



# SOUTH CAMBERLEY PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

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## Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

### 2026-2027

Date of Approval	Date of Review
March 2026	March 2027
Status and Review Cycle	Statutory, every year



## Statement of Intent

South Camberley Primary and Nursery School is committed to supporting the Local Authority (LA) in ensuring that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs continue to have access to appropriate education. Our aim is to provide every child with the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of their health circumstances.

We recognise that:

- Some pupils may require hospital admission or alternative education provision due to the nature of their medical needs.
- Wherever possible, pupils should continue their education within their school setting.
- The ultimate goal of any provision is to reintegrate pupils back into school as soon as they are medically able.

We acknowledge our ongoing responsibility for pupils' education while they are absent from school and will work closely with the Local Authority, healthcare professionals, and families to ensure that children with medical needs receive the right level of support. This includes maintaining strong links with their education and school community.

## Key Objectives

This policy seeks to:

- Ensure that suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs.
- Clarify the responsibilities of the school when education is provided by the Local Authority.
- Support pupils in maintaining continuity of learning and connection with their peers and teachers.
- Promote effective communication between the school, families, healthcare providers, and the Local Authority.
- Facilitate a smooth transition back into school when pupils are well enough to return.

## Legislation and Guidance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- **Education Act 1996 (Section 19)** – duty on Local Authorities to arrange suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, due to illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive it.
- **Equality Act 2010** – requirement to avoid discrimination and make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities or health needs.
- **Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR** – obligations relating to the handling of personal and medical data.
- **DfE Statutory Guidance (updated December 2023):** *“Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school”* – sets out Local Authority duties and expectations for schools.
- **DfE Guidance (2015):** *“Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions”* – outlines schools' responsibilities in managing medical needs.

### 1. Local Authority (LA) Duties

#### 1.1 Statutory Duty

The Local Authority must arrange suitable, full-time education (or as much education as the child's health allows) for children of compulsory school age who cannot attend school due to illness. Schools have a duty to support the LA in fulfilling this responsibility.

## **1.2 Expectations of the LA**

The Local Authority should:

- Act promptly – provide education as soon as it is clear that a pupil will be absent for 15 school days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative.
- Work collaboratively – liaise with medical professionals, schools, and families to minimise delay in provision.
- Ensure quality – provide education that is of good standard, enables pupils to gain appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind peers, and supports successful reintegration into school.
- Personalise provision – tailor education to the needs of individual pupils.
- Provide transparency – appoint a named officer responsible for children with health needs and ensure parents are informed of who this is.
- Publish arrangements – maintain a written, publicly accessible policy statement outlining how they meet their legal duties.
- Review regularly – monitor and evaluate provision to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.
- Clarify scope – set clear policies for children both under and over compulsory school age, ensuring consistency.

## **1.3 Restrictions on the LA**

The Local Authority must not:

- Operate policies or processes that prevent a child from accessing suitable education.
- Withhold or reduce provision based on cost considerations.
- Base provision solely on the percentage of time a child can attend school, rather than on whether they are receiving a suitable education.
- Use rigid lists of health conditions to determine eligibility, or apply inflexible policies that result in children missing out on appropriate education.

## **2. Definitions**

### **2.1 Children with Health Needs**

Children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs may include those experiencing:

- Physical health conditions (e.g., chronic or acute illnesses).
- Physical injuries that prevent attendance.
- Mental health difficulties, including anxiety and depression.
- Emotional or psychological challenges, including school refusal linked to medical or mental health needs.
- Progressive conditions that worsen over time.
- Terminal illnesses requiring palliative care.
- Chronic conditions that result in long-term absence.

These definitions reflect the broad range of health needs recognised under the Education Act 1996 and DfE statutory guidance (2023)

### **2.2 Alternative Education Provision**

Children who cannot attend mainstream education for health reasons may access provision through:

- Hospital Schools – specialist schools located within hospital settings, providing continuity of education while pupils receive medical treatment.
- Home Tuition Services – Local Authority provision delivered at home, often acting as a bridge between school and pupil when attendance is not possible due to illness or treatment.
- Medical Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) – Local Authority establishments offering tailored education for children unable to attend their registered school due to medical needs.

