



EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL NEEDS POLICY



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1. Context

1.1 Our vision is to enable all Telford and Wrekin children and young people to access a good or better education, where their needs are met, so that they can learn successfully and each reach their full potential. See also Telford and Wrekin Belonging Strategy, SEND & AP Strategy and Accessibility Policy.

1.2 This policy sets out how Telford and Wrekin Council will work with all agencies so that Telford children who are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) and who are not able to attend school because of their health needs¹ are supported to achieve our vision.

1.3 Telford and Wrekin recognises that there is a shared responsibility between the local authority (LA), schools and partner agencies to successfully implement this policy and promote high quality integrated service provision to support positive outcomes for this cohort of children and young people.

1.4 The provision for children who are medically unfit to attend school will ensure that:

- ☑ Pupils make good progress in their education and do not fall behind their peers, particularly in key subjects. (Priority 1 Telford and Wrekin Belonging Strategy)
- ☑ Disruption to learning is minimised and there is a continuity of education provision within the school curriculum. (Priority 2 Telford and Wrekin Belonging Strategy)
- ☑ Pupils are able to obtain qualifications as appropriate to their age and abilities. (Priority 1 Telford and Wrekin Belonging Strategy)
- ☑ Pupils are able to reintegrate successfully back into school and that this takes place as soon as their health permits. (Priority 1 & 4 Telford and Wrekin Belonging Strategy)
- ☑ Pupils continue to feel fully part of their school community and are able to stay in contact with classmates. (Priority 1 Telford and Wrekin Belonging Strategy)

2. The Statutory Framework

2.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on the governing bodies of Maintained schools, Academies, Alternative Provision Academies and Pupil Referral Units to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. For more information regarding the duties of schools please refer to the Statutory Guidance Supporting Pupils at School with a Medical Condition (DfE 2015)

¹ For the purpose of this policy a Telford child is defined as a child where those who have parental responsibility and who are the main care giver reside within Telford and Wrekin LA. This includes:

- those who access their education in neighbouring LAs and who are ordinarily resident in Telford
- those children who are in care to Telford and Wrekin Local Authority and are placed in another LA area for their care and/or education provision. This does not include those children who are in care to another LA and are placed in Telford for their care and/or education provision.

2 Children unable to attend school because of health needs will have written confirmation from an appropriate medical professional that they are unable to attend school because they are medically unfit but that they are well enough to access education.

2.2 The key points of the guidance are as follows:

- ☑ Pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education.
- ☑ Governing bodies must ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions.
- ☑ Governing bodies should ensure that school leaders consult health and social care professionals, pupils and parents to ensure that the needs of children with medical conditions are properly understood and effectively supported.

2.3 The primary route to support young people with medical conditions, in terms of both physical and mental health, is through the school; so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential. In some cases, this will require flexibility, schools should make reasonable adjustments. Where appropriate to meet the needs of a young person, schools could design programmes of study that rely on part-time attendance at school in combination with alternative provision.

For further guidance please refer to the DfE publication 'Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance', February 2023.

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK
(www.gov.uk)

2.4 Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and section 3 of the Children, Schools and Families Act 2010, place local authorities under a duty to arrange full-time education for all children who, for reasons which relate to illness, exclusion or otherwise, would not receive suitable education unless arrangements are made for them.

2.5 In January 2013 the Department for Education published statutory guidance entitled 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs – Statutory guidance for local authorities'. This provides comprehensive guidance to LAs and related services and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the LA and school. This policy should be read alongside this guidance and any future relevant guidance.

Specifically:

2.5.1 There will be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the LA – for example, where the child can still attend school with some support; where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child; or where arrangements have been made for the child to be educated in a hospital by an on-site

hospital school. We would not expect the LA to become involved in such arrangements unless it had reason to think that the education being provided to the child was not suitable or, while otherwise suitable, was not full-time or for the number of hours the child could benefit from without adversely affecting their health. This might be the case where, for example, the child can attend school but only intermittently.

