

# Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

John Spendluffe Technology College



**Approved by:** JSTC Governing Body

**Date:** September 2022

**Last reviewed on:** July 2022

**Next review due by:** September 2023

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

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy reflects the requirements of the Education Act 1996.

It also based on guidance provided by our local authority. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## **3. The responsibilities of the school**

JSTC follows the guidance provided by Lincolnshire County Council for pupils unable to attend school due to ill health or injury, as laid out below.

### **Protocol for Referral to Pilgrim Hospital School September 2020**

(Education for Children who are unable to attend school due to ill health)

This document sets out how Lincolnshire Children's Services will support Lincolnshire pupils who are unable to access their usual place of learning due to illness or injury. This policy therefore applies to all pupils who are resident in Lincolnshire including those who attend school outside of the county boundary.

The Department of Education "Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs" [January 2013] provides guidance to schools and Local Authorities on their duties towards pupils with health needs and states that:

"LAs are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. This applies whether or not the child is on the roll of a school and whatever the type of school they attend. It applies to children who are pupils in Academies, Free Schools, special schools and independent schools as well as those in maintained schools."

It is recognised that, wherever possible, supporting a pupil to continue to attend their designated school provides the best possible outcome, enabling access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Maintaining relationships with peers and staff and fostering a sense of belonging are significant protective factors for children and young people. Lincolnshire

Children's Services have therefore established a graduated response to providing for pupils with health needs, underpinned by the fundamental principle that pupils are supported to remain in their local school wherever possible.

When seeking to support a pupil and their family through a period of long term or recurring ill health schools should always offer a Child and Family Early help Assessment to the parent.

## **SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT**

School staff will be amongst the first professionals to become aware of a pupil's health needs, and they are therefore best placed to implement the initial response to a pupil's changing health needs. Lincolnshire Children's Services Pupil Reintegration Team, SEND team and the Attendance and Inclusion team can provide support and advice to schools in responding to such situations.

It is acknowledged that there are a multitude of health situations which can impact on a pupil's ability to engage with their education provision and individual circumstances will require individual responses. However the following broad areas may all require a personalised educational offer for children and young people:

- long-term sickness
- anxiety or other mental health difficulties
- recurrent bouts of chronic illness leading to cumulative lengthy periods of absence (in which case advice and coping strategies may be offered)
- health needs which are impacting negatively on their attendance
- health needs that require a school make adjustments to the pupils learning or environment

Schools should liaise with the family and agree ways to support the pupil through the period of ill health.

There are many and varied interventions schools can implement to support a pupil through a period of ill health. Below are some examples:

- Changes to the timetable and/or school day,
- Blended learning packages
- Use of virtual learning platforms,
- Support for peer relationships,
- Developing emotional resilience,
- Promoting wellbeing,
- Counselling,
- Mentors/buddies,
- Management of medicines,
- Safe havens,
- Referral to wider external support agencies.

(Contact details of teams and a range of tools schools can access to support pupils in school is available at the end of this document.)

For pupils who are experiencing heightened anxiety, mental health needs or school based anxiety, early intervention can provide the necessary support and structure to reduce the long term impact on the pupil. It is recognised that where pupils do experience periods of low mood, anxiety or mental health these are further compounded by low attendance and resulting low achievement. It is therefore essential that when a student is experiencing anxiety lead school refusal a PSP should be put in place without delay which will detail the range of adjustments, and interventions appropriate to the individual's circumstances. It is paramount that support is provided at the earliest opportunity in order to minimise the negative spiral effect on the pupil. Schools may request support of the Healthy Minds Team in completing a PSP for such situations.

## **EXCEPTIONS TO PROVISION OF SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT**

There are occasional situations where due to the nature of the pupil's illness or sudden injury the school is not able to effectively implement school based support and this necessitates a direct referral to Pilgrim Hospital School. Usually this would be in response to a serious injury sustained by the student precluding attendance at school or a planned operation and discharge home and where medical advice is clear that return to school is not appropriate.

Schools should always contact PRT team for advice and guidance in any such situation.

## **REFERRAL to the LOCAL AUTHORITY**

Where a pupil has a health needs which cannot be met by the support schools have established a full review should be arranged, this may be a PSP review or part of a TAC meeting. The review will consider:

- A) What other support could be established
- B) if a referral for a placement with the Pilgrim Hospital School should be completed.

Where it is evidenced that school based support is insufficient to ensure a pupil is able to access broad and balanced curriculum, (unable to access, not refusing to) and, the school can demonstrate that it has taken all possible steps to address or respond to the situation without success; the school should consider submitting a referral to the Local Authority for support from Pilgrim Hospital School.

The referral must be supported by the following documentation:

- Robust medical evidence from a consultant or medical professional which illustrates that the pupil is unable to access their usual place of learning due to their current health needs.