### **3. Responsibilities of the School**

#### **3.1 Local Advisory Committee**

The Local Advisory Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring robust arrangements are in place, and effectively implemented, for pupils unable to attend school due to medical needs.
- Reviewing these arrangements on a termly basis to ensure they remain appropriate and effective.
- Clarifying and communicating the roles and responsibilities of all staff involved in supporting pupils with health needs.
- Establishing and maintaining systems for responding to health emergencies and critical incidents, both on-site and during off-site activities.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs receive appropriate and up-to-date training.

#### **3.2 Inclusion Lead**

The Inclusion Lead is responsible for:

- Working with the Local Advisory Committee to ensure compliance with statutory duties relating to pupils with health needs.
- Collaborating with parents, healthcare professionals, and the Local Authority to develop arrangements that serve the best interests of each child.
- Ensuring all staff understand and implement the arrangements put in place to support pupils' health needs.
- Appointing a named member of staff to act as the key contact for pupils with healthcare needs. At South Camberley Primary and Nursery School, this role is held by Mrs R Summerland, who ensures appropriate support is tailored to individual pupils.
- Coordinating training for staff responsible for supporting pupils with health needs.
- Providing teachers with relevant information about pupils' medical conditions, including the potential impact of the condition and/or medication on learning and participation.
- Notifying the Local Authority when a pupil is likely to be absent for a significant period due to medical needs.
- Overseeing the education of pupils unable to attend school, including monitoring progress and planning for reintegration.
- Supplying external education providers with accurate information about pupils' capabilities, progress, and outcomes.
- Liaising with education providers and parents to agree programmes of study during absence.
- Maintaining communication with pupils to keep them informed about school events and encourage peer connections.

#### **3.3 Teachers and Support Staff**

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Respecting confidentiality in relation to pupils' health needs.
- Designing lessons and activities that enable pupils with health needs to participate fully, ensuring exclusion only occurs where there is clear, evidence-based justification.
- Understanding their role in supporting pupils with health needs and attending relevant training.
- Being aware of pupils' individual medical needs through lawful and appropriate information-sharing.
- Recognising the signs, symptoms, and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions, and knowing how to respond in an emergency.
- Keeping parents informed about how their child's health needs are being managed in school.

#### **3.4 Parents**

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually where health permits.
- Work in partnership with the school to secure the best possible outcomes for their child.

- Notify the school promptly of the reason for any absence.
- Provide accurate, sufficient, and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss and plan support for their child.

## **4. Managing Absences**

### **4.1 Parental Notification**

- Parents must contact the school on the first day of absence if their child is unable to attend due to illness.

### **4.2 Authorisation of Absence**

- Absences due to illness will normally be authorised.
- Authorisation may be withheld if the school has genuine cause for concern regarding the authenticity of the illness, in line with statutory attendance guidance.

### **4.3 Short-Term Absence (fewer than 15 school days)**

- The school will provide support for pupils absent for fewer than 15 school days by:
  - Liaising with parents to arrange appropriate schoolwork.
  - Offering part-time education at school where feasible.
  - Prioritising curriculum areas in consultation with the pupil, family, and relevant staff to ensure continuity of learning without overwhelming the child.

### **4.4 Long-Term Absence (15 or more school days)**

- Where absence is expected to last 15 or more school days, either consecutively or cumulatively across the academic year:
  - The Inclusion Lead will notify the Local Authority.
  - The LA will assume responsibility for arranging suitable education provision.

### **4.5 Anticipated Absence**

- Where absences are known or anticipated in advance, the school will liaise with the LA to ensure education provision is in place from the start of the absence.

### **4.6 Hospital Admissions**

- For hospital admissions, the Headteacher will liaise with the LA and hospital school staff to agree an appropriate education programme during treatment.

### **4.7 Attendance Monitoring**

- The school will monitor attendance carefully and ensure registers clearly indicate whether a pupil is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school.

### **4.8 Removal from Roll**

- A pupil will only be removed from the school roll if:
  - An appointed medical practitioner certifies that the pupil is unlikely to be fit to attend school.
  - The decision is made in accordance with School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

### **4.9 Safeguards for Removal**

- Pupils will not be removed from the school register without:
  - Parental consent, and
  - Certification from an appointed medical practitioner, even if the LA has assumed responsibility for their education.

