



## Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

<b>Date of last review by Local Governing Body</b>	March 2026
<b>Review cycle</b>	Annual
<b>Policy due for review by Local Governing Body</b>	March 2027

***This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Health Needs Policy. Together, these documents set out the school's approach to meeting its statutory duties and ensuring that students with medical conditions receive appropriate support to access education safely and effectively.***

### **Aims of the Policy**

This policy, together with the procedures outlined within it, sets out the school's commitment to supporting students with medical needs and ensuring that they are able to access education safely and effectively. It establishes clear expectations regarding attendance, medical support, and the administration of medication within the school day.

Specifically, this policy aims to:

- Promote and enable regular school attendance for all students, including those with medical conditions.
- Provide clear information to parents/carers regarding the school's procedures for administering medication during school hours and supporting students with healthcare needs.

### **Legislation and Guidance**

This policy has been developed with due regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance. It reflects the school's responsibilities under the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Department for Education (2013) *Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs*
- Department for Education (2015) *Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions*

The school will ensure that its practices remain compliant with current legislation and statutory expectations.

### **Definition of a student with medical needs**

Students may, at some point during their education, experience a medical condition that affects their ability to participate fully in school activities. For many, this will be a short-term issue, such as completing a course of prescribed medication. However, some students have medical conditions which, if not appropriately managed, may significantly impact their access to education. These students are considered to have medical needs.

The majority of students with medical needs are able to attend school regularly and, with appropriate support, participate in most routine school activities. In certain circumstances, staff may need to take additional precautions when supervising activities to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student concerned, as well as others.

Children who may be unable to attend school as a result of medical needs include those with:

- Physical health conditions
- Physical injuries
- Mental health conditions (including anxiety-related difficulties)
- Emotional difficulties, including school avoidance
- Progressive medical conditions
- Terminal illnesses
- Chronic illnesses

Where a student is too unwell to attend school and is receiving specialist medical treatment, educational provision may be arranged through a Medical Pupil Referral Unit (Medical PRU). Medical PRUs are Local Authority (LA) establishments that provide education for children who are unable to attend their registered school due to medical needs.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Responsibilities of the Local Governing Body and Headteacher**

The Local Governing Body and the Headteacher are responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to support students who are unable to attend school due to medical needs. These arrangements must be effectively implemented and reviewed on a termly basis to ensure they remain appropriate and responsive to individual circumstances.

#### **They are also responsible for ensuring that:**

- The roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in supporting students with medical needs are clearly defined and understood.
- Robust procedures are established and maintained for managing health emergencies and critical incidents, both on-site and during off-site activities.
- Staff who have responsibility for supporting students with medical needs receive appropriate training and are competent to carry out their duties.
- A named member of staff is appointed to take lead responsibility for students with healthcare needs, including liaising with parents/carers, students, the Local Authority (LA), key workers, and other professionals involved in the student's care.
- Teachers and relevant staff are provided with appropriate information regarding a student's medical condition, including the potential impact of the condition and/or any prescribed medication on the student's learning and wellbeing.
- The Local Authority is notified where a student is expected to be absent from school for a significant period due to medical needs.

### **Responsibilities of the SENCo**

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) is responsible for overseeing and coordinating support for students who are unable to attend school due to medical needs.

#### **This includes ensuring that:**

- Appropriate arrangements are in place for students who cannot attend school because of medical conditions.
- Student progress is actively monitored during periods of absence, and effective plans are implemented to support successful reintegration into school when appropriate.
- Education providers supporting the student during their absence are supplied with relevant and accurate information regarding the student's abilities, progress, and outcomes.
- Liaison takes place with the Headteacher, external education providers, and parents/carers to agree suitable programmes of study while the student is absent from school.
- The Family Partnership Worker provides an effective link between the student, their parents/carers, and the Local Authority (LA), ensuring clear communication and coordinated support.

## **Responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for ensuring that this policy is effectively developed, implemented, and consistently applied across the school.

