Children with health needs, who cannot attend school policy.

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Statement of intent

PPAT aims to ensure that all pupils who are unable to attend school due to medical needs continue to receive the same high standard of education, including physical education, and attend as many school trips as their medical condition allows.

Due to the nature of their health needs, however, some pupils may be able to attend the school setting or be at home. We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their school, and the aim of the provision will be to help reintegrate pupils back into school as soon as they are well enough.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work with the Local Authority (LA), healthcare partners and families to ensure that all pupils with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with the school.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Alternative Provision (updated February 2025)
- Arranging Education for Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School (updated December 2023)
- Equality Act 2010

This policy also follows guidance provided by Somerset Local Authority and operates in conjunction with the following trust and school policies: (Policies in blue are policies that may be found at school level)

- Accessibility Plan
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Confidentiality Statement
- Data Protection Policy
- Medical Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Remote Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Medical Policy

2. Local Authority (LA) duties

For the purpose of this policy, the LA's duties when pupils are unable to attend school due to health needs are outlined below. These duties have been included so as to differentiate the responsibilities that lie with the school and those that will be carried out by the LA. The Trust and its schools are not responsible for ensuring that the LA meets its responsibilities – their responsibilities are outlined in the 'Roles and responsibilities' section of this policy.

The LA will be 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. The school will fulfil its duty to effectively collaborate and communicate with the LA as required.

In line with statutory guidance, it will be the LA's responsibility to:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutively or cumulatively.
- Liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil.

- Ensure the education pupils receive is of good quality, allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind their peers in school, and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- Address the needs of individual pupils in arranging provision.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of pupils with additional health needs and ensure parents know who this is.
- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards children with additional health needs.
- Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for each pupil and that it provides suitable education.
- Have clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.
- Maintain good links will the schools in its area and put systems in place to promote co-operation between them when children cannot attend due to ill health.

To comply with statutory guidance, the LA will be expected to not:

- Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child from getting the right type of provision and a good education.
- Withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a child because of how much it will cost.
- Have policies based upon the percentage of time a pupil is able to attend school rather than whether the pupil is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.
- Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not they will arrange education for children or inflexible policies which result in children going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in).

3. Definitions

"Children with health needs" are children of compulsory school age who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs. These medical needs include:

- Physical health issues.
- Physical injuries.
- Mental health problems, including anxiety issues.
- Emotional difficulties resulting in school refusal.
- Progressive conditions.
- Terminal illnesses.
- Chronic illnesses.

Children who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend or participate in any of the following:

- **Hospital school** – a school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment.

- **Home tuition** – many LAs 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.

For the purpose of this policy, **"school-based support"** in relation to supporting pupils with additional health needs may include:

- Day-to-day support offered at school where the pupil is able to attend as normal.
- Support given to pupils who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days, whether consecutive or cumulative.
- Any educational or extra-curricular provision as requested by the LA as part of its arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school full-time, e.g. where the pupil attends school part-time as an arranged part of their full-time education provision.
- As part of their reintegration into normal school attendance following a period of absence or part-time attendance due to health needs.

"LA-arranged education," for the purpose of this policy, is defined as education provision arranged by the LA where the pupil cannot attend school full time due to medical reasons for a period of 15 school days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust through its schools will be responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a schedule of regular updates on the arrangements made for pupils who cannot attend the school due to their medical needs.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in any school-based 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 where a pupil with health needs is able to, or partially able to, attend school and/or extra-curricular activities.
- Ensuring a suitable member of staff is assigned responsibility for the education of pupils with additional health needs to be a point of contact for the LA and parents.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with additional health needs are appropriately trained.

The Trust will be responsible for:

- Approving and reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

Headteachers will be responsible for:

- Working with the board and local governing bodies to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils with additional health needs.
- Working collaboratively with the LA, parents, and other professionals, as necessary, to develop any school-based arrangements to meet the needs of pupils.