## **5. Support for Pupils**

### **5.1 Complex or Long-Term Health Needs**

- Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will work collaboratively with the Local Authority, relevant medical professionals, parents, and, where appropriate, the pupil.

- The aim will be to identify how the pupil's needs can best be met, ensuring access to full-time education wherever possible.
- Where medical evidence supports the need for adjustments, the school will make reasonable modifications to the pupil's programme of study.

### **5.2 Individual Health Care Plans (IHCPs)**

- Reasonable adjustments will be recorded within the pupil's Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP).
- IHCPs are monitored half-termly by the school's First Aid Leads
- Monitoring ensures that support remains responsive to the pupil's evolving needs.

### **5.3 Hospital Admissions**

- Pupils admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by medical professionals and the hospital tuition team.
- The school will liaise with the hospital to ensure continuity of learning and smooth reintegration when the pupil returns.

### **5.4 Communication During Absence**

- During periods of absence, the school will maintain regular communication with the pupil's education provider to ensure effective outcomes.
- The school will also work with the LA to ensure the pupil remains connected to their school community through:
  - School newsletters
  - Emails
  - Invitations to school events
  - Cards or letters from peers and staff

### **5.5 Sharing Information and Resources**

- Where appropriate, the school will provide the pupil's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials, and resources to support continuity of learning.

### **5.6 Adaptations for Reintegration**

To support a pupil's successful return to school following an extended absence, the following adaptations may be considered:

- A personalised or part-time timetable (which is exceptional, short-term & reviewed)
- Access to additional support in school (e.g., pastoral or SEN support).
- Online access to the curriculum from home during transition.
- Relocation of lessons to more accessible rooms.
- Provision of quiet spaces or rest areas within school.
- Special examination arrangements to manage anxiety, fatigue, or other health-related needs.

## **6. Reintegration**

### **6.1 Tailored Planning**

- When a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, a personalised reintegration plan will be developed in collaboration with the Local Authority.

### **6.2 Consistency of Provision**

- The school will work with the LA to ensure consistent provision during the transition back to school and following any period of education outside school.

### **6.3 Curriculum Access**

- As far as possible, pupils will be supported to access the same curriculum and learning materials they would have used in school, ensuring continuity of education.

### **6.4 Involvement of Health Professionals**

- Where appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in developing the reintegration plan.
- The appointed named member of staff will inform the nurse of the timeline to ensure appropriate support is prepared.

## **6.5 Reasonable Adjustments**

- The school will consider and implement reasonable adjustments to ensure suitable access to the school environment and curriculum.

## **6.6 Timing of Planning**

- For longer absences, reintegration planning will take place close to the pupil's likely date of return, avoiding unnecessary pressure on the pupil or their parents during the early stages of absence.

## **6.7 Gradual Reintegration**

- The school recognises that some pupils may require a phased return over an extended period.
- Plans will be developed in consultation with the pupil, parents, and key staff, taking into account medical advice, concerns, and the preferred pace of return.

## **6.8 Reintegration Plan Content**

The reintegration plan will include:

- The planned date of return, once known.
- Details of regular review meetings.
- Identification of the named member of staff responsible (Inclusion Lead/SENCO).
- Clear responsibilities and rights of all parties involved.
- Opportunities for social contact, including peer and mentor involvement.
- A programme of small, achievable goals leading up to full reintegration.
- Follow-up procedures to monitor progress and address emerging needs.

## **6.9 School Environment**

- The school will ensure a welcoming and supportive environment, encouraging staff and pupils to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

## **6.10 Evaluation**

- Following reintegration, the school will support the LA in seeking feedback from the pupil and their family regarding the effectiveness of the process, using this to inform future practice.

## **7. Data Protection and Information Sharing**

### **7.1 Accuracy of Records**

- All information relating to pupils with health needs must be kept accurate and up-to-date.
- Updates will be made promptly following receipt of new medical information or professional advice.