2.5.2 The law does not specify the point during a child's illness when it becomes the LA's responsibility to secure for the child suitable full-time education. Schools would usually provide support to children who are absent from school because of illness for a shorter period, for example when experiencing chicken pox or influenza. In some cases, where a child is hospitalised, the hospital may provide education for the child within the hospital and the LA would not need to arrange any additional education, provided it is satisfied that the child is receiving suitable education. More generally, LAs should be ready to take responsibility for any child whose illness will prevent them from attending school for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, and where suitable education is not otherwise being arranged.

2.6 In considering these two pieces of statutory guidance in tandem, it is clear that:

- Where a child is absent for less than 15 days, the responsibility for their education rests with the school where they are on roll.
- Where a child is away from school for 15 days or more because of ongoing health needs whether consecutive or cumulative across the school year, the school should make arrangement to support the young person either through reintegration into school, through other means such as alternative provision or through education out of school.
- Where a child is away from school for 15 days or more because of ongoing health needs whether consecutive or cumulative across the school year, and either they are not on roll in a school or the school is unable to provide suitable education, then the LA will assume the responsibility for the education of the child. There is an expectation that all young people will either remain on roll or be placed on roll in a registered school throughout this process.

2.7 In practice, in Telford and Wrekin, there is some cross over between the second and third bullet points in clause 2.6. Therefore, where a child is absent for 15 days or more and the school is concerned that they will be unable to make arrangements to support the education of the young person, they should notify the Local Authority as described below with a view to arranging a 'tripartite meeting' between school, LA and parents.

2.8 The DfE departmental advice, 'Mental health and behaviour in schools', March 2016 clarifies the responsibilities of the school, outlining what they can do and how to support a child or young person whose behaviour may relate to an unmet mental health need.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

2.9 For children who are Electively Home Educated, it would be assumed that the child is receiving appropriate education in the home environment, unless this has been deemed unsuitable by an EHE Adviser.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Local Authority

3.1 The LA is responsible for ensuring that there is a named senior officer with responsibility for the provision of education for children and young people who are unable to attend school because of medical needs. In this authority the officer is Andy Cooke, Service Delivery Manager for Alternative Provision and Children in Care. Contact should be through the medical needs email address: medicalneeds@telford.gov.uk

3.2 The LA is responsible for arranging a suitable full time³ education for children who have health needs that mean that they are unable to attend school for a period that exceeds fifteen days, consecutive or cumulative, as a result of the same condition and either they are not on roll in a school (excluding EHE young people) or the school is unable to provide suitable education.

³ *By full-time we mean provision that is equivalent to the value of education that a child would receive in school. This is generally considered to be 25 hours per week though may vary due to the needs of the medical condition.*

3.3 Where a child is receiving tuition on a 1:1 basis then access to 25 hours per week may not be appropriate as the provision is more concentrated. In such cases the provision will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be tailored to the child's age, aptitude, and ability and any other individual need (for example, health, social and emotional needs, special educational needs or disability).

3.4 The LA will facilitate effective liaison with all agencies, including medical professionals and will ensure that there is a minimum of delay in starting appropriate support. The role of the School Nurse is pivotal in linking agencies, providing information about a particular condition and supporting schools to plan for the child's return.

3.5 Education may be arranged:

- Within the home setting overseen by staff from the child's school or a commissioned tutor or through a supervised online education provision
- Within an identified community setting overseen by a tutor from the Student Engagement Programme, a tutor commissioned by the LA or through a supervised online education provision.
- Within one of the Student Engagement Programme's provisions such as at House 1 or at the PRH Hospital Provision (in partnership with Shropshire LA), commissioned by the home school.

