

Pupils with Additional Health Needs – Attendance Policy

Authorising Body: Wellbeing Committee

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Statement of intent

Briarwood School 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 excursions and enrichment opportunities as their medical condition allows.

Due to the nature of their health needs, however, some pupils may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision and unable to attend school as normal. 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 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
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026' (in force from 1 September 2026)
- DfE (2023) 'Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'
- DfE statutory guidance on alternative provision
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance', read alongside the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE attendance guidance

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Remote Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions & First Aid in Schools Policy
- Accessibility Policy and Plan

2. Local Authority 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 school is not responsible for

ensuring that the LA meets its responsibilities – the school’s 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 suitable education as soon as it is clear that a pupil will be away from school for 15 school days or more because of health needs, whether consecutively or cumulatively. Where the LA arranges alternative education, provision should begin as soon as possible and, at the latest, by the sixth day of absence.
- 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.
- Where full-time education is not in the pupil’s best interests for reasons relating to their physical or mental health, arrange part-time education on the basis considered to be in the pupil’s best interests, with the aim of providing as much education as the pupil’s health allows.
- 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 with 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 or school refusal.
- Progressive conditions.
- Terminal illnesses.
- Chronic illnesses.

Children who are unable to attend 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 governing board 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.
- Approving and reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

The Executive Headteacher will be responsible for:

- Working with the governing board 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, 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.

The Head of Provision will be responsible for:

- Notifying the LA when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time (more than 15 days) so they are able to ensure suitable provision
- 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.
- Working closely with the Head of Inclusion (Senior Attendance Champion) and Complex Needs Assistant Headteacher to ensure the effective management of absence related to medical or health needs, including reasonable adjustments, attendance action planning and timely escalation where required.
- For planned hospital admissions, liaising with the LA as early as possible to discuss the likely admission date and expected length.

The Head of Inclusion will be responsible for:

- Working closely with the Complex Needs co-ordinator to ensure oversight of any pupils who are accessing alternative provision
- Notifying the Head of Provision when a pupil is likely to be away from school for 15 school days or more, whether consecutively or cumulatively, due to health needs, and ensuring the local authority sickness return is completed where the statutory threshold is met.
- Working with Heads of School, the Complex Needs Assistant Headteacher, the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies to ensure health-related attendance barriers are understood and addressed through a support-first approach.
- Maintaining strategic oversight of whole-school attendance, including persistent absence (below 90%), severe absence (at or below 50%), pupils with medical needs and the impact of reasonable adjustments and interventions.

Heads of School will be responsible for:

- Managing pupils registered at the school who are unable to attend fully because of health needs, including mental health needs, during short-term absence and ensuring normal attendance procedures, safeguarding follow-up and appropriate educational support continue.
- Ensuring anticipated or actual health-related absence approaching 15 school days, whether consecutive or cumulative, is communicated promptly to the Head of Inclusion and Head of Provision, without waiting for the threshold to be reached where longer absence is already expected.

- Where attendance falls below 95%, respond to emerging concerns; where it falls below 90%, meet with parents/carers to create or review an Attendance Action Plan, including reasonable adjustments and relevant professional input. Where attendance is 90% or below, ensure attendance is considered at the next EHCP annual or interim review.

The Complex Needs Assistant Head will be responsible for:

- Supporting HOP and HOI with complex health-related attendance cases, particularly where absence is prolonged, attendance remains below 90% following site-based support, or the pupil is accessing LA-arranged education or alternative provision.
- Providing annual reports to the governing board 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 (including mental health needs)
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school from ALP
- Supplying any LA-arranged education providers with information about pupils' capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Liaising with ELT and LA-arranged education providers, and parents to help determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school, where necessary.
- Providing a link between pupils and their parents, the school, and LA where necessary.