### **7.2 Confidentiality and Consent**

- To protect confidentiality, all information-sharing methods (e.g., staff notice boards, electronic systems) will be agreed in advance with the pupil and their parents, in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.
- Information will only be shared with staff who need it to fulfil their professional responsibilities, in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

### **7.3 Staff Access to Information**

- Teachers, Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), supply staff, and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including:
  - High-risk health needs.
  - Named first aiders.
  - Emergency procedures.
- This information will be displayed securely (e.g., staffroom noticeboard or secure digital platform) to ensure staff are prepared to respond appropriately.

### **7.4 Parental Rights and Responsibilities**

- Parents will be made aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding data protection, confidentiality, and information sharing. To achieve this, the school will:

- Ensure the Data Protection Policy and related policies are easily accessible.
- Provide parents with a copy of the Data Protection Policy.
- Request parental consent via a clear consent form, specifying:
  - Which organisations and individuals their child's health information will be shared with.
  - The methods of sharing to be used.
- Consider how friendship groups and peers may support pupils with health needs, ensuring this is managed sensitively and with parental agreement.

### **7.5 Transition and Information Exchange**

- When a pupil is discharged from hospital or returning from alternative education provision, the school will ensure that all relevant information is received to enable a smooth transition back to school.
- The Inclusion Lead/SENCO will liaise with the hospital, tuition service, or Local Authority to coordinate the transfer of information and ensure continuity of support.

## **8. Record Keeping**

### **8.1 Medicines Administration**

- Written records will be kept of all medicines administered to pupils.
- Records will include:
  - The date and time of administration.
  - The name of the pupil.
  - The medicine and dosage given.
  - The name and signature of the staff member administering the medicine.

### **8.2 Safeguarding and Accountability**

- Accurate record keeping protects both staff and pupils and provides evidence that agreed procedures have been followed.
- Records will be subject to regular monitoring to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and best practice.
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### **8.3 Data Protection Compliance**

- All records will be maintained in line with the school's Data Protection Policy, the Data Protection Act 2018, and UK GDPR.
- Records will be stored securely, with access restricted to authorised staff only.
- Retention and disposal of records will follow statutory guidance and the school's data retention schedule.

## **9. Training**

### **9.1 Timely Training**

- Staff will receive training in a timely manner to ensure they are prepared to support pupils returning to school after illness or medical treatment.

### **9.2 Role of Healthcare Professionals**

- Healthcare professionals will be involved in identifying the type and level of training required.
- Training will be agreed jointly between the school and healthcare professionals to ensure accuracy and appropriateness.

### **9.3 Confidence and Competence**

- Training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident and competent in supporting pupils with additional health needs.
- Refresher training will be provided as necessary to maintain standards.

#### **9.4 Role of Parents**

- Parents of pupils with additional health needs may provide specific advice about their child's condition.
- However, parents will not be the sole trainers of staff; professional medical input will always be sought to ensure safe practice.

### **10. Examinations and Assessments**

#### **10.1 Liaison with Alternative Provision**

- The Inclusion Lead will liaise with the alternative provision provider to plan examination and course requirements where appropriate, ensuring continuity of learning and assessment.

#### **10.2 Sharing Assessment Information**

- Relevant assessment information will be shared with the alternative provision provider, where required, to support accurate tracking of pupil progress and attainment.

#### **10.3 Access Arrangements**

- Awarding bodies may make special arrangements for pupils with:
  - Permanent or long-term disabilities and learning difficulties.
  - Temporary disabilities or illnesses.
- Applications for access arrangements (e.g., extra time, rest breaks, use of technology, modified papers) will be submitted by the school, or by the Local Authority if more appropriate, at the earliest opportunity in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments guidance.
- The school will ensure that pupils and parents are fully informed of the support available and the process for applying.

### **11. Monitoring and Review**

#### **11.1 Annual Review**

- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Local Advisory Committee to ensure compliance with statutory guidance and effectiveness in practice.

#### **11.2 Communication of Changes**

- Any updates or amendments to the policy will be clearly communicated to:
  - All staff involved in supporting pupils with additional health needs.
  - Parents and carers of affected pupils.
- Training and guidance will be updated accordingly to reflect changes.

### **12. Linked Policies**

This policy contributes to the review and revision of related school policies, including:

- Accessibility Plan
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy