

THE EDUCATION OF SICK CHILDREN

Policy and guidance

Introduction

This guidance applies to pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs, who are physically ill or injured, and those who may be experiencing periods of mental ill health.

It is based on the good practice that already exists in Sefton Schools and draws upon the statutory guidance, *“Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs”* (DFE 2013)

The primary aim of educating children and young people who cannot attend school due to illness or medical reasons is to minimise, as far as possible, the disruption to normal schooling by continuing education as normally as their health needs allow.

Pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs should be able to access suitable and flexible education appropriate to their needs and the nature of the educational provision made must be responsive to the demands of a changing medical status.

The Complementary Education Service is centrally funded. One of its main roles is to support the continuing education of pupils who cannot attend school for medical reasons with minimal disruption to the education that was planned for them prior to their illness.

The main aims of the Complementary Education Service in respect of sick children are:

- To provide continuity of engagement in teaching and learning
- To enable pupils to reintegrate into mainstream provision as soon as their health needs allow
- To help pupils who have experienced a period of illness, develop their self-confidence, resilience and academic progress
- To ensure a supported reintegration to full-time education wherever possible and at the earliest opportunity, commensurate with pupils' medical progress;
- To minimise the potential underachievement and disruption that could result from being out of school
- To work in close partnership with parents and engage pupils in making decisions and exercising choice

Making a referral for educational support

All referred pupils are raised at the Monitoring and Placement Group which meets fortnightly. The group is represented by the Attendance and Welfare Service, School Health, SEN and Inclusion, Career Connect and the Complementary Education Service.

Requests for support from the Complementary Education Service should be made by the referring setting's SENDCO. The group also considers any available supporting medical advice from

Consultant Paediatricians
Specialist CAMHS Clinicians
Hospital based Paediatric Services
GPs
Clinicians and medical professionals from Alder Hey Hospital
Any other supporting services involved with pupils and their families

Action needed to initiate a referral

If after demonstrating all possible steps to support the presenting health need in school, referrals should be considered for pupils:

- with potentially long-term sickness or recurrent bouts of chronic sickness leading to sustained periods of absence
- who may be reluctant to or fail to attend school due to anxiety, phobia or other underlying condition impacting on their physical or mental health
- who are pregnant and will consequently have an interrupted education pre-and post-delivery

who may be experiencing a period of mental ill health which is impacting on their emotional health and wellbeing

Schools can support through completion of a "Request for Educational Intervention for Sick Children"

- Before making a request for support it is expected that an Early Help assessment will have been fully considered and where possible completed by the school. Schools will appoint a lead practitioner.

- For pupils experiencing mental ill health it is expected that a SEND support plan has already been devised and/or implemented before a request for support is considered.

Forms should be returned to:

CME@sefton.gov.uk

Multi Agency Planning Meeting

Once a young person has been accepted for support from the Complementary Education Service, the school should convene a multi-agency meeting within 10 school days which may include the following:

- Pupil
- Parent
- Appropriate School Staff, e.g. SENDCO, Designated Contact Teacher/Learning Mentor
- Home Tuition Manager/Complementary Education Tutor
- CAMHS Representative
- Social Worker
- Careers Service representative
- GP /medical worker /school nurse
- Designated Teacher for Young People in Public Care
- The meeting should decide:
 - The continuing education plan
 - Subjects to be studied (which will vary depending on medical condition)
 - Number of teaching sessions provided
 - How to continue links with school and peers
 - Date of next review

The role of the mainstream/special school/educational setting

Schools have a vital part to play in ensuring that pupils who are absent from school Due to ill health have the support they need to maintain their continuing education.

Good communication and co-operation between the home, school and Complementary Education is vital to enable high quality education is to be provided.