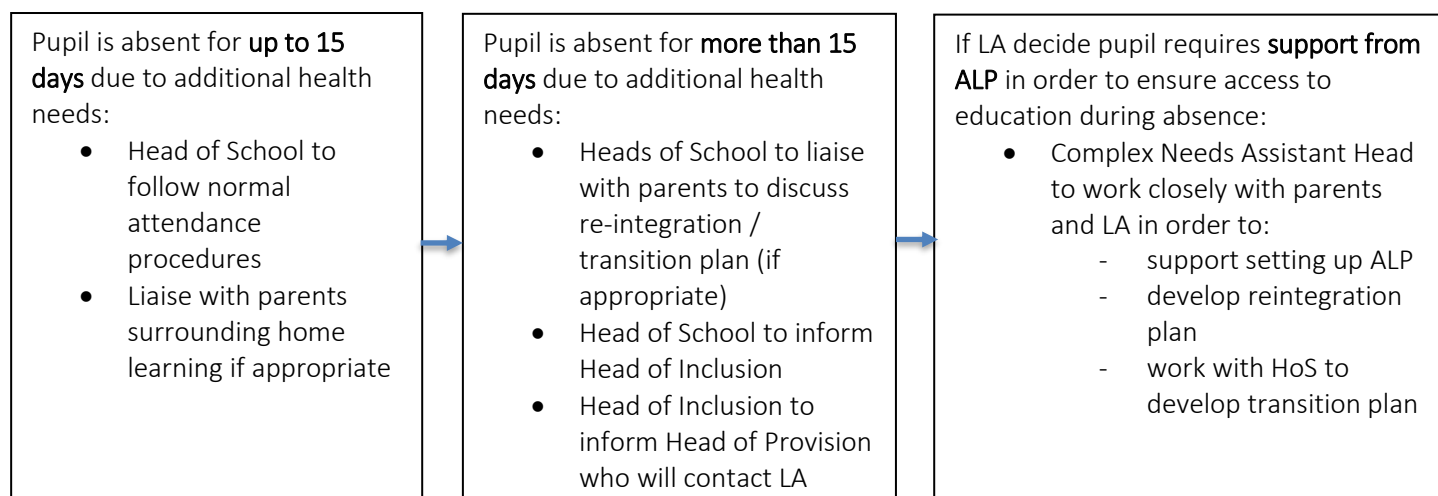
Staff will be responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- Designing school-based activities, including 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.

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.

Pupil absence reported due to additional health needs:



5. Managing absence

Parents will be required to contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.

Absence due to illness will normally be authorised on the basis of information provided by parents/carers. In line with the Attendance Policy, the school will not routinely request medical evidence. Evidence may be requested where health needs are complex, long-term or frequently recurring and it would help the school and relevant professionals plan appropriate support. The school will explain why evidence is being requested and will not require evidence that would incur a cost to the family.

Where a pupil is absent because of illness and the local authority has not taken responsibility for arranging education, the school will consider what educational support is appropriate and manageable in light of the pupil's health. This may include suitable curriculum materials, liaison with parents/carers and professionals, or carefully planned school-based support. Any remote education will complement, not replace, face-to-face education and will form part of an agreed plan with review arrangements.

As soon as it is clear that a pupil is likely to be unable to attend school for 15 school days or more because of health needs, whether consecutively or cumulatively, the Head of Provision will notify and work with the local authority so that its section 19 responsibilities can be considered and suitable education arranged where required. The school will not wait until the fifteenth day where the likely duration is already known.

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 Head of Provision will liaise with the LA and the hospital education provider as early as possible to discuss the likely admission date and expected length of absence. Where possible, plans will be made in advance for the educational programme to be followed while the pupil is in hospital.

Where the Local Authority arranges alternative education, this should begin as soon as possible and, where it is clear that a pupil will be absent for 15 school days or more, whether consecutively or cumulatively, provision should be arranged in accordance with the Local Authority's statutory duties. The school will work constructively with the Local Authority, education provider, relevant health professionals and parents/carers to ensure continuity of education and the best possible outcomes for the pupil.

Where full time education would not be in the pupil's best interests for reasons relating to their physical or mental health, the Local Authority may arrange part-time education on a basis that it considers to be in the pupil's best interests. Any such arrangement will be regularly reviewed and will provide as much education as the pupil's health needs allow.

The school will provide the Local Authority and any education provider with relevant information about the pupil's needs, capabilities, progress, outcomes and curriculum. Where appropriate, curriculum materials and resources will be shared to support continuity between the pupil's school-based and alternative education.

The school will work with the Local Authority, parents/carers, relevant health services and other professionals to regularly review the provision to ensure that it remains appropriate for the pupil and provides suitable education.

Where possible, pupils will be supported to access the same curriculum and materials as they would have used in school and to take examinations or assessments at the same time as their peers. Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements will be considered in accordance with the pupil's individual needs.

The school will maintain appropriate contact with the pupil during periods of absence and will support them to remain connected to school life, taking account of their health needs, communication needs and individual circumstances.

