

HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST

Supporting Children with Medical Needs Who Cannot Attend School
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POLICY ISSUE CONTROL

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1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Horizons Education Trust (HEdT) is committed to ensuring that all children with medical conditions receive the support they need to access education fully, safely, and inclusively. HEdT recognises its legal duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, and the Department for Education's statutory guidance Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School (2017). The Trust believes that pupils with medical conditions should be able to enjoy the same opportunities as any other child, ensuring they can participate in academy life, benefit from high-quality education, and feel included within their school community. This policy recognises and ensures that pupils who are unable to attend school, due to physical or mental health needs, continue to receive suitable education.

2.0 AIMS

- 2.1 This policy ensures that pupils unable to attend due to physical or mental health needs continue to receive suitable education. It must be read alongside Local Authority (LA) protocols. The aims are to:
- Ensure suitable education is arranged for pupils unable to attend school due to health needs, in line with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.
 - Clarify responsibilities of schools, LAs, families and agencies.
 - Ensure fair, timely and transparent processes.
 - Ensure provision begins as soon as possible.

3.0 STATUTORY & NON-STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 This policy is informed by the following:
- Education Act 1996 (Section 19 duty)
 - Children and Families Act 2014
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Children Act 1989, 2004 and 2014
 - DfE Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions (2017)
 - Working Together to Improve Attendance (2024)
 - Arranging Alternative Provision (2025)
 - Providing Remote Education (2024)
 - Children Missing Education (2024)
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
 - Data Protection Act 2018 & GDPR
 - Non-statutory mental-health attendance guidance (2023)
 - Trust policies on Attendance, Medical Needs, Reasonable Adjustments and SEND

4.0 TRUST COMMITMENT

- 4.1 HEdT ensures that pupils with health-related barriers to attendance receive an education that is:
- Suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and SEND profile.
 - Equivalent, as far as their health allows, to what they would receive in school.

- Flexible and responsive to changing health needs.
- Designed to maintain academic progress, communication development and emotional wellbeing.

4.2 Provision will reflect specialist SEND pedagogy:

- Multi-sensory learning
- Communication-rich approaches including AAC
- Specialist resources, assistive technology and adapted environments
- Integration of therapy input where appropriate (physiotherapy, OT, SaLT)

4.3 Reintegration is the planned goal wherever medically appropriate.

5.0 DEFINITION OF PARENT/CARER

5.1 Based on Section 576 Education Act 1996:

- Natural parents
- Those with parental responsibility
- Anyone caring for the child

6.0 WHEN THE POLICY APPLIES:

6.1 This policy is activated when:

- A pupil is, or is expected to be, absent for **15 days** or more (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical need; or,
- The academy cannot meet the pupil's medical need through on-site support alone; and
- Medical advice indicates absence or reduced attendance is required.

6.2 Trust academies must notify the LA promptly so that suitable education is not delayed.

7.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1.1 The Trust recognises that Local Authorities hold statutory duties, under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, to **arrange** suitable education for children who are medically unable to attend school for more than **15 days**.

7.1.2 This can include home tuition, a hospital school, or another alternative setting. A senior officer from the Local Authority will oversee these arrangements.

7.1.3 For as long as the pupil remains on roll at a HEdT academy, the Trust and the academy will continue to remain involved, maintain regular communication, and act in a reasonable and proportionate manner to meet the pupil's needs. This includes retaining full safeguarding responsibility throughout the period the pupil is unable to attend school.

7.1.4 All children of compulsory school age are entitled by law to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have.

7.2 Horizons Education Trust will:

- Work proactively with each LA to ensure they fulfil these duties.
- Escalate concerns where provision is delayed or insufficient.
- Hold regular communication with LA officers regarding individual cases.
- Ensure that LAs are fully informed of medical needs, expected absence duration and required provision.
- Advocate for high-quality provision, timely arrangements and clear reintegration processes.
- Request confirmation and timelines from LAs to support accountability.
- Appoint a Director of Safeguarding & Attendance
- Maintain oversight of cases, quality, outcomes and timescales.
- Provide guidance, training and frameworks for implementation.

7.3 Academies will:

- Appoint a named Attendance Champion.
- Track attendance, identify health-related patterns and notify the LA accordingly.
- Work collaboratively with families, health professionals and external agencies.
- Prepare required planning documents/Personalised Plans; including but not limited to IHP, PEP (where appropriate) and EHCP reviews.
- Arrange reasonable adjustments and personalised timetables.
- Coordinate reintegration planning.
- Ensure external providers follow plans, report on progress and support reintegration.
- Support in the provision of adapted/dedicated resources.
- Work collaboratively with families to ensure needs are being met.
- Understand medical needs of children in their care.
- Support emotional wellbeing and communication.

7.4 Parents will:

- Notify the academy of changes to needs.
- Provide relevant medical information.
- Engage with planning, reviews and reintegration.
- Support education at home or in alternative provision.

7.5 Pupils will:

- Contribute their views in communication-appropriate ways.

8.0 PROVISION & REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

- 8.1 Provision will be personalised, responsive to medical advice and SEND profiles. This may include: **(academies to customise)**

- Adapted timetables
- Sensory and medical support
- Pastoral and therapeutic interventions
- Remote or blended learning
- Specialist SEND approaches

- 8.2 Provision should begin promptly and be formally recorded in the Personalised Plan.

9.0 MONITORING, PLANNING & REVIEW

- 9.1 Each pupil supported under this policy will have:

- A Personalised Plan (as detailed in 7.3), outlining education arrangements, goals, review dates and required adjustments
- Clear safeguarding arrangements linked to their pattern of attendance and health needs
- Involvement from relevant agencies, including health and SEND professionals
- Reviews will take place at least every 6 weeks, or sooner where needs are changing

- 9.2 Reviews should occur at least every 6 weeks.

10.0 EXAMS & TRANSITIONS

- Provide appropriate access arrangements and modified assessment spaces based on medical and SEND needs.
- Ensure pupils accessing education off-site or through alternative provision have equivalent access to examinations and accreditation.
- Plan transitions (including mid-year, between phases and into post-16) using updated health information and multi-agency input.
- Use alternative or personalised accreditation routes where these best meet a pupil's needs and circumstances.
- Ensure continuity of curriculum and support during periods of transition or disrupted attendance.

11.0 REINTEGRATION

- 11.1 Reintegration will be:

- Gradual, using a phased plan tailored to the pupil's health, stamina and emotional readiness
- Collaborative, involving the pupil, family, academy staff, health professionals and the Local Authority
- Flexible, adapting to changes in medical, sensory or mental-health needs
- Supported by appropriate reasonable adjustments and ongoing review

- 11.2 Pupils should remain connected to their academy community, routines and relationships throughout their absence, wherever appropriate.

12.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE

12.1 The Trust and its academies will:

- Maintain a register of all pupils receiving education due to health needs or alternative provision
- Review attendance, engagement, outcomes and reintegration success as part of Trust-wide quality assurance
- Monitor the timeliness and suitability of provision in collaboration with Local Authorities and health partners

- Share effective practice and provide support to academies to ensure consistent implementation across the Trust

13.0 COMMITMENT

- 13.1 Horizons Education Trust remains committed to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of diagnosis, health condition or complexity of need, have equitable access to education.
- 13.2 This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects current statutory duties, emerging best practice and the changing needs of our pupils.
- 13.3 All academies within the Trust are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently and that pupils remain safe, supported and included throughout periods of absence.