

Children with Health needs who can't attend school

Approved by:	Academy Committee	Date: 15 th May 2024
Last reviewed on:	May 2024	
Next review due by:	May 2025	

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Statement of intent

Thornden School aims to support all students who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, to have access to education and to reintegrate into full time education as soon as their medical condition allows.

We recognise that, whenever possible, students should receive their education within Thornden School and the aim of any provision will be to reintegrate students back into school as soon as they are well enough. Where this is not possible, we will work to enable an appropriate level of education , which may be part of a reduced hours provision package or alternative provision.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a student’s education whilst they are not attending Thornden School and will work families and other stakeholders to ensure that students with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

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
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- DfE KCSIE June 2023
- Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2013
- HCC (2024) Child and Young People not in receipt of full time education provision
- Guidance for schools on the use of reduced hours provision

This policy operates in conjunction with the following HISP/Thornden School policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy.

RHP (reduced hours provision) school guidance and legislative context:

HCC remains committed to children and young people's rights to a full-time education and makes clear that RHP must follow the following requirements (SCARAB):

- SAFEGUARDING – must have regard to the welfare, protection and safety of the child or young person, including a risk assessment.
- CONSULTATION – must have consultation with any relevant agencies working with the child or young children, including, but not limited to, the Virtual School, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team for children and young people with SEND, and Children's Services (Social Care).
- AGREEMENT – must be sought only in negotiation with parents/carers or, for Children in Care, the social worker, as the authority holds all or part of the parental responsibility and with their written agreement.
- REVIEW – must have a clear and agreed timeframe for review.
- AS PART OF A SUPPORT PLAN – must be part of a wider education plan, to support in the short-term their successful access to full-time education.
- BEST INTERESTS – must be in the best interests of the child or young person

Local Authority Duties

The Local Authority must arrange suitable (normally) full-time education for students of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The school has a duty to support the Local Authority in doing so.

The Local Authority should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a student will be away from school for 15 days or more, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, and where suitable education is not otherwise being arranged. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the student.
- Ensure the education students receive is of good quality, allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind their peers in school, and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- Address the needs of individual students 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.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of students with additional health needs and ensure parents/carers know who this is.
- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards children with additional health needs.
- Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the student and that it is providing suitable education.
- Give clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.

The Local Authority should not:

- Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child or young person 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.
- 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).

Definitions

Students who are unable to attend the 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 or school refusal
- Progressive conditions
- Terminal illnesses
- Chronic illnesses

Students who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend the following:

- **Hospital school:** A special school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the student is receiving treatment.
- **Remote Education:** Provision arranged via Thornden School or other providers which may be accessed online. This can either take the form of live teaching/tutoring or remotely accessed learning resources.

Roles and Responsibilities

The HISP Multi Academy Trust is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Local Governance Committees fulfil their responsibilities as outlined below.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those throughout the school involved in the arrangements to support the needs of students are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring systems across the school for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents are robust and fit for purpose.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place across the school to implement and quality assure the training of staff with responsibility for supporting students with health needs.

The Local Governance Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for students who cannot attend the school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
 - Ensuring review of the arrangements made for students who cannot attend the school due to their medical needs.
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- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those within the school involved in the arrangements to support the needs of students are clear and understood by all.

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Working with the Academy Committee to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting students with health needs.
- Working collaboratively with parents/carers and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the needs of students.
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet students' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Appointing a named member of staff. This member of staff will be responsible for liaising with parents/carers, students, the Local Authority, key workers or others involved in the student's care.
- Ensuring the support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual students.
- Providing teachers who may support or provide work for students with health needs with suitable information relating to a student's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the student as appropriate.
- Notifying the Local Authority when a student is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time (more than 15 days in one instance or throughout an academic year) due to their health needs.

Assign an appropriate member of staff to be responsible for:

- Delegating communication with students/families as appropriate
- Ensure support for students who are unable to attend because of medical, physical or mental health needs, including the arrangement of regular review meetings.
- Actively support reintegration into the school.
- Where appropriate, supplying students' education providers with information about their capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Liaising with any education provider, who may be in place, and parents/carers to determine appropriate programme of study whilst they are absent from the school.
- Keeping students informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Providing a link between students and their parents/carers, and the Local Authority.
- Ensuring any necessary risk assessments are carried out.

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of students' health needs.
- Where appropriate provide work that those with health needs to participate fully

- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their students through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual student's health needs.

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.
- Carry out agreed actions with regards to supporting the reintegration of the child into school.

Managing Absences

Parents/carers must 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.

For periods of absence that are expected to last for 15 or more school days, the school will notify the Local Authority. The school will continue to support the student in liaison with the Local Authority as part of their overall plan. Absences will be coded appropriately and parents will be informed if their child is in danger of accruing unauthorised absence.

Effective collaboration between all relevant services (Local Authorities, CAMHS, NHS, the student's school and, where relevant, NHS school nurses) is essential to delivering effective education for students with additional health needs. This applies whether the student is in hospital or at home.

When a student is in hospital, liaison between hospital teaching staff, and the student's school can ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum. It can ensure that the school can make information available about the curriculum and work the student may miss, helping the student to keep up, rather than having to catch up.

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 their school.

A student unable to attend the 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 Local Authority has become responsible for the student's education.

Support for Students

Where a student has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the student's needs and how these may be best met with the Local Authority, relevant medical professionals, parents/carers and, where appropriate, the student.

The Local Authority expects all schools and Academies to support students with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to students' programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.

The school will make reasonable adjustments under students' Individual Health Care Plans (IHCPs), if one is in place, in accordance with the Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy.

Students 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, Thornden School will work with any provider of the student's education to

establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

Whilst a student is away from school, the school will work with the Local Authority to ensure the student can successfully remain in touch.

- Parental newsletters
- Emails/Show my homework (Satchel one)
- Invitations to school events
- Regular calls/meeting
- Home visits as appropriate

To help ensure a student with additional health needs is able to attend the school following an extended period of absence, the following adaptations will be considered:

- A personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with the student, parents and with named staff member and reviewed regularly
- Personalised plan, considering all aspects of the school day
- Access to additional support in the school
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at the school
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue

Reintegration

When a student is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan.

The school will work to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school.

As far as possible, the student will be able to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in the school.

If appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in the development of the student'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 student.

The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the student.

For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the student's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill student or their parents/carers in the early stages of their absence.

The school is aware that some students will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the student, 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 student.
- Where appropriate including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period.
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration.
- Follow up procedures.

The school will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage students and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

Information Sharing

It is essential that all information about students with health needs is kept up to date.

In order to protect confidentiality, student information is mainly held on the school I.M. systems (Arbor) and stored outside of this in line with GDPR requirements.

All teachers, teaching assistants, supply and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures, via the agreed school 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.
- Signpost parents/carers with a copy of the policy on information sharing.
- Consider how friendship groups and peers may be able to assist students with health needs.

When a student is discharged from hospital or is returning from other education provision or reduced hours provision, Thornden 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.

Training

Staff will be advised in a timely manner how to assist with a student's return to school. Once a student's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant advice before the student's anticipated return.

Parents/carers of students with additional health needs may provide specific advice but will not be the sole advisor of staff.

Examinations and Assessments

The named member of staff will liaise with the alternative provision provider over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate.

Relevant assessment information will be provided to the alternative provision provider if required.

Awarding bodies may make special arrangements for students with permanent or long-term disabilities and learning difficulties, or temporary disabilities and illnesses. Applications for such arrangements will be submitted by the school, or Local Authority if more appropriate, as early as possible.