- Ensuring any school-based arrangements put in place to meet pupils' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with additional health needs and liaises with parents, pupils, the LA, medical professionals, key workers, and others involved in the pupil's care.
- Ensuring any school-based support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual pupils.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with additional health needs who are attending school or attend school part-time.
- Providing teachers who support pupils with additional 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.
- Providing annual reports to the local governing body on the effectiveness of any school-based arrangements in place to meet the needs of pupils of pupils who cannot attend school due to health needs.
- 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.
- Adjustments to timetables and the percentage of time spent in teh school setting

The named member of staff will be responsible for:

- The management of any pupils registered at the school who are unable to fully attend school because of their health needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school, including writing or amending medical care plans in association with parents and health professionals..
- Supplying any LA-arranged education providers with information about pupils' capabilities, progress, and outcomes.
- Liaising with the headteacher, LA-arranged education providers, and parents to help determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school, where necessary.
- Keeping pupils who are being educated by LA-arranged education providers informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Providing a link between pupils and their parents, the school, and LA where necessary.

Staff will be responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- Designing school-based activities, which may include if appropriate lessons, in a way that allows pupils with additional 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.
- Understanding their role in any school-based support for pupils with additional 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 individual pupils' health needs.
- Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in school-based education.
- Keeping school case records

Parents will be expected to:

- Ensure, where school-based provision is in place, the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible.
- Work in partnership with the school, LA, and any LA-arranged provision to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the school, or the relevant education provider, of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how any school-based support, including reintegration, for their child should be planned.

5. Managing absence

Parents will be required 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.

The school will provide support to pupils who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days, whether consecutive or cumulative, by liaising with the pupil's parents to arrange schoolwork, as soon as the pupil is able to cope with it, or part-time education at school. The school will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the pupil, their parents, and relevant members of staff.

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 member of staff with responsibility for pupils with additional health needs will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the pupil and their education.

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 planned hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the LA and the hospital education provider as early as possible to discuss the likely admission date and expected length. Plans will be made, where possible, for the educational programme to be followed while the pupil is in hospital.

The LA will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the pupil which will allow the school, the LA, and the provider of the pupil's education to work together.

The school will monitor pupil attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a pupil is, or should be, receiving education other than at school.

The school will only remove a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where:

- The pupil has been certified by the school's 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 pupil unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent and certification from the school's medical officer, even if the LA has become responsible for the pupil's education.

Staff will be alert to the fact that missing education can put pupils at risk of harm and may be an indicator of a safeguarding issue. Concerns will be handled in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Children Missing from Education Policy. Staff will also be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for pupils with additional health needs.

The school will provide to the LA, at agreed intervals, the full name and address of any pupils who are not attending school regularly, including if this is due to any additional health needs.

6. Support for pupils

Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, schools will discuss the pupil's needs and how these may be best met with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil.

Pupils with continuing health needs will have a medical care plan (MCP) also known as an individual health-care plan (IHP), which is subject to regular review and assessment. Where a pupil's needs amount to, or include ongoing SEND, an education, health and care plan (EHCP) may be more appropriate to meet their long-term needs. Where a pupil has an EHCP and an MCP/ IHP, both plans will be reviewed alongside each other.

Medical evidence will be used where available to best understand a pupil's needs and identify the most suitable provision. Where specific medical evidence is not readily available, schools will consider liaising with other medical practitioners and other sources of evidence to ensure appropriate provision can be arranged as soon as possible.

The LA expects schools to support pupils with additional health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the schools to make reasonable adjustments to pupils' programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.

Schools will make reasonable adjustments under pupils' IHPs, in accordance with the Medical Policy.

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, schools will work with the provider of the pupil's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

The use of digital resources will be considered to support learning and complement face-to-face education, where appropriate. Digital resources will only be used in accordance with the pupil's needs. Staff will follow procedures set out in the Remote Education Policy.

