the child's needs. Strategies for successful reintegration will be key. The reintegration strategy should include:

- Date for planned reintegration once known.
- Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration
- Clearly stated responsibilities and rights of all those involved

Manchester City Council has revised its Section 19 policy. This policy describes how the local authority will achieve its commitment to ensuring that children and young people of school age receive a suitable education. The policy applies to the education of children who may not receive a suitable education by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise and the arrangements that will be made for them.

The policy builds on the Manchester Inclusion Strategy and the Anxiety Based School Avoidance toolkit. It covers school and local authority responsibilities relating to exclusions and to pupils who cannot attend school for health reasons and sets out the education offer for excluded pupils those who cannot attend school for health reasons.

The policy can be found on the MCC website:

https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7394/section_19_policy_september_2021