



St Matthew's Primary School

Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

Date Policy Written: July 2025

Review Cycle: Annual basis or sooner if required.

Ratified by Governing Board on: 14th July 2025

Next review date: July 2026

This Policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Medical Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- SEND Policy
- DfE Guidance "Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs" (2023)

At St Matthew's Primary School we work to ensure that all children with medical conditions and health needs receive the appropriate care and support to enable them to remain well, be fully included in all elements of school life and make progress alongside their peers. Due to the nature of some health needs, we recognise that there may be times where children are unable to attend school due to their condition. At these times, St Matthew's Primary School will follow the Department for Education guidance "Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs" (2023) and work with Luton Borough Council to arrange suitable full-time education (or as much education as the child's health condition allows).

When making any decisions regarding provision, St Matthew's Primary School will remain focussed on supporting the pupil and be led by the principle "Children unable to attend school because of a health need should be able to access suitable and flexible education appropriate to their needs. The nature of the provision must be responsive to the demands of what may be a changing health status.." (DFE Guidance, 2023)

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 understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority

Legislation and guidance

This policy has due regard to the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and the Equality Act 2010, along with "Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions" (DfE 2015)

It is also based on guidance provided by our local authority.

Responsibilities of the school

Initially, St Matthew's Primary will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school. Where absence is anticipated we ask parents/carers to provide the school with as much notice and information as possible so appropriate provision can be put into place. In all cases of

absence due to health needs, the Assistant Head for Inclusion/ SENDCo will be responsible for coordinating provision and liaising with all parties. Provision will be decided on a case by case basis, with all arrangements being made in conjunction with medical professionals, parents/carers and pupils. The following strategies would be implemented:

- A plan of learning would be provided by the class teacher on Google Classrooms each week. This could be completed as appropriate to the child's medical needs. All completed work can be uploaded to Google Classroom and this platform would also enable communication between the child/family and their class teacher. School would support with an appropriate device to access this, if necessary.
- If a child is accessing hospital schooling or receiving support from an alternative educational provider, links would still be provided via Google Classroom (as above) to enable the child exposure to their classwork and as a mechanism to keep in touch. The Assistant Head for Inclusion/SENDCo would also liaise with these other educational teams as appropriate, providing information regarding next step targets, progress and outcomes.
- Our School Medical Officer would be responsible for keeping in touch with parents/carers regarding health needs and identifying any medical provision needed to support the child when returning to school
- The provision would be reviewed on a weekly basis by the Inclusion Team. The Assistant Head for Inclusion/ SENDCo would use these reviews to monitor progress, provision and consider plans for reintegration.

When the child is ready to be reintegrated back into school, the Assistant Head for Inclusion/ SENDCo would liaise with medical professionals, parents/ carers and the child to generate a plan for this. This would be based on individual circumstances and personalised to ensure a successful transition back into school. In devising this plan, a consideration would be given to:

- Timetabling
- Any necessary support
- Training for staff in meeting changed or new medical needs
- Adapted resources/ spaces
- The implementation of any new or amended Healthcare Plan

Responsibilities of the Local Authority

The Department for Education Guidance "Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs" (2023) states that "where a child cannot attend school because of a physical or mental health need, and cannot access suitable full-time education, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable alternative provision. " This relates to the statutory duties as outlined in Section 19 of the Education Act.

Local Authorities should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the child.
- Ensure that the education children receive is of good quality, as defined in the statutory guidance Alternative Provision (2025), allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from slipping behind their peers in school and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- Address the needs of individual children in arranging provision. "Hard and fast" rules are inappropriate: they may limit the offer of education to children with a given condition and prevent their access to the right level of educational support which they are well enough to receive. Strict rules that the offer of education a child receives may also breach statutory requirements.

Therefore, where or where it is anticipated a child with health needs is unable to attend school for 15 days, the Inclusion Team will make contact with the local authority regarding a referral for support for this child.

In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, St Matthew's Primary school will:

- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil
- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required
- Help make sure that the provision offered to the pupil is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully
- When reintegration is anticipated, we will work with the local authority to:
 - Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the pupil to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible

- Enable the pupil to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through Google Classrooms, newsletters, emails, invitations to school events)
- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made

St Matthew's Primary School will only remove a pupil who is unable to attend school due to health needs from roll when :

- the pupil has been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and
- neither the pupil nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

A child unable to attend school because of health needs would not be removed from roll even if the LA has become responsible for the child's education. "Continuity is important for children and knowing that they can return to their familiar surroundings and school friends can help their recovery and their educational progress"

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Natalie Crawford (Assistant Head for Inclusion). At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

Key Staff in relation to students with health needs who cannot attend school

Headteacher	Jane Thomas
Deputy Headteacher	Vicki Rayner
Assistant Head for Inclusion	Natalie Crawford
School Medical Officer	Sarah Patrick
SENDCo	John Harper
Safeguarding Manager	Sandie Gonsalves
Family Worker	Shaheen Hanif
Attendance Officer	Kelly Farmer
School Nurse	Nishat Akhtar