DDAT
Derby Diocesan Academy Trust

Children with Medical Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy

September 2026

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1. 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, parents, and governors understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority.

DDAT aims to ensure that all children 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 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.

DDAT understands that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not in 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.

The Trust recognises that many pupils with medical conditions may also be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Schools will consider reasonable adjustments to ensure pupils are not disadvantaged and can continue to access education as fully as their health needs allow.

2. 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'
- Department for Education: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026)
- Department for Education: Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions (December 2015)
- Department for Education: Allergy Safety in Schools (July 2026)
- Department for Education: Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026)

See Appendix 1 for further information on support available.

3. The School’s Responsibilities

Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the pupil's needs with parents/carers and consider how their needs may be best met in conjunction with the LA, relevant medical professionals and, where appropriate, the pupil.

The school will support pupils with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or the school may make reasonable adjustments to pupils' programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments. These reasonable adjustments may be recorded in a pupil’s individual healthcare plan (IHCPs), in accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

The school will make reasonable adjustments under pupils' individual healthcare plans, in accordance with the managing medical conditions and first aid policy.

Information within plans will include:

- The medical condition, its triggers, signs, symptoms, and treatments.
- The pupil’s resulting needs, including medication (dose, side effects and storage) and other treatments, time, facilities, equipment, testing, access to food and drink where this is used to manage their condition, dietary requirements, and environmental issues.
- Specific support for the pupil’s educational, social, and emotional needs.
- The level of support needed and who will provide this support, their training needs, expectations of their role and confirmation of proficiency to provide support for the child’s medical condition from a healthcare professional; and cover arrangements for when they are unavailable.
- Who in the school needs to be aware of the child’s condition and the support required.
- Arrangements for written permission from parents and the headteacher for medication to be administered by a member of staff or self-administered by the pupil during school hours.
- separate arrangements or procedures required for school trips or other school activities outside of the normal school timetable that will ensure the child can participate.
- what to do in an emergency, including whom to contact, and contingency arrangements. Some children may have an emergency healthcare plan prepared by their lead clinician that could be used to inform development of their individual healthcare plan.

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. Where

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

Whilst a pupil is away from school, the school will ensure the pupil can successfully remain in touch with their school through school newsletters, emails, Invitations to school events, cards or letters from peers and staff.

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver a suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school. The Headteacher and SENDCo will be responsible for making and monitoring these arrangements. The school will discuss arrangements for working from home or hospital with parents / carers. 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, the pupil attending a hospital school whilst they are an in-patient , a member of staff attending the home to support work or access to online learning such as Google Classroom, **blended learning platforms**, or **live-streamed classes**, Work will be prepared by class teachers. Once the pupil is able, they will be integrated back into school with alternative arrangements to make it possible. These will be discussed with parents and the pupil in conjunction with any medical advice from other professionals.

A reintegration plan will normally be developed following a significant period of absence. This may include phased attendance, curriculum adjustments, pastoral support, access arrangements and regular review meetings with the pupil and family.

Educational provision should be full-time, or as close to full-time as the child’s health condition allows, as advised by medical professionals.

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

- a personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with parents and the 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.
- alternative provision for break or lunch times.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school for medical reasons, decisions regarding educational provision will be informed by medical evidence and professional advice wherever possible. The Trust will work in partnership with parents, healthcare professionals and the Local Authority to ensure provision remains appropriate, proportionate and responsive to changes in need.

4. The Board of Trustees and Head Teacher

The Board of Trustees and Head Teacher are 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, pupils, the LA, 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 LA when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs.

5. The SENDCo

The SENDCo is responsible for:

- In collaboration with pastoral staff, dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school including attendance tracking, academic progress, social reintegration. Attendance and engagement with any alternative educational provision will be reviewed regularly throughout the period of absence.
- Supplying pupils' education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress, and outcomes.
- Liaising with the headteacher, education providers and parents to determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school.
- Liaising with Derby City or Derbyshire County Council (delete as appropriate) inclusion team to provide a link between pupils and their parents, and the LA.

6. Teachers and Support Staff

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, including school trips and visits
- 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 informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school.

7. The Local Authority

The Trust would endeavour to meet the needs of an absent pupil's education and school would make suitable arrangements for provision, however if this were not to be the case, assistance would be sought from the Local Authority. The school would contact the Derby City or Derbyshire County Council (delete as appropriate) for further assistance. In cases where the Local Authority makes arrangements, the school agrees to work collaboratively with the Local Authority to ensure the most suitable provision is in place for the child and communication with parents/carers and the pupils would be maintained. The Local Authority must not place the responsibility of arranging education provision on parents or require them to provide medical evidence beyond that which is reasonable and already available.

8. Absences

Parents 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. Cases will usually require medical evidence and consultation with parents to ensure that a pupil's medical condition is clear and what support is required.

The school will provide educational support for pupils with medical conditions who are absent from school because of illness. 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. Pupils who are absent because of illness can be supported through liaison with the pupil's parents. This may be through schoolwork being provided for completion at home as soon as the pupil is able to cope with it, including the use of remote education. Alternatively, it may be possible for part-time education at school or a gradual phased return to full-time attendance.

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 pupil's absence. 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. The school will monitor pupil attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether

a pupil is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school. Where a pupil's absence raises safeguarding concerns or places them at risk of becoming a child missing education, the school will follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and local authority procedures.

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 LA, and decisions about the education of the pupil, will be made jointly with the school, parents and Trust representative. In accordance with DfE guidance, suitable full-time education should begin as soon as a child is unable to attend school, and by the 15th day of absence at the latest, unless their health needs prevent this.

The Trust recognises that attendance difficulties arising from genuine medical need should be considered separately from attendance concerns arising from non-medical factors. Schools will work with families and relevant professionals to understand barriers to attendance and identify appropriate support.

9. Definitions

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.
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) or Emotionally Based Barriers to Attendance (EBBA), where medical or mental health evidence indicates that health needs are affecting attendance.
- Progressive conditions.
- Terminal illnesses.
- Chronic illnesses.

Children 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 the child is receiving treatment
- Home tuition: the school will provide appropriate provision after consultation with the pupil, parent/carers, and medical professionals. LAs also have home tuition services that act 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: these are LA establishments that provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

10. Links to Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility Plan
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions Policy
- Allergy Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust and approved by the Trust Board annually or in light of regulatory changes. 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 and pupils themselves.

This policy applies to: All Trust settings and any school converting into the trust since the last review and approval of this policy.

Where this policy states ‘school’ this means any of our educational establishments and the wider Trust.

Where this policy states ‘Headteacher’ this also includes ‘Head of School’ and Executive Headteacher.