- ☑ Within a NHS hospital setting in Telford and Wrekin shared service with Shropshire LA overseen by the home school, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire LA.
- ☑ Within a NHS hospital setting in another LA and in accordance with local arrangements.
- ☑ Where a child has a mental health condition that requires treatment in a specialist centre that is commissioned through NHSE the LA may commission the hospital school to provide education or may arrange for education to be provided by the home school or by a tutor commissioned by the LA or through an online education provision.

3.6 Where the LA has arranged for education for a young person, the LA will track the attendance and progress of that young person.

Schools

3.7 All schools are required to establish written policies and procedures for dealing with the education of pupils with medical needs, including the completion of Health Care Plans as appropriate.

3.8 If a pupil is absent from their home school (school they are on roll at) for 15 days or less then it will remain the responsibility of the home school to arrange suitable education provision, in the event that they are deemed well enough to participate in education activities.

3.9 If a pupil is absent from their home school for 15 days or more because of ongoing health needs whether consecutive or cumulative across the school year, the school should make arrangement to support the young person either through reintegration into school, through other means such as alternative provision or through education out of school.

3.10 The school should publish a policy to describe supporting pupils with medical conditions that should include information such as how the school will make educational provision for pupils, what strategies will be used to ensure support for pupils with long-term absences and how pupils will access curriculum materials and public examinations.

3.11 The school will be expected to nominate a teacher to act as the named contact for each child who will facilitate communication generally between the pupil and the school, arrange reviews and keep records.

3.12 The school will monitor pupil attendance and mark registers so that they show if a pupil is, or ought to be, receiving education. Children will not be removed from school roll unless medical evidence states that the child will be unable to attend school for the rest of their compulsory schooling. For further advice on how to mark the pupil's absence on the school register, please contact the Attendance Support Team; attendancesupportteam@telford.gov.uk.

4. Identification and referral

4.1 This policy applies to all children and young people who have a health need and their absence has been validated as necessary by an appropriate specialist medical professional; this could include a consultant community paediatrician; a specialist consultant in acute services; a specialist consultant psychiatrist.

4.2 Health problems can include physical illnesses, injuries and clinically defined mental health problems certified by medical evidence.

4.3 All referrals must be verified, in writing, by an appropriate medical specialist and should indicate:

- Whether the child is not well enough to attend school
- That the child is well enough to participate in education
- For how long support might be required
- A description of medical needs and what medical intervention is currently in place

4.4 For children who have returned from hospitals or other in-patient units out of county, medical evidence will be sought from the discharging hospital medical staff. This should inform the appropriate education placement on return to the LA.

4.5 Referrals to the LA for children who are absent for 15 days or more and who meet the above criteria for medical evidence should be made to: medicalneeds@telford.gov.uk

5. Provision:

Education for children who are admitted to hospital where the hospital is in Telford and Wrekin

5.1 Educational provision for pupils who are physically ill, injured or who have clinically defined mental health problems and who are admitted to an NHS hospital provision will be the responsibility of the local authority in which the hospital is located.

5.2 Where Telford children are admitted to an NHS hospital provision provided by SATHT (Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust) education provision is coordinated through the PRH Hospital Provision (in partnership with Shropshire LA). The Hospital Educational Coordinator will liaise with the home school to ensure that the home school is setting appropriate work to allow for curriculum continuity.

5.3 The aim of the Service is to support pupils by providing appropriate education for the period they are unable to access mainstream school. The Service recognises that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their mainstream school and aim to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream education at the earliest opportunity.

5.4 Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire LA's will provide direct support for medically referred pupils and work closely with other agencies to ensure pupils continue to have access to those agencies that are involved with their education, health and/or care provision. The Service will maintain links with mainstream school and will keep parents fully informed in both process and decision making regarding the child's programme and progress.

Education for Children who are admitted to hospital where the hospital is in another LA area

5.5 Sometimes children are admitted to hospital in another LA area. This is likely to be because they require access to specialist services that are not available locally.