### **In particular, the SLT will ensure that:**

- All students with medical conditions are appropriately supported to enable them to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of school life.
- Support arrangements are centred on the individual needs of each student.
- Sufficient staff receive appropriate training and demonstrate the required competence before assuming responsibility for supporting students with medical conditions.
- Accurate written records are maintained for all medication administered to students.
- Appropriate insurance arrangements are in place to cover the support provided to students with medical needs.

No child with a medical condition will be denied admission to the school or prevented from taking up a place because suitable arrangements for their medical condition have not yet been finalised.

However, in line with safeguarding responsibilities, the Local Governing Body must ensure that no student's health is placed at unnecessary risk. For example, where there are concerns relating to infectious diseases or other significant health risks, and where attendance would be detrimental to the health and safety of the child or others, the school is not obliged to admit the child until it is safe to do so.

## **Responsibilities of Teachers, Support Staff and Family Outreach Workers**

Teachers, Support Staff, and Family Outreach Workers are responsible for supporting students with medical needs in line with this policy.

### **They must ensure that:**

- Confidentiality is maintained in relation to students' health needs, in accordance with data protection requirements.
- Lessons and activities are planned and delivered in a way that enables students with medical needs to participate as fully as possible. Students should not be excluded from activities they wish to take part in without a clear, evidence-based reason.
- They understand their specific role in supporting students with medical needs and attend all required training.
- They are aware of the medical needs of the students they work with, through appropriate and lawful information sharing.
- They recognise the signs, symptoms, and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and understand the procedures to follow in an emergency.

- Parents/carers are kept appropriately informed about how their child's medical needs are affecting them whilst in school.

### **Responsibilities of the Headteacher**

#### **The Headteacher will ensure that:**

- All staff are aware of this policy and understand their responsibilities in implementing it.
- Relevant staff are informed of a student's medical condition on a need-to-know basis.
- A sufficient number of appropriately trained staff are available to implement this policy and to support all Individual Healthcare Plans (IHCPs), including during contingency and emergency situations.
- Individual Healthcare Plans are developed, implemented, regularly reviewed, and effectively monitored.
- School staff are appropriately insured and understand that they are covered when supporting students with medical conditions.
- The school nursing service is contacted in cases where a child has a medical condition that may require support in school but has not yet been referred to or identified by the school nurse.

### **Responsibilities of All School Staff**

#### **All school staff will:**

- Know how to respond appropriately if they become aware that a student with a medical condition requires assistance.
- Familiarise themselves with the medical needs of the students they support.
- Undertake suitable and sufficient training and achieve the necessary level of competence before taking responsibility for supporting students with medical conditions. (Information regarding the school's approach to supporting students with medical conditions forms part of the induction programme for all new staff.)
- Keep parents/carers informed about the arrangements in place to support their child, including any contact made with external agencies. Parents/carers will be notified if their child becomes unwell whilst at school.
- Undertake appropriate risk assessments and consider how a student's medical condition may affect their participation in educational visits, school trips, sporting activities, and other off-site provision.

It is recognised that there is no legal obligation for school staff to administer medication; this remains a voluntary responsibility.

## **School Nurses and Healthcare Professionals**

School nurses play a key role in ensuring that students with medical conditions are appropriately supported within the school setting. They are responsible for notifying the school when a student has been identified as having a medical condition that will require support in school. Wherever possible, this notification should take place before the student begins attending the school to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place from the outset.

### **School nurses may:**

- Support staff in the development and implementation of a student's Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP).
- Provide professional advice and guidance to school staff.
- Liaise with other healthcare professionals to ensure appropriate medical support is in place and to identify any necessary staff training requirements.

The school will access the school nursing service for advice and guidance whenever required.

Other healthcare professionals, including General Practitioners (GPs) and paediatricians, should notify the school nurse when a child has been identified as having a medical condition requiring support in school. They may also provide advice to inform the development and review of Individual Healthcare Plans.

Specialist local health teams may provide additional support within the school environment for students with specific medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, or epilepsy.

