

Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School Policy



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE



Partnership Learning

Approved by: Ms Leila Amri
Reviewed and evaluated: September 2025
Ratified by Governors: September 2025
Next Review date: September 2026

[Contents](#)

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Aims.....	3
3. Legislation and Guidance.....	4
4. Definition of Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school.....	4
5. Responsibility of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Local Authority.....	5
6. The responsibilities of the School.....	6
7. Managing Absences.....	9
8. Support for Pupils.....	10
9. Reintegration into the School.....	11

1. Introduction

Partnership Learning aims to support the Local Authority of their schools to ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs are both kept safe but also given access to the curriculum. Due to the nature of their health needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their school and the 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 the school and will work with the Local Authority, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

At Riverside Bridge School, we aim to ensure that all children, regardless of circumstance or setting receive a good education to enable them to shape their own future. Where children are unable to attend school because of their health, the school will follow Department of Education Guidance and work with The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Local Authority who have the responsibility to arrange suitable full-time education (or part-time when appropriate for the child's needs) for children who are unable to attend a mainstream or special school because of their health.

The Local Authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for children who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision. There will, however, be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the Local Authority, for example, where the child can still attend school with some support. Where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child; or where arrangements have been made for the child to be educated in a hospital by an on-site hospital school, we would not expect the Local Authority to become involved in such arrangements unless it had reason to think that the education being provided to the child was not suitable or, while otherwise suitable, was not full-time or for the number of hours the child could benefit from without adversely affecting their health. This might be the case where for example, the child can attend school but only intermittently.

2. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs.

- pupils, staff and parents/carers understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority.

3. Legislation and guidance

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'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Partnership Learning and School policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

It also based on guidance provided by our Local Authority.

4. Definition of Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school

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;
- emotional difficulties or school refusal;
- progressive conditions;
- terminal illnesses;
- chronic illnesses.

Children who are unable to attend school for health reasons may attend any of the following:

- hospital school - a special school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment;
- home tuition - a tuition service that acts as a communication channel between schools and pupils on occasions where pupils are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment;
- medical PRUs - local authority establishments that provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

5. Responsibility of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Local Authority

Where the Local Authority is involved in arranging provision, the expectation from the school is that the Local Authority will:

- 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;
- 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 and allows them to take appropriate external tests, prevents them from slipping behind their peers in school and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible;
- 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, provide part-time education on a basis they consider to be in the child's best interests. The nature of the provision must be responsive to the demands of what may be a changing health status;
- set up a personal education plan (PEP) , which should ensure that the school, the Local Authority, hospital school or other provider can work together;
- ensure effective collaboration between all relevant services (Local Authority, CAMHS, NHS, schools and, where relevant, school nurses) in delivering effective education for children with additional health needs;

- have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs, and parents/carers should know who that person is. This person is Amila Sarwar for the Local Authority who will be liaising with the Deputy Headteacher from Riverside Bridge School;
- 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 such as 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.

6. The responsibilities of the School

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

Where a child is absent from school for medical reasons, the school will provide education tasks and resources for use at home when the child is well enough to engage in education.

The Deputy Headteacher will be responsible for making and monitoring these arrangements. A meeting will be made with parents/carers to discuss arrangements for working from home or hospital. A plan will be drawn up detailing agreed actions from the discussion, the plan will be signed by school and parents/carers. The plan will then be carried out to deliver education to the child.

Arrangements could include sending work home, attending a hospital school or face-to-face lessons via an online platform may be arranged by class teachers.

When an absence is known to be more than 15 days or exceeds 15 days, then home tuition should be offered to the child. This may be provided through the school's resources or via the Barking & Dagenham Tuition Service.

Where a child is admitted to hospital, the school will liaise with the teaching service to inform them of the curriculum areas the pupil should be covering during their absence. Where possible, the school will plan the educational programme of the pupil with the service provider, taking account (as appropriate) of the medical condition, treatment, effects of medication, therapeutic programmes provided and the duration of absence from school.