5.6 Where Telford and Wrekin children are admitted to an NHS hospital provision, that is not located within Shropshire or Telford and Wrekin, education provision will be arranged through the LA in which the hospital is located e.g. where a child is admitted to Birmingham Children's Hospital, Birmingham City Council will be responsible for making appropriate education provision until point at which they are discharged.

Private hospital provision (Tier 4, mental health)

5.7 Occasionally children may require hospitalisation due to mental ill health. Where this is the case the LA will expect that a multi-agency meeting will have been arranged with the aim of avoiding admission and the LA will have been invited to attend.

5.8 In the event of an admission the responsibility for notifying the LA lies with the Integrated Care System (ICS). The ICS and/or hospital school should not automatically expect the LA to agree to commission education provision from the hospital school. Decisions with regard to education arrangements will be made following a multi-agency meeting attended by a representative of the LA. The LA must be satisfied that the child is well enough to access education provision.

5.9 The LA will consider all available information in order to reach a decision about the most appropriate education arrangements. Any decisions will take account of the views of health professionals involved in treatment; the views and wishes of the parents and child and the views of the home school.

Provision may include:

- The home school providing work, this may be appropriate where a child is preparing for external examinations
- A tutor may be commissioned to provide personalised provision within the hospital setting
- The LA may commission the hospital school to provide suitable education.

5.10 If the admission is an assessment placement only the LA will not be responsible for arranging education provision during the assessment period unless the assessment is required to take place over an extended time i.e. longer than 15 days.

Education provision where there is no admission to a hospital

5.11 Occasionally a child may not be well enough to attend a mainstream school but can access their education within a small setting where the education can be tailored to the ongoing medical needs of an individual child. Where this is the case schools may have their own inclusion units to support this, alongside the commission of Student Engagement Provision (SEP) at House 1, to support the needs of the child where this is appropriate and suitable for the child.

5.12 The aim of the SEP is to support pupils by providing appropriate education for the period they are unable to access mainstream school. The SEP recognises that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their mainstream school and aim to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream education at the earliest opportunity.

5.13 House 1 will maintain good links with the child or young person's home school and, through regular reviewing, involve them in decisions concerning the educational programme and pupil progress. This should also include social and emotional needs, for example ensuring that learners feel fully part of their school community, are able to stay in contact with classmates, and have access to the opportunities enjoyed by their peers.

5.14 Educational support via House 1 is agreed through the Telford and Wrekin Fair Access Panel (please see Telford and Wrekin FAP Protocol), schools are required to provide baseline assessment information and curriculum plans to inform the planning of educational provision. This information, along with advice from medical professionals, will ensure that the education provided is effectively matched to the child or young person's unique needs.

5.15 A pupil's objectives and individual education plans should be prepared by the provider in consultation with the school, should be in writing and should be regularly reviewed and monitored by all parties, including the learner and their parent/carers.

5.16 During the period the pupil is attending House 1 and whilst they remain on the roll of the school, the school will be expected to take an active role in supporting through supply of curriculum materials and books; liaising with staff over planning; making sure access is available for examination materials; making arrangements for examinations and where appropriate and most importantly, ensuring that there is a named teacher within school who can co-ordinate and support links with House 1.

5.17 Learners will be supported by both their home school and House 1 to access examinations. It is the school's responsibility, where appropriate for the needs of the child, to ensure learners are prepared for and entered for public examinations and national tests, and

should meet all the fees associated with this process. Special arrangements for taking external examinations should be discussed and agreed at regular review meetings.

Online Learning

5.18 Online learning tools may be used to support the learner's education. The learner should, where available, have access to ICT equipment and to the school's intranet and internet. However, it is not always appropriate that online learning will not be used in isolation and should complement face to face education.