### **Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers have primary responsibility for their child's health and wellbeing. They are expected to provide the school with accurate and up-to-date information regarding their child's medical condition. Parents/carers and, where appropriate, the student should provide relevant details in consultation with their child's GP or paediatrician.

Parents/carers must be actively involved in the development and review of their child's Individual Healthcare Plan. However, confirmation of medical needs and required provision will always be sought from an appropriate healthcare professional.

The school nursing service may offer advice and support to parents/carers, students, school staff, education officers, and the Local Authority to ensure effective partnership working and coordinated support for students with medical needs.

### **Parents/carers are responsible for:**

- Carrying out any actions agreed as part of the implementation of a healthcare plan (for example, providing medication or specialist equipment) and ensuring they, or another nominated adult, are contactable at all times.
- Ensuring that their child is well enough to attend school.
- Providing accurate information regarding the treatment and care their child requires.

### **Students**

#### **Students should, wherever appropriate and in accordance with their age and understanding:**

- Be fully involved in discussions about their medical support needs.
- Contribute as far as possible to the development of their Individual Healthcare Plan.
- Comply with the arrangements set out in their plan.

Upon notification that a student has a medical condition, the school will implement suitable arrangements. These may be introduced when a student first joins the school, receives a new diagnosis, or when existing medical needs change. The school will ensure that robust Individual Healthcare Plans are established where appropriate.

### **Inclusion at Estuary Academy North**

#### **At Estuary Academy North, students with medical conditions will:**

- Be fully included and supported to participate actively in all aspects of school life, including educational visits and sporting activities, enabling them to flourish and achieve to the best of their ability.
- Be treated as individuals, recognising that medical conditions vary widely in their nature, complexity, duration, and impact on learning and wellbeing.
- Be supported to develop confidence and independence, promoting self-care where appropriate.
- Receive support from appropriately trained staff who work in effective partnership with families, healthcare professionals, and other agencies to secure the best possible outcomes.

### **Unacceptable Practice**

Estuary Academy North is committed to ensuring that students with medical conditions are treated fairly, respectfully, and in accordance with statutory guidance. In line with this commitment, the school will not engage in practices that disadvantage, exclude, or place unnecessary barriers in the way of students with medical needs.

**Specifically, the school will not:**

- Prevent students from accessing their inhalers or prescribed medication, or from administering their medication when and where necessary.
- Assume that all students with the same medical condition require identical treatment or support.
- Disregard the views of students or parents/carers, or ignore medical evidence or professional advice (although such advice may be discussed or clarified where appropriate).
- Send students with medical conditions home frequently, or prevent them from participating in normal school activities, including lunch, unless this is clearly specified within their Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP).
- Send a student who becomes unwell to the school office unaccompanied or accompanied by someone unsuitable.
- Penalise students in relation to their attendance record where absences are directly linked to their medical condition, for example hospital appointments or treatment.
- Prevent students from drinking, eating, or taking toilet or other necessary breaks required to manage their medical condition effectively.
- Require parents/carers, or otherwise make them feel obliged, to attend school to administer medication or provide medical support, including support with toileting.
- Prevent students from participating in, or create unnecessary barriers to, any aspect of school life, including educational visits and extracurricular activities, for example by requiring parents/carers to accompany their child without clear justification.

These expectations reflect the school's commitment to inclusion, equality, and safeguarding, and ensure that students with medical needs are supported appropriately at all times.

**Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP)**

An Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP) (see Appendix 1) is a key document used to identify and record the support required to ensure that students with medical needs are able to access education safely. The purpose of the IHCP is to set out the necessary arrangements and safety measures to protect the student and others, while enabling full participation in school life wherever possible.

The development or review of an IHCP may be initiated by a member of school staff or a healthcare professional, in consultation with the parent/carer. Parents/carers will be formally invited to contribute to the development of the plan; a template letter for this purpose is provided in Appendix 5.

