



Policy on children with health needs who cannot attend school 2024

St Laurence School Academy Trust

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| Date of last review: | May 2024 | Review period: | 1 year |
| Date of next review: | May 2025 | Owner: | Deputy Headteacher |



St Laurence School Policy on children with health needs who cannot attend school

1) Introduction

St Laurence School is committed to supporting students with health needs that prevent them from attending school, as evidenced by the student's health care team. A student who has health needs should have the same opportunities as their peer group, we will do all we can to support students access a suitable curriculum if the student is unable to access our provision.

2) Purpose

To enable a clear understanding of what St Laurence School's role is, in supporting student with health needs who cannot attend school. St Laurence School is responsible for the education of students who are on our roll and are well enough to attend our setting. St Laurence School aims to ensure that all students 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. When a student is unwell and we have received medical evidence to say that a student is not medically fit to attend school, we will work with their health team and hold a Medical Education Plan (MEP) meeting, at which the health team are able to prescribe the amount of education the student is well enough to attend.

Due to the nature of their health needs, some students may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, students should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate students back into school as soon as they are well enough. We will support any alternative form of provision, whilst setting this up.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a student's education whilst they are not in school and will work with the LA, 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.

3) 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 our school is responsible for when education is being provided by the local authority

4) Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the following legislation:

[The Education Act 1996](#)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Equalities Act 2010

It is also based on the following statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE):

Alternative provision

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

This policy also follows guidance provided by our local authority. WiltsLA-Medical Needs Education Policy-FINAL-Sept22LT.pdf

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

5) Roles and Responsibilities of Wiltshire schools (defined by WiltsLA-Medical Needs Education Policy-FINAL-Sept22LT.pdf)

At all times, the pupil remains the responsibility of the school where they are on roll. In accordance with statutory and other advisory guidance, Wiltshire schools must:

- Have a policy and named appropriate person responsible for dealing with pupils unable to attend school because of their medical needs
- Keep the pupil on roll and include them in any planning
- Schools retain a full safeguarding responsibility for all pupils on their school's roll. Schools should ensure they carry out any necessary welfare checks. Schools must decide how to fulfil this responsibility, based upon their knowledge of the child and family.
- Provide work and materials if pupils are absent for up to 15 school days
- Co-ordinate, implement and regularly review Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP) / Personal or Medical Education Plans (MEP); be active in the monitoring of pupils who may attend school for partial days; monitor the progress and reintegration into school of those who have been absent because of their medical needs, liaising with other agencies (including the LA and Education Welfare Service) as necessary
- Where appropriate, complete and register a Reduced Educational Provision (REP) Plan
- Where appropriate, consider any additional 'first line' adjustments and support to assist pupils with medical needs. This may include alternative provision and/or online learning arrangements, for example. Where schools have arranged alternative provision, the pupil's attendance and progress at the AP setting/intervention remains the responsibility of the 'home' or registered school and should be regularly reviewed
- Draw up an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) / Personal or Medical Education Plan (MEP) for any pupil with diagnosed medical conditions to be reviewed at least annually in continuing partnership with the pupil, parents and professionals (also see Section 4 below)
- Understand the school's duties under the Equalities Act with regard to reasonable adjustments for pupils who have a disability
- Ensure that pupils who have SEN but do not have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have their SEN mentioned in their IHCP or MEP
- Ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs are kept informed about school social events and can participate. Examples of these are homework clubs, study support and other activities deemed suitable by the child's health care team.

- Ensure that arrangements are made for pupils who are due to undertake public examinations, including entrance arrangements and any assistance requirements such as help with scribing, alternative venue and/or invigilation needs and the submission of mitigation or special consideration requirements, where appropriate
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers for example through visits, use of Information Technology and social events.

6) If our school makes the arrangements

Initially, our school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver the same high standard of education for children with health needs who cannot attend school. This may come in the form of advice and direction to resources that the pupil can use while unable to be in school. However, this will be on guidance from the child's medical health team, the school will require medical evidence from the medical team to advise the school of what is achievable for the pupil. As a school we are responsible for the first 15 days of absence.

If the absence becomes longer than 15 days consecutive or non-consecutive the school will make a referral to MNERS (see section 8.1) who will take over responsibility for the pupils education. Regular monitoring of the plan will be completed, and adjustments will be made in view of new medical evidence or advice from the child's medical team.