The school will aim to ensure maximum continuity of education for the pupil by providing medium term planning, programmes of study/schemes of work, appropriate resources, and information relating to the pupil's ability, progress to date, assessment data and special educational needs.

Where practical, the school will host review meetings as the pupil remains on the school roll and is therefore the school's responsibility.

Where pupils have recurrent admissions or have a planned admission to hospital, the school will aim to provide a pack of work for the pupil to take into hospital with them.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical 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 medical 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;
- appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with healthcare needs and liaises with parents/carers, pupils, the Local Authority, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care;
- 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;
- 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.

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/carers and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of pupils;
- 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 liaises with parents/carers, pupils, the local authority, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care;

- 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.

The named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with healthcare needs - the Deputy Headteacher, is responsible for:

- dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical need;
- actively monitoring pupils' 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/carers to determine pupils' curriculum provision 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/carers, and the local authority.

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/carers informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school;

- keeping parents/carers informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school.

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 health needs;
- attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

7. Managing Absences

Parents/Carers are 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 pupils who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the pupil's parents/carers to arrange schoolwork as soon as the pupil 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 pupil, 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 named person with responsibility for pupils with health needs will notify the Local Authority, who will take responsibility for the pupil and their education.

Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the Local Authority to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence.

For hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the Local Authority regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital.

The Local Authority will set up a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for the pupil which will allow the school, the Local Authority and the provider of the pupil's education to work together.

The school will monitor pupils' attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a pupil is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school.

The school will only remove a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where:

- the pupil has been certified by a Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school-age;
- and neither the pupil nor their parents/carers has indicated to the school their intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school-age.

A pupil unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent and certification from a Medical Officer, even if the Local Authority has become responsible for the pupil's education.

8. Support for Pupils

Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the pupil's needs and how these may be best met with the Local Authority, relevant medical professionals, parents/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil. The Local Authority expects the school to support pupils with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to pupils' curriculum provision where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.

The school will make reasonable adjustments under each pupil's individual healthcare plans (IHCPs), in accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy.

Pupils 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, the school will work with the provider of the pupil's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

Whilst a pupil is away from school, the school will work with the Local Authority to ensure the pupil can successfully remain in touch with their school using the following methods: phone calls, emails, letters, In-Touch Services, invitations to school events, cards or letters from peers and staff and website/school newsletters.

Where appropriate, the school will provide the pupil's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.

9. Reintegration into the School

Throughout the absence, the school will maintain contact with both parents/carers and the pupil. This will include regular communication via letters, newsletters, or e-mail. Both the school and the education provider will support and advise pupils and their parents/carers, as appropriate, during the absence.

The school should expect to receive regular reports and assessment of pupils' progress from the service provider during the pupil's absence and a folder of work if appropriate on return to school.

The appointed named member of staff will ensure that all relevant staff are aware of a pupil's absence and of their responsibility towards maintaining continuity of education for the child.

When a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the Local Authority.

The school will work with the Local Authority when reintegration into school is anticipated to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside school.

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

The school is aware that some pupils will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the pupil, their parents/carers and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.

The school will ensure that the pupils and staff in the School who have maintained contact with the pupil who has been absent will play a significant role helping the pupil to settle back into school.

The school will accept part-time attendance where pupils are medically unable to cope with a full day, until the pupil is able to attend for full school days.

The school will make arrangements for pupils with mobility problems to return to school, taking account of health and safety issues, organising risk assessment and seeking advice

on lifting and handling procedures where necessary. The impact on staff will be taken into account and additional support may be required from the school budget or via review and referral to the Local Authority's SEND panel.

Where appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in the development of the pupil'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 pupil.

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

- a personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with parents/carers;
- access to additional support in school;
- online access to the curriculum from home when necessary;
- movement of lessons to more accessible rooms;
- places in school to rest and/or to manage anxiety or fatigue.

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 pupil;
- clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved;
- details of social contacts, including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period;
- a program of small targets leading up to reintegration.

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

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

Any changes in the policy will be clearly communicated to all members of staff involved in supporting pupils with additional health needs, and to parents/carers and pupils themselves when appropriate.