Each IHCP will be developed in partnership with the school, parents/carers, the student (where appropriate), and relevant healthcare professionals. Healthcare professionals will advise on the level of detail required, taking into account the nature, severity, and complexity of the student's condition. The plan will clearly specify:

- The student's medical condition and associated needs
- The support and adjustments required
- Who is responsible for delivering specific aspects of support
- When and how support will be provided

The level of detail included within an IHCP will reflect the complexity of the student's condition and the degree of support required. It is recognised that students with the same medical condition may require different levels and types of support.

Each IHCP will define what constitutes an emergency and outline the procedures to be followed, ensuring that all relevant staff are aware of potential symptoms, triggers, and appropriate responses. Where applicable, the arrangements set out in the IHCP will align with any Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place.

IHCPs will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner where there is evidence that the student's needs have changed. Where a student has identified special educational needs but does not have an EHCP, these needs will be referenced within the Individual Healthcare Plan to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to support.

### **Local Authority**

Where the Local Authority (LA) is required to arrange educational provision for a child with health needs, it must fulfil its statutory duty to ensure that suitable education is provided without unnecessary delay. The Local Authority must work in partnership with schools, families, and health professionals to ensure that students with medical conditions continue to receive high-quality education and are supported to reintegrate successfully when appropriate.

**If the Local Authority makes arrangements for the education of children with health conditions, it should:**

- Provide suitable education as soon as it is clear that a student will be absent from school for 15 days or more, whether those days are consecutive or cumulative.
- Liaise with appropriate medical professionals to minimise delay in arranging suitable provision.
- Ensure that the education provided enables students to take appropriate qualifications, is of good quality, prevents them from falling behind their peers, and supports successful reintegration into school as soon as their health allows.
- Take account of the individual needs of the student when arranging provision.
- Appoint a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs and ensure that parents/carers are informed of this contact.
- Maintain a written, publicly accessible policy statement outlining how it fulfils its legal duties towards children with additional health needs.
- Review provision regularly to ensure it remains appropriate and continues to provide suitable education.
- Provide clear policies covering provision for children and young people both under and over compulsory school age.
- Work constructively with local providers, relevant agencies, and parents/carers to secure the best possible outcomes for the student.
- Share information with relevant health services as required.
- Ensure that the educational provision is as effective as possible and that appropriate arrangements are in place to support reintegration into school.
- Plan for continuity of provision during and after the period of education outside school, enabling access to the same curriculum and learning materials wherever possible.

- Enable the student to remain connected to school life, for example through newsletters, electronic communication, invitations to school events, or access to online learning.
- Develop individually tailored reintegration plans for each student returning to school.
- Consider whether reasonable adjustments are required in line with equality legislation.

**The Local Authority should not:**

- Operate processes or policies that prevent a child from accessing appropriate provision and a suitable education.
- Withhold or reduce provision, or alter the type of provision offered, on the basis of cost.
- Base decisions solely on the percentage of time a child is able to attend school rather than on whether the child is receiving suitable education.
- Maintain lists of health conditions that automatically determine eligibility for provision or apply inflexible criteria that result in children being without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition permits).

These expectations reflect statutory guidance and ensure that children with health needs receive equitable access to education.

**Managing Medicines on School Premises**

The school recognises that, in order to support students with medical needs effectively, medication may need to be administered during the school day. Clear procedures are in place to ensure that medicines are managed safely and in accordance with statutory guidance.

Parents/carers must provide prior written consent for any medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, to be administered to a student. A parental agreement form is provided in Appendix 2 and must be completed before medication can be given.

All medicines will be stored securely and appropriately, in line with safety requirements. Students will be informed of where their medication is kept and, where appropriate, will be able to access it without delay. A written record will be maintained for all medication administered to students; the appropriate recording form is provided in Appendix 3.

A student under the age of 16 will not be given medication containing aspirin unless it has been prescribed by a doctor. Before administering any medication, including pain relief, staff will check the maximum dosage and confirm when the previous dose was taken to prevent the risk of overdose.

