

'With Jesus we can achieve what we dream and believe'

School Mission



Children with Health Needs Who Are Unable to Attend School Policy

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment.

1. Introduction

St. Michael's Catholic Primary School works in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, medical services, other professionals and education providers to enable children and young people with medical needs who are unable to attend school to receive education in a hospital setting or at home. Our school will be proactive in promoting the education entitlement of pupils on roll and in securing effective provision.

This applies to pupils unable to attend school for reasons of sickness, injury or mental health needs where a medical practitioner considers that a child should or could not attend school. This policy is based upon the statutory guidance for Local Authorities 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs', December 2023. This comes under the category of 'education otherwise' when the child remains on the school roll and is educated temporarily in a hospital setting or through home tuition.

The principles underlying this policy are:

- The school recognises that children absent for medical reasons are entitled to continuity of education as far as their condition permits and acknowledges that it has a central role to play in securing and ensuring the continuity of education.
- The education provided shall be of high quality and as broad and balanced as possible such that reintegration is achievable as smoothly as possible.
- If a health-based absence is for less than 15 days, schools will continue to employ local arrangements, for instance to send work home or arrange access to existing online learning facilities and blended learning. This period can be extended for additional time if parents, children and school colleagues agree.

2. School's Responsibility

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.

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, 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 education that is:

- Equivalent to the education that children would receive in school, though the hours of tuition could be fewer as support is direct.
- Possibly be part time where full time education is not in a child's best interests of the child is not well enough to manage full time
- Be of a good quality, in order to ensure positive outcomes in terms of progress for the child.
- 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 School will continue to maintain and update records for the child or young person, which may include: assessment data, exam arrangements, SEN support plan, early help or safeguarding as relevant and health-based support.
- A named person will be identified in school to contact, along with a governor to review support and school policies for children with medical needs.
- For children not attending education on site, at least weekly contact will be maintained, work arranged as well as social opportunities which may be online.

3. Reintegration into the School

- The school will work with providers of education, doctors, educational psychologists, Personal Advisers, indeed all relevant professionals, the parents/carers and the pupil themselves to plan a gradual and sensitively orchestrated reintegration into school.
- 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, organizing risk assessment and seeking advice on lifting and handling procedures and where necessary to create an Individual Healthcare Plan.
- The school will consider any reasonable adjustments to provide suitable access for a child whose condition amounts to a disability.
- Where the absence is likely to be lengthy, the reintegration plan may only take shape nearer to the likely date of return, to avoid putting unsuitable pressure on an ill child in the early stages of their absence.
- Throughout the absence, the school will maintain contact with both parents/carers and the pupil. This will include invitations to events and productions at the school as well as regular communication via letters, newsletters or e-mail.

- The school 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.

4. Advice for Parents/Carers

- If a parent / carer has concerns that their child's health is having an impact on their learning, they should contact the school to discuss how they could properly support the child to enable them to have full access to education.
- If it becomes clear that the child can no longer attend their home school access because of their health needs, the school will inform the local authority as quickly as possible to ensure minimum disruption to the child's education.

5. Children with health needs and an Education, Health and Care Plan

- Support for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be reviewed in line with the SEND Code of Practice Statutory Guidance (2015).
- When children with EHCPs are not attending due to health needs, this will be communicated at the earliest opportunity by school to the local authority SEN officer.

This policy will be reviewed May 2025