The professionals working with the pupil may be as follows:

- Head of House/Assistant Head of House
- Medical Administrator
- Pupils medical team (this may include but not limited to, GP, CAMHS)
- Curriculum team
- Deputy Head – Quality of education: Attitudes

As part of ongoing review of the pupils medical needs we would work with the relevant professionals to plan a reintegration plan for a student returning from a period of time medical need. This may be in conjunction with the local authority but as a minimum this would be expected to involve the parent, the school and the medical team.

7) If the local authority makes the arrangements

If our school cannot make suitable arrangements, or if it is clear that a child will be away from school for 15 days (consecutive or over the course of the year) or more because of their health needs, Wiltshire LA will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.

When the local authority arranges alternative education, the education should begin as soon as possible, and at the latest by the 6th day of the child's absence from school.

Where full-time education is not in the child's best interest for reasons relating to their physical or mental health, the local authority must arrange part-time education on whatever basis it considers to be in the child's best interests.

8.1) Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service (MNERS)

Who is eligible?

- MNERS can assist children and young people of compulsory school age where there is a diagnosed medical illness or health need, which prevents the pupil attending their usual place of school.
- Educational support will be dependent upon the individual needs of the young person and informed by advice from treating medical professional/s.
- MNERS in Wiltshire does not accept referrals for children and young people who are electively home educated (EHE) or attending school on a part-time timetable.
- For children and young people with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), any bespoke education provision needs will be managed by the SEND Team.
- Further general service information about MNERS is available on the Right Choice website: Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service
- Up to date written medical evidence (from a Consultant level clinician) is required for referral to this service and should be provided by the school; in conjunction with the consent of parents/carers with parental responsibility.
- Medical evidence should detail the diagnosis, treatment plan, expected period that a young person cannot attend the usual school setting and the support required to enable them to reintegrate back into their school.
- For pupils diagnosed with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), medical evidence should, where possible, specify the recovery programme the pupil is following. This may include, for example, periods of school attendance, periods of rest and periods of activity that may be completed at home or in school.
- Please note that MNERS requests updated medical information every 6 months.

8.2) Referral information:

- Where schools (in Wiltshire) consider they are unable to manage an Individual Health Care Plan / Personal or Medical Education Plan and 1st line interventions (including for example alternative provision options using additional LA SLA funding for schools) have not been successful, a referral using the DART (Diagnostic Assessment and Referral Tool) system may be made.
- The referral will require a detailed account of how the young person has been supported to date and provide an indication of why additional support is required.
- It is expected that all students referred to MNERS will have an existing support plan in place at school (e.g. My Support Plan, Early Support Assessment, IHCP or MEP) and schools are also asked to complete and submit a MNERS 'pre-referral checklist'.
- To avoid delays; Consultant level medical evidence must be included with the DART/SARF to support the referral being made.
- Medical evidence will continually be reviewed with the expectation that medical advice is updated within each 6-month period. This assists the service to make ongoing decisions about education provision and/or reintegration planning.
- Should medical evidence no longer be available, or recommends a return to school, then MNERS input will cease.

8.3) Continuance of provision:

- Where a referral to MNERS is accepted, the education arrangements will be dependent upon the particular needs of the young person and subject to ongoing review (usually at ½ termly intervals).

- This will routinely incorporate consideration of return to school or a phased reintegration into school. Where a DART referral is declined or is unsuitable, advice and information will be provided to the referrer.
- Cases may also be referred by the MNERS Manager for further consideration and review via the LA's CMOE monitoring arrangements.

9.1) In cases where the local authority makes the arrangements, St Laurence school will:

- Provide to the local authority, at agreed intervals, the full name and address of any pupils of compulsory school age who are not attending school regularly due to their health needs
- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents/carers to ensure the best outcomes for the child
- Collaborate with the local authority to ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum, including making information available about the curriculum
- Along with the local authority, regularly review the provision offered to ensure it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education
- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required
- When a child has complex or long-term health issues, work with the local authority, parents/carers and the relevant health services to decide how best to meet the child's needs (e.g. through individual support, arranging alternative provision or by them remaining at school, being supported at home and back into school after each absence)
- Where possible, allow the child to take examinations at the same time as their peers, and work with the local authority to support this
- Help make sure that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully

9.2) When reintegration is anticipated, work with the local authority to:

- Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the child to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible, including through digital resources
- Enable the child to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, digital learning platforms, social media platforms, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school), and, where appropriate, through educational visits
- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school, which includes extra support to fill any gaps arising from the absence
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made

10) Monitoring arrangements

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

11) Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Policy