- For Anxiety led school refusal a copy of the PSP providing evidence of the support school has established in response to the pupils health needs.
- Copy of the school Attendance register showing 15 days consecutive absence from school.
- The form must be signed by parent, school and wherever possible pupil.

The Pupil Reintegration Team will assess any referral forms submitted and where these do not meet the above criteria, or there are omissions, the referral will be declined and returned to the school with advice or a request for more documentation.

Referrals will be considered at the Pilgrim Hospital School referral panel which meets each week and the outcome notified to the school within 3 working days of the panel meeting.

'STEP UP' SUPPORT - For a limited number of referrals, and where capacity allows, the LA in consultation with the Pilgrim Hospital School may identify a pupil for enhanced school support. This includes the provision of outreach support for the school and family provided by a member of the Pilgrim Hospital Team. If upon receipt of a completed referral the panel consider this would be the most effective means of addressing the pupil's needs the school will be contacted to discuss the nature and extent of the outreach available.

## **PILGRIM HOSPITAL SCHOOL**

When a referral for a school place is accepted by the Pilgrim Hospital School panel, the family and referring school will be contacted by a staff member from the Pilgrim Hospital

School to discuss the referral in more detail and to plan the education for the pupil involved. (Usually within two school weeks). Pupils will become dual registered with both schools once a start date has been arranged with the Pilgrim Hospital School.

The pupil's progress will be kept under regular review and liaison with their designated school will continue to provide the pupil with a cohesive curriculum. Pilgrim Hospital School is not a long term placement and as a pupil's health improves arrangements for their reintegration back to mainstream school will form part of the review process.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

It is important to note that Pilgrim Hospital School is not a medical setting and does not provide medical interventions or treatment. On-going medical intervention is at the discretion of the medical professionals working with the student.

Schools should also be aware that there are some disabilities which, whilst these may present a pupil with a number of challenges in accessing and engaging with school, do not constitute an illness and for whom a referral to Pilgrim Hospital would not therefore be appropriate.

Where a school identifies a pupil has a long term health and education needs and/or disability the school should follow the DfE ' Guidance on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) system for children and young people aged 0 to 25' September 2014.

School should seek to provide appropriate support to the pupil and consider if the pupil needs a referral for an Education Health Care Plan. Schools must also ensure that in accordance with their Equality Duties they establish appropriate reasonable adjustments for all pupils with disabilities including those with mental health needs.

Pupils with no school place - Usually school is the appropriate referral agency for a placement with Pilgrim Hospital School. However where a student is not on roll at a school, a referral may be made by an appropriate Local Authority Officer or a medical professional.

For advice about referral routes for pupils not registered at School please contact the Pupil Reintegration Team.

### **3.1 If the school makes arrangements**

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

Contact through the pastoral teams to establish the nature of the needs and close liaison with home could be that work is set online or sent home. Pastoral teams will liaise with the SEND team at JSTC for adjustments that may need to be made for timetabling, reintegration or next steps.

With ongoing medical difficulties, if a pupil is likely to be ill for more than 15 school days, a request for Education Support on Medical grounds\* may need to be considered. A request to the Local Authority will be assessed and consideration will be given to seek support from Lincolnshire Pilgrim (hospital) School. \*Request for Education Support (medical grounds) <http://www.pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk/HowToRefer>

School should consider a referral to Pilgrim when:

- The designated referral form has been completed, signed, dated and parental consent has been given.
- School can demonstrate that it has taken steps to address or respond to the situation in the first instance but without success (school based interventions may vary depending on the nature of the medical condition).
- The young person has been absent from education due to ill health for 15 school days or more.
- Supporting documentation, including robust medical evidence is attached to the referral

Students who are receiving regular treatment in hospital may get hospital tuition, the starting date after admission varies at each hospital and is organised through admission teams at the hospital. When your child is ready for discharge and will be ready for school provision, then a medical professional will contact the SEND department who will then

make arrangements for transition back to school. The SEND department will work closely with the pastoral and attendance teams to ensure that transition back into school occurs smoothly. This may mean part-time attendance until the student is fully recovered.

### **3.2 If the local authority makes arrangements**

If the school can't make suitable arrangements, Lincolnshire County Council will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.

For some longer term health conditions, reintegration may not be possible so the local authority will, with liaison with parents, medical consultants and the young person seek how to best meet the young person's needs, this may be tuition in the home or through hospital school.

In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, the 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, 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 newsletters, emails, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school)
  - Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school
  - Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made

### **4. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by Mrs Forman, SENDCo. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

### **5. Links to other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- SEND policy

# **POLICY DOCUMENTS**

The following policy document was presented to the Governing Body of John Spendluffe Technology College and approved and adopted by them on the date stated.

Policy: Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

Date: September 2022

Review: September 2023 (dependent on additional changes from LCC and updates throughout the year)

Headteacher: Mr S Curtis