ST. MICHAEL'S CE SCHOOL

CHILDREN WITH HEALTH NEEDS WHO CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL

STATUTORY POLICY	
Reviewed By:	Angela Harris
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Governor Sign Off	John Whitehouse
Next Review Due	Spring 2027

ST. MICHAEL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHILDREN WITH HEALTH NEEDS WHO CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL POLICY

***Mission**: St. Michael's Church of England School, established upon Christian foundations and living out the Christian faith, is committed to providing every child with an excellent education.*

Vision: We serve our community through the values of humility, gentleness, and compassion, where every child can flourish academically, personally, and spiritually, guided by the wisdom and love of God.

***Bible Verse:** "…your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."* **1 Peter 3:3-4 (NIV)**

***Motto:** Working together for the Good of All*

School Values

Love - Serve - Grow

Introduction

At St Michael's we have due regard for our duties under the Equality Act 2010. Through the delivery of this Policy we will ensure that we: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Background

Under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (section 19) and the Equality Act 2010, local authorities (LAs) were given the duty to find suitable full-time education (or as much education as a child's condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who because of illness or injury would not otherwise receive 'suitable' education, that is, an education appropriate for the child's age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs that they might have. There is no absolute legal deadline by which

local authorities must start to arrange education. However, as soon as it is clear that a child will be away from school for 15 days or more (consecutive or cumulative) because of health needs, the local authority should arrange suitable alternative provision.

DfE statutory guidance on arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs was updated in December 2023, replacing the previous January 2013 guidance. The December 2023 guidance sets out the local authority's Section 19 duties and the role of the child's home school in supporting continuity of education and reintegration, including where absence is related to physical or mental health needs.

The Children and Families Act 2014 brought with it a change in the law which now requires schools to make arrangements for children with medical conditions. This applies to pupils who can't attend school and who have an identified medical condition.

It is also the responsibility of the school in partnership with the LA, hospital education or home education providers to provide educational support and resources to ensure the pupil with health needs who cannot attend school is able to access full-time education (or as much as the condition of the child allows) equivalent to that which would be provided to other pupils in the school.

The DFE published statutory guidance to accompany this change in 2015 entitled 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'.

From 19 August 2024, schools are expected to make a sickness return to the local authority where a pupil is recorded as absent using Code I (illness) and the school has reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will miss 15 school days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. This supports early planning so that suitable education is arranged where needed.

CHILDREN WITH HEALTH NEEDS WHO CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL

St. Michael's is aware of our responsibility for children and young people on our roll who have health needs which prevent them coming into school for a period of time. We have the following arrangements in place to minimise as far as possible, the disruption to their schooling by continuing to provide education as normally as the incapacity allows.

Implementing the policy

- Where a pupil 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 under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996. The school (as the pupil's home school) will work closely with

the local authority, the family, and relevant professionals to support continuity of learning, safeguarding, and reintegration.

- Governors ensure the policy identifies the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in supporting medical conditions.
- The policy is reviewed regularly and is accessible to parents and school staff.
- Every child on roll who has a medical condition is given an individual healthcare plan (IHP), which is drawn up in partnership with parents, healthcare professionals and, whenever appropriate, the child. Where a child has a special educational need identified in an educational health care plan (EHCP), the IHP should be linked to or become part of that plan. If a child has a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) but does not have an EHCP, then that need is mentioned in their IHP. We also draw up short or longer term IHPs for our pupils who are unable to come into school because of their medical needs, in liaison with other agencies involved.
- The school will identify a named member of staff responsible for coordinating support for pupils who cannot attend due to health needs (the School Health Needs Lead). This person is the main point of contact for parents/carers, the local authority, and relevant professionals.

Provision for children who cannot attend school because of illness

In line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996, an LA has a duty to ensure that arrangements are in place for the provision of suitable education for those children of compulsory school age who by reason of illness may not for any period receive suitable education, unless such arrangements are made for them. This applies to children and young people:

- Who are of statutory school age.
- Who are not in school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, due to ill health.
- Where the health need and necessity for absence have been supported by appropriate medical evidence and/or advice from a relevant health professional.
- Who will not receive a suitable full-time education unless alternative arrangements are made for this by the school and the LA, working with other agencies such as the health professionals, social services, hospital school service etc.