6. Referral for education arrangements to be made by the LA

6.1 Where a child is away from school for 15 days or more because of ongoing health needs whether consecutive or cumulative across the school year and the school is unable to provide suitable education, then a referral to the LA should be made. Contact should be through the medical needs email address: medicalneeds@telford.gov.uk

6.2 Referral on medical grounds for the LA to arrange education provision must be supported by evidence from a Consultant Paediatrician, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist or Medical Practitioner. Best practice dictates that these referrals are supported with information from the pupil's mainstream school.

6.3 Where a child has been an inpatient at Princess Royal Hospital and been supported through the hospital provision, then a referral will be coordinated by the Hospital Educational Coordinator upon discharge.

6.4 The Ensuring Access to Education Panel will consider all available evidence to make a recommendation about the most appropriate provision. The final decision will be made by the responsible officer named in para 3.1.

6.5 Where the referral is deemed to meet the threshold for the LA to support arrangements for education, the normal process will be for a 'tripartite meeting' to be called between the LA, the school, and parents. This will result in an action plan which will identify the steps and stages of support, with the ultimate aim of reintegrating the young person back into school, where and when appropriate. This plan will usually include elements of support from both the Local Authority and the school. The school will have a roll to identify an appropriate curriculum so that the young person doesn't fall behind their peers. The tripartite meeting will be recorded on the record template, **see Appendix A**.

6.6 Where the child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the SEND Service will also be invited to the meeting to review the provision identified in the plan and to consider how the resources provided by this might best be used.

6.7 Any support identified in the action plan will then be monitored by the Local Authority. Where necessary, further tripartite meetings might be called where the needs of the young person change.

6.8 Whilst overall responsibility for education of children with medical needs sits with the senior office named in 3.1, other roles allocated with the service include:

- ☑ Attendance at Tripartite meetings and developing the subsequent support agreements: **Louise Bartholomew**.
- ☑ Monitoring medical needs inbox and maintaining medical needs register: **Millie Barnley**
- ☑ Monitoring ongoing support through the support agreements: **Zara Panasiuk**
- ☑ Quality assurance of the process and arbitration: **Andy Cooke**
- ☑ Contact for all of these roles should be through the medical needs inbox: medicalneeds@telford.gov.uk

7. Reintegration

7.1 Telford and Wrekin recognises that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their mainstream school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream education at the earliest opportunity as soon as they are well enough. Arrangements for reintegration will be discussed with school staff and each child or young person will have a personalised reintegration plan that may include:

- ☑ Access to AP for a period of time
- ☑ Education provided in the home delivered by staff commissioned by the school; House 1; A tutor commissioned by the LA or through online learning/virtual schooling.
- ☑ Ongoing access to therapeutic intervention may be required and will be considered as part of a multi-agency approach.

7.2 Schools are responsible for monitoring the quality of any and all provisions they commission for the individual learner, e.g. through regular reviewing, site visits, checking safeguarding information, single central records, attendance records and progress records.

Appendix A - Tripartite meeting record

Date:		Student:	
School:		Key contact at school:	
Present at meeting:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School staff • Parent/carer • Student • Other professionals involved 			
School update			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include the current school offer • Successes and challenges • How student is managing? • What else could be offered by school? • What are the next steps? 			
Medical update			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on current challenges • Advice and guidance on what can be managed • Medical evidence/documentation supplied? 			
Update from other professionals			
Actions agreed			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include existing provision • Next steps and gentle challenge where appropriate 			
AOB			
Date of next meeting			

Appendix A - Tripartite meeting record

Date: Student:

School: Key contact at school:

Present at meeting:

- School staff
 - Parent/carer
 - Student
 - Other professionals involved
- School update
- To include the current school offer
 - Successes and challenges
 - How student is managing?
 - What else could be offered by school?
 - What are the next steps?
- Medical update
- Update on current challenges
 - Advice and guidance on what can be managed
 - Medical evidence/documentation supplied?
- Update from other professionals
- Actions agreed
- To include existing provision
 - Next steps and gentle challenge where appropriate
- AOB

Date of next meetin