The school will remain responsible for providing the following information:

- Progress and assessment data including baseline assessments, current and target grades
- an appropriate medium-term plan for teaching and learning within core subjects
- The loan of appropriate resource materials including text books
- Details of exam specifications and entries
- Details of access arrangements

The school also remains responsible for:

- Providing a consistent point of contact for any referred pupils
- Exam entries, access arrangements, exam invigilation and any required payments for public examinations
- Disapplication of National Curriculum in order for the young person to maintain progress in core subjects if appropriate
- Careers interviews and work experience placements
- Monitoring pupil attendance and marking registers so that it is clear that the pupil is receiving education off site
- Arranging review meetings
- Procedures for ensuring that pupils are re-integrated smoothly into school when their health permits

Schools should:

- Have a policy and a named person responsible for dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs
- Nominate a governor responsible for reviewing the procedures that apply to educating young people with medical needs
- Attend all reviews of pupils' Support and Reintegration Plans
- Ensure that work is available to pupils who are absent due to illness/injury.
- Ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school because of illness are kept
- Ensure pupils are informed about and are invited whenever possible to school social and cultural events
- Ensure progress leaders/form tutors/learning mentors to phone, e-mail or send cards every few weeks to prevent a sick child and his/her family from feeling isolated from school
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers
- Engage in visits to the Pinefield Centre to familiarise with and understand the educational provision and support arrangements for pupils attending the Centre

At all times for the duration of agreed support, pupils remain the responsibility of the schools or settings where they are on roll

The Complementary Education Service will:

- Implement the agreed continuing support plan
- Carry out any relevant and agreed actions within an early help plan
- Provide teaching and learning in core subjects
- Ensure teaching takes into account pupils' cognitive abilities, preferred learning styles and social and emotional needs
- Oversee the work provided by the school in other areas of the curriculum
- Liaise closely with the host school to ensure continuity of provision
- Work with the mainstream school's attendance officer to ensure good attendance whilst on tuition and complete attendance records
- Record pupil attendance and record any attendance issues / concerns with schools
- Provide half termly pupil progress and attendance reports
- Where it would be appropriate, provide additional support to the young person to enable access to online learning packages
- Offer small group tuition, if appropriate, so that sick children do not feel isolated and to give pupils with psychological problems the chance to take small steps with re-integration
- Liaise with health and other agencies
- Attend review meetings arranged by the school
- Facilitate and support a gradual reintegration of pupils back into their school settings as and when their health needs allow
- In partnership with school, implement a reintegration plan and attend reintegration reviews as necessary
- Establish a clear plan and timetable to support the pupil's reintegration with a named member of school staff responsible for overseeing and supporting agreed arrangements
- Work with school staff in ensuring pupils are adequately prepared for examinations

Pupils recovering from illness or with continuing medical needs - help and support on return to fulltime schooling.

- The return should be planned, with a programme drawn up with the help of all agencies and services involved
- Where applicable, consideration should be given to a flexible / reduced timetable
- It might be necessary to look at special arrangements for lunchtime, or for the beginning and end of the school day
- Schools may need to look at the possibility of relocating lessons to the ground floor



- Consideration may need to be given to transition and change-over times for example allowing pupils to leave lessons five minutes early to avoid crowded corridors
- Use of pastoral support programmes, involvement with learning mentors or peer mentors will ensure young people feel supported and can communicate any issues or concerns.

It helps if school staff are aware that some returning pupils will need follow-up medical appointments. This requires sympathetic handling and provision of flexible opportunities to help pupils catch up on any lessons missed e.g. homework clubs/ lunchtime or after school study support sessions.

Working Together

- Whilst pupils are supported by the Complementary Education Service, regular termly reviews are convened by schools. Reviews enable supporting services including CAMHS, health and other professionals to share their involvement and review academic progress and attainment. Progress and outcomes in respect of pupils' emotional and physical health and wellbeing are also shared.
- Parents and carers play an important role in reviews in terms of sharing the ways in which they too can support their child's resilience, wellbeing and educational progress.
- Reviews also take into account pupils' special educational needs and any additional and different approaches or adjustments required to help them fully engage in teaching and learning. Where pupils have an education and health care plan then outcomes and provision are subject to an annual review which is convened by the relevant school setting.

For further information please contact

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