Students who have been prescribed a controlled drug may legally carry it if they are assessed as competent to do so. Where this is not appropriate, the medication will be stored securely by the school. Access will be restricted to named members of staff, and the medication will be readily accessible in an emergency. Accurate records will be kept of any doses administered and the quantity of controlled medication held on site. A record of staff training in relation to the administration of medicines is maintained (see Appendix 6).

Any concerns or complaints relating to the management of a student's medical condition should, in the first instance, be discussed directly with the school. Formal complaints will be managed in accordance with the school's published complaints procedure.

### **Emergency Procedures**

All staff are expected to be familiar with the procedures for contacting emergency services and to understand their individual responsibilities in the event that an emergency arises. Clear lines of accountability will be in place to ensure that emergency procedures are implemented promptly and effectively.

Within each centre, a minimum of two members of staff will hold current paediatric first aid certification. These staff members are responsible for administering immediate first aid and providing appropriate care until emergency services arrive.

If a student requires transportation to hospital, a member of staff will accompany the student and remain with them until a parent/carer or appropriate responsible adult arrives, ensuring the student's safety and welfare at all times.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with the policy review cycle of Estuary Academy North, part of the Alternative Learning Trust. As part of this review process, the school will evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the policy to ensure ongoing compliance with statutory requirements and continued alignment with current best practice. The policy will be formally adopted, actively promoted, and consistently implemented across all centres within Estuary Academy North to ensure a coherent and equitable approach to supporting students with medical needs.

Central to the effective implementation of this policy is the Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP). The primary purpose of the IHCP is to clearly identify the level and type of support required to enable a student with medical needs to access education safely and successfully. Each IHCP will be developed and agreed in partnership with parents/carers and relevant staff, ensuring a collaborative and

informed approach. Parents/carers will also agree the frequency with which the plan should be reviewed. All Individual Healthcare Plans will reflect the specific medical condition, personal circumstances, and individual needs of the student.

In developing an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP), input will be sought from relevant individuals to ensure that the plan is comprehensive, accurate, and reflective of the student's needs.

**Contributors may include:**

- The Headteacher
- The parent or carer
- The student, where appropriate and of sufficient maturity
- The class tutor
- Care assistant/support staff
- Any member of staff who has agreed to administer medication or who is trained in emergency procedures
- Relevant external professionals, such as a GP or other healthcare practitioner

The SENCo will be responsible for coordinating the collection and sharing of information and will act as the primary point of contact for parents/carers, external professionals, staff, and supply teachers. The IHCP must also identify any training requirements necessary to ensure that staff are fully prepared to support the student safely and effectively.

All information relating to a student's medical condition will be treated as confidential and managed in accordance with data protection legislation. Where intrusive or intimate procedures are required, it is recommended that two members of staff are present, one of whom should, wherever possible, be of the same gender as the student. The dignity, privacy, and wellbeing of the student must be respected and preserved at all times.

## Appendix 1: individual healthcare plan

Name of school/setting

Child's name

Group/class/form

Date of birth

Child's address

Medical need, diagnosis, or condition

Date

Review date


### Family Contact Information

Name

Phone no. (work)

(home)

(mobile)

Name

Relationship to child

Phone no. (work)

(home)

(mobile)


### Clinic/Hospital Contact

Name

Phone no.

### G.P.

Name

Phone no.



Who is responsible for providing support in school

Describe medical needs and give details of child's symptoms, triggers, signs, treatments, facilities, equipment or devices, environmental issues etc.

Name of medication, dose, method of administration, when to be taken, side effects, contra-indications, administered by/self-administered with/without supervision.

Daily care requirements

Specific support for the pupil's educational, social, and emotional needs

Arrangements for school visits/trips etc

Other information

Describe what constitutes an emergency, and the action to take if this occurs.

Who is responsible in an emergency (*state if different for off-site activities*)

Plan developed with

Staff training needed/undertaken – who, what, when

Form copied to

## Appendix 2: parental agreement for setting to administer medicine

Estuary Academy will not give your child medicine unless you complete and sign this form, and the school or setting has a policy that the staff can administer medicine.

