CAMBRIAN

Nurturing Growth - Inspiring Minds

Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school Policy

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This document applies to all academies and operations of Cambrian Learning Trust.

www.cambrianlearningtrust.org

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In this document:

'The Trust', We' and 'Our' refers to the Cambrian Learning Trust.

Parent refers to:

- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child / young person
- Any person who has care of a child / young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child/young person)

1. Aims of this policy

The Cambrian Learning Trust ('the Trust') aims to support the relevant Local Authority (LA) and ensure that all pupils who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows, to enable them to reach their full potential.

Due to the nature of their health needs, some pupils 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 them back into the school as soon as they are well enough.

Each school understands that they have a continuing role in pupils' education while they are not attending the school and will work with families, the Local Authority and healthcare partners to ensure that all pupils with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- Department for Education (DfE) guidance: ensuring a good education for pupils who cannot attend school because of health needs
- DfE guidance: Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school
- DfE guidance: Equality Act 2010 Advice for Schools
- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Oxfordshire County Council Medical Needs Policy – May 2022
- Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK

2.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies which can be found on the school's website:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices

3. Local Authority duties

3.1. The LA must arrange suitable full-time education for pupils of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. Each school has a duty to support the LA in doing so.

3.2. The LA should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision.
- Ensure the education pupils 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 pupils in arranging provision.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of pupils with additional health needs and ensure parents know who this is.
- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards pupils with additional health needs.
- Regularly review the provision offered to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the pupil and that it is providing suitable education.
- Give clear policies on the provision of education for pupils and young people under and over compulsory school age.

3.3. The LA should not:

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

- Withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a pupil because of how much it will cost.
- Have policies based upon the percentage of time a pupil is able to attend school rather than whether the pupil is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.
- Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not they will arrange education for pupils or inflexible policies which result in pupils going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in)

4. Definitions

4.1. Pupils 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, school refusal, EBSA (Emotionally based school avoidance)
- Progressive conditions
- Terminal illnesses
- Chronic illnesses

4.2. Pupils who are unable to attend mainstream education 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 pupils are receiving treatment.
- **Home tuition**: many LAs have home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and pupils on occasions when they are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment.
- **Medical PRUs**: these are LA establishments that provide education for pupils unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. The Trustees have responsibility for:

- Overseeing the implementation and observance of this policy across the Trust.

5.2. The Local Governing Committee (LGC) of each school has responsibility for:

- Monitoring the appropriate implementation of this policy within the school and ensuring statutory requirements are fulfilled.

5.3. The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with this policy and the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils with health needs.
- Notifying the LA when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to health needs.
- Ensuring that there is a named member of staff, e.g. SENDCo/Pastoral Lead/Inclusion Lead, who is responsible for:
    - Dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs.
    - Actively monitoring pupils' progress and reintegration into school.
    - Supplying education providers with information about pupils' capabilities, progress and outcomes.
    - Liaising with education providers and parents to determine programmes of study whilst pupils are absent from school.
    - Keeping pupils who are absent from school informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
    - Providing a link between pupils and their parents, and the LA.

6. Managing absence

6.1. Parents should contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.

6.2. Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.

6.3. The school will provide support to a pupil who is absent because of illness, or the need to self-isolate, for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the pupils' parents. School work will be provided as soon as a pupil is well enough to complete this or is able to commence reintegration back into school. The school will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the pupil, the parents and relevant members of staff.

6.4. For periods of absence that are expected to last for 15 or more school days, either in one period of consecutive absence or cumulative or over the course of a school year, the named person with responsibility for pupils with health needs will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the pupil and the provision of appropriate education.

6.5. 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 pupils' absence.

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

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

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

- The pupil has been certified as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend the school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and
- Neither the pupil nor the parents have indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

6.9. A pupil unable to attend the school because of health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent and medical certification, even if the LA has become responsible for the pupils' education.

7. Support for pupils

7.1. Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the pupils' needs and how these may be best met with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil.

7.2. The LA expects the school to support a pupil with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.

7.3. A pupil admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital concerned.

7.4. During a period of absence, the school will work with the provider of the pupils' education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

7.5. Whilst a pupil is away from school, the school will work with the LA to ensure the pupil can successfully remain in touch with school using, for example, the following methods.

- School newsletters
- Emails
- Invitations to school events
- Cards or letters from peers and staff

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

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

- A reintegration timetable, drafted in consultation with the pupil, their family and a named staff member
- Access to additional support in school
- Online access to the curriculum from home
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at school
- Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue
- School accessibility policy

7.8. Schools recognise that mental health is a significant factor affecting attendance and that emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA), anxiety and other mental health needs require a proactive, supportive response. In line with the DfE's *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (July 2026), the school will identify emerging concerns early and aim to work collaboratively with families and professionals to understand the underlying barriers to attendance. Support plans will focus on reducing anxiety triggers, maintaining connection with school and ensuring that pupils receive the right help at the right time.

8. Reintegration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.8. 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 programme of small goals leading up to reintegration.
- Follow up procedures.

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

8.10. Following reintegration, the school will support the LA in seeking feedback from the pupil regarding the effectiveness of the process.

9. Information sharing

9.1. It is essential that all information about a pupil with health needs is kept up-to-date.

9.2. To protect confidentiality, all information-sharing techniques will be agreed with the pupil (as appropriate) and parents in advance of being used, in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

9.3. All teachers, TAs, supply and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures, via the standard school protocols for information sharing.

9.4. Parents 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.
- Provide the pupil and parents with the relevant Data Protection Privacy Notices.
- Consider how friendship groups and peers may be able to assist a pupil with health needs.

9.5. When a pupil is discharged from hospital or is returning from other education provision, the 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.

10. Record keeping

10.1. In accordance with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to a pupil.

10.2. Proper record keeping protects both staff and the pupil, and provides evidence that agreed procedures have been followed.

10.3. All records will be maintained in line with the Trust's Record Retention Policy.

11. Training

11.1. Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a pupils' return to the school.

11.2. Once a return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training before the pupils' anticipated return.

11.3. Healthcare professionals should be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required.

11.4. Training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident in their ability to support the pupil with additional health needs.

11.5. Parents of the pupil may provide specific advice but will not be the sole trainer of staff.

12. Examinations and assessments

12.1. The named member of staff will liaise with the Oxfordshire Hospital School (OHS) or other education provider over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate.

12.2. Relevant assessment information will be provided to OHS or other education provider if required.

12.3. Awarding bodies may make special arrangements for pupils 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 LA if more appropriate, as early as possible.

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the Trustees.