It is the responsibility of the school to work with partners to ensure that the provision for a child unable to attend school because of illness or injury will start as quickly as

possible. Once assured that provision is in place, the LA will only intervene if it has reason to think that the educational provision being made is unsuitable or insufficient.

Procedure when a pupil is, or is likely to be, absent for 15 school days due to health needs

1. Early identification: The School Health Needs Lead monitors patterns of illness absence and maintains regular contact with parents/carers.
2. Sickness return: Where the pupil is recorded as absent with Code I and the school has reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will miss 15 school days (consecutive or cumulative), the school will make a sickness return to the local authority, to support timely planning. OBJ
3. Planning meeting: The school will request/attend a multi-agency planning discussion with the local authority and relevant professionals (as appropriate), involving the parent/carer and the child where appropriate. OBJ
4. Education plan: The school will provide information about curriculum content and the pupil's current learning so that alternative provision can align as closely as possible. OBJ
5. Safeguarding and suitability checks: Where education is delivered off-site/online/at home, safeguarding expectations and safe working practice will apply as they would in school.
6. Review cycle: Any part-time timetable or reduced-hours provision will be time-limited and regularly reviewed with the aim of increasing access as health allows.

The education may be provided in a variety of ways

Education arranged for a pupil who cannot attend due to health needs should be good quality and, as far as the child's health allows, equivalent to that provided in mainstream school. Provision must be suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude, and any SEND. Where full-time education is not in the child's best interests due to health needs, part-time education should be arranged and reviewed regularly with the aim of increasing hours as soon as the child's health allows.

- Through part-time education at the school the child normally attends and supplemented by additional work to be done at home.
- School to home liaison, using digital media, virtual classrooms or homework.
- A hospital school if the child has to spend periods of time in hospital.
- Attendance at an alternative provision (AP) centre.
- Home tuition.

Transport

The provision of temporary transport for a pupil on medical grounds to and from school can sometimes enable a pupil to attend school who would not otherwise be able to do so, even if this can only be part-time. The school will process requests for transport on medical grounds through the LA. Transport for pupils in wheelchairs can usually be arranged.

Reintegration into school

We are aware that returning to school after a period of illness or injury can be an emotional hurdle for our pupils.

- While the pupil is away from school, we encourage peers to keep in touch in age-appropriate, safe ways, for example through cards, letters, or messages shared via parents/carers or school-approved channels, and in line with safeguarding expectations.
- The class teacher will also keep in touch with the pupil and their parents and keep them informed of school events.
- We also invite the child or young person to attend special school events wherever possible and make great efforts to ensure that they feel welcome if they are able to come.
- When a return to school is likely, we consult with the child and parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues and the timing of return.
- Where possible, we encourage the child to come into school part-time during the period of ill health, as a useful half-way house to full reintegration.
- Young people with medical conditions are generally entitled to variations with regard to the sitting of public examinations. We want our pupils' academic prospects to be kept as open as possible, so the school will discuss this with others involved and see what can be arranged in the best interests of the pupil.

The plan will be reviewed at least every 4–6 weeks (or sooner if circumstances change) by the School Health Needs Lead, with the family and relevant professionals, to confirm whether provision remains suitable and whether reintegration can increase.

Raising concerns about provision

Parents/carers should raise concerns in the first instance with the Headteacher (or the School Health Needs Lead). If concerns relate to alternative provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19, the school will support the family to contact the local authority and follow the local authority's published routes for escalation

Removing a pupil's name from the school register

A pupil will not be removed from roll solely because they are unable to attend due to health needs. Any consideration of removal from roll will follow the relevant pupil

registration regulations and will be discussed with the local authority and parents/carers as appropriate.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Governors