Date for review to be initiated by

Name of school/setting

Name of child

Date of birth

Group/class/form

Medical condition or illness


### Medicine

Name/type of medicine  
*(as described on the container)*

Expiry date

Dosage and method

Timing

Special precautions/other instructions

Are there any side effects that the school/setting needs to know about?

Self-administration – y/n

Procedures to take in an emergency


**NB: Medicines must be dated and in the original container as dispensed by the pharmacy**

### Contact Details

Name

Daytime telephone no.

Relationship to child

Address


I understand that I must deliver the medicine personally to

[agreed member of staff]

The above information is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate at the time of writing and I give consent to school/setting staff administering medicine in accordance with the school/setting policy. I will inform the school/setting immediately, in writing, if there is any change in dosage or frequency of the medication or if the medicine is stopped.

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3: record of medicine administered to an individual child

Name of school/setting	
Name of child	
Date medicine provided by parent	
Group/class/form	
Quantity received	
Name and strength of medicine	
Expiry date	
Quantity returned	
Dose and frequency of medicine	

Staff signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent \_\_\_\_\_

Date			
Time given			
Dose given			
Name of member of staff			
Staff initials			
Date			
Time given			
Dose given			
Name of member of staff			
Staff initials			

#### 4: Record of medicine administered to an individual child (Continued)

Date

--	--	--

Time given

--	--	--

Dose given

--	--	--

Name of member of staff

--	--	--

Staff initials

--	--	--

Date

--	--	--

Time given

--	--	--

Dose given

--	--	--

Name of member of staff

--	--	--

Staff initials

--	--	--

Date

--	--	--

Time given

--	--	--

Dose given

--	--	--

Name of member of staff

--	--	--

Staff initials

--	--	--

Date

--	--	--

Time given

--	--	--

Dose given

--	--	--

Name of member of staff

--	--	--

Staff initials

--	--	--

## Appendix 5

### Letter Inviting Parents/Carers to Contribute to an Individual Healthcare Plan

Dear Parent/Carer,

#### **Re: Development of an Individual Healthcare Plan for Your Child**

Thank you for informing us of your child's medical condition. We appreciate your support in ensuring that we have accurate and up-to-date information so that we can provide appropriate care within school.

Enclosed is a copy of the school's policy for supporting students with medical conditions for your information. A key requirement of this policy is the development, where appropriate, of an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP). The purpose of the IHCP is to clearly outline the support your child requires and how this support will be provided within the school setting.

The plan will be developed in partnership with you, your child (where appropriate), the school, and any relevant healthcare professionals who can advise on your child's specific needs. Our aim is to ensure that staff have a clear understanding of how best to support your child and that there is clarity regarding what needs to be done, when it should be done, and who is responsible.

The level of detail included in the plan will depend upon the nature and complexity of your child's medical condition and the degree of support required. In some cases, it may be determined that a formal Individual Healthcare Plan is not necessary; however, this decision will be based on careful consideration of how your child's condition may impact their participation in school life.

A meeting to discuss the development of your child's Individual Healthcare Plan has been arranged for:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The meeting will involve:

I hope this date is convenient for you and would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance. If you would like us to invite any additional medical practitioner, healthcare professional, or specialist who may provide relevant information, please let us know.

If you are unable to attend, please complete the attached Individual Healthcare Plan template and return it, along with any relevant medical information, so that it can be considered as part of the meeting.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below.

Yours sincerely,

**SENCo**  
**Estuary Academy North**

**Appendix 6: Staff training record – administration of medicines and/or medical procedures**

Name of school/setting	
Name	
Type of training received	
Date of training completed	
Training provided by	
Profession and title	

I confirm that [name of member of staff] has received the training detailed above and is competent to carry out any necessary treatment. I recommend that the training is updated [name of member of staff].

Trainer’s signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that I have received the training detailed above.**

Staff signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested review date