Whilst a pupil is away from school, the school will work with the LA to ensure the pupil can successfully remain in touch with the school using the following methods:

- Digital learning platforms
- School newsletters
- Social media platforms
- Emails
- Invitations to school events
- Cards or letters from peers and staff

Where appropriate, schools will provide the pupil's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources. Schools will strive to achieve effective collaboration between relevant services to ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum.

Provision for pupils will support their individual needs to overcome barriers to attainment and achievement, giving equal consideration to their pastoral needs to allow them to prosper in the education system. Consideration will be given to the pupil's personal, social, and emotional needs to allow them to feel fully included in the school community, maintain contacts with classmates and have access to the same opportunities.

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

- A personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with the named staff member/head teacher
- Access to additional support in school
- Adaptions to the environment to support accessibility
- 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

Schools will ensure that pupils are involved in decision-making as much as possible, in accordance with the pupil's age and maturity, to help ensure that the right provision is offered and encourage their commitment and engagement.

Alongside the LA, the provision offered to a pupil will be regularly reviewed by the schools to ensure it continues to be appropriate for the pupil's needs and that suitable education is being provided. The review process will seek input from:

- The pupil.
- Parents.
- Relevant agencies and medical practitioners, where possible.
- The LA SEND team, where the pupil has an EHC plan.

7. Reintegration

When a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, schools will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the LA.

During a lengthy absence, a reintegration plan will be developed near to the likely date of return to avoid putting unsuitable pressure on an ill pupil in the early stages of their absence.

Schools will work with the LA when reintegration into school is anticipated to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside school.

As far as possible, the pupil will be able to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in school.

If appropriate, a school nurse or a member of the local health team will be involved in the development of the pupil's reintegration plan and informed of the timeline of the plan by the appointed named member of staff, to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the pupil.

Schools will consider whether any reasonable adjustments and staff training need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the pupil.

For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the pupil's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill pupil or their parents in the early stages of their absence.

Schools are aware that some pupils will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the pupil, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing, and the preferred pace of return.

The reintegration plan will include:

- The date for planned reintegration, once known.
- Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration.
- Details of the named member of staff who has responsibility for the pupil.
- Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved.
- Details of contacts, including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period.
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration.
- Follow-up procedures.

The school will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage pupils and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

Following reintegration, the school will support the LA in seeking feedback from the pupil and family regarding the effectiveness of the process.

8. Information sharing

It is essential that all information about pupils with additional health needs is kept up to date.

To protect confidentiality, all information-sharing techniques, will be agreed with the pupil and their parent in advance of being used, in accordance with the Trust Confidentiality Statement.

All teachers, TAs, supply, and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures, via

information provided directly to relevant staff through the use of medical wallets in classrooms and SharePoint folders.

Parents will be made aware of their own rights and responsibilities regarding confidentiality and information sharing. To help achieve this, schools will:

- Ensure this policy and other relevant policies are easily available and accessible.
- Provide the pupil and their parents with a copy of the policy on information sharing.
- Ask parents to sign a consent form which clearly details the organisations and individuals that their child's health information will be shared with, and which methods of sharing will be used.
- Consider how friendship groups and peers may be able to assist pupils with additional health needs.

When a pupil is discharged from hospital or is returning from other education provision, schools will ensure the appropriate information is received to allow for a smooth return to the school. The named member of staff will liaise with the hospital or other tuition service as appropriate.

9. Record keeping

In accordance with the Medical Policy, individual health care plans, will record all medicines administered to pupils. Schools will also hold medical records for some pupils, for example. Secure logs for those children with epilepsy

Proper record keeping will protect both staff and pupils and provide evidence that agreed procedures have been followed.

All records will be maintained in line with the Records Management Policy.

10. Training

Healthcare professionals will be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required. Training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident in their ability to support pupils with additional health needs.

Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a pupil's return to school.

Once a pupil's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training before the pupil's anticipated return.

Parents of pupils with additional health needs may provide specific advice but will not be the sole trainer of staff.

11. Examinations and assessments

Where possible, pupils will take statutory, external assessments at the same time as their peers and schools will work with the LA to support this.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Any changes to 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.