The school will monitor pupil attendance and mark registers accurately so that it is clear whether a pupil is attending school, absent due to illness or receiving education elsewhere.

The school will provide the Local Authority with a sickness return for any pupil of compulsory school age recorded using Code I where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will be absent for 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of sickness.

The school will not routinely request medical evidence when a pupil is absent due to illness and will usually accept the information provided by parents/carers. Where a pupil's health needs are complex, long-term or frequently recurring, the school may request appropriate evidence where this would help the school and relevant professionals understand the pupil's needs and plan suitable support. The school will explain why evidence is being requested and will not require evidence that results in a family having to pay for a GP appointment.

Removing a pupil from the admission register will be managed in accordance with current pupil-registration requirements and Briarwood School's Attendance Policy. As pupils at Briarwood are placed by the Local Authority, the school will not remove a pupil from the admission register without the required Local Authority involvement or consent and a lawful ground for deletion.

Where a pupil is absent without explanation, or their whereabouts cannot be established, the school will follow its safeguarding and children missing education procedures, make reasonable enquiries and

notify the Local Authority as required. The pupil will remain on roll unless and until a lawful ground for deletion applies and the required process has been completed.

Staff will remain alert to the fact that absence from education can place pupils at increased risk of harm and may be an indicator of a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns arising from, or contributing to, a pupil's absence will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Children Missing Education procedures.

The school will provide the Local Authority, at agreed intervals and as required by statutory attendance arrangements, with relevant information about pupils who are not attending school regularly, including where absence is related to additional health needs.

6. Support for pupils

Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, the school 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 Health Protocol which will be subject to regular review by the school, which is developed in conjunction with and parents. If the child has an additional care plan from any health care services, this will feed directly in to the Health Protocol.

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

The school will make reasonable adjustments within a pupil's risk assessment and health protocol, in accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and First Aid in School's Policy.

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to full-time education. A temporary part-time timetable will be used only in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests. It will be short-term, agreed with parents/carers, form part of a wider support, healthcare or reintegration plan, include regular review dates and a clear intended end date, and involve the local authority as appropriate because all Briarwood pupils have an EHCP. Absence linked to the timetable will be recorded using the appropriate statutory attendance code.

Reasonable adjustments and support-first interventions will be prioritised before any consideration of attendance enforcement. The school will record support offered, the family's response, adjustments made and relevant medical, mental-health or disability-related circumstances.

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, the school 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
- Social media platforms
- Emails (if deemed appropriate)
- Invitations to school events
- Cards or letters from peers and staff
- Visits to site
- Phone-calls
- Teams video links (if deemed appropriate)
- Home visits (if deemed appropriate)

Where appropriate, the school will provide the pupil's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources. The school 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 will be considered:

- A personalised or part-time timetable
- Access to additional pastoral support in school
- Home learning packs (hardcopies or via SeeSaw)
- Adaptions to environment in line with risk assessment
- Consideration to additional resting periods in line with risk assessment
- Additional risk assessments (e.g. manual handling, hydrotherapy) if deemed appropriate
- Additional staff training in medical issues or needs if required e.g. tracheostomy support

The school 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 school 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

7. Reintegration

When reintegration is anticipated, the school will work with the pupil, parents/carers, local authority, education provider and relevant health professionals to create an individually tailored attendance reintegration plan.

During a lengthy absence, an attendance 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.

The school 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.

During and after education outside school, the school will support continuity of provision so that, as far as possible, the pupil can access the same curriculum and materials as their peers, including appropriate digital resources, while taking account of their health needs.

If appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in the development of the pupil's attendance 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.

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

The attendance reintegration plan will include:

- The date for planned reintegration, once known.
- An attendance plan agreed by all parties and reviewed at regular points
- Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration.
- Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved.
- Details of social contacts, including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period.
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration.
- Follow-up procedures.
- An updated risk assessment
- Any medical or health protocols (if required)

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 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.

Teachers, TAs, supply and support staff will be given access only to the health and emergency information they need to fulfil their role safely. Information will be shared and displayed in a

proportionate, secure and confidential way in accordance with the school's Data Protection, Confidentiality and Records Management policies.

Parents will be made aware of their own rights and responsibilities regarding confidentiality and information sharing. To help achieve this, the school 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, the school 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 Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and First Aid in School's Policy, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to pupils.

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 as soon as reasonably possible but 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. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Head of Provision and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, local-authority arrangements or school procedures change. At each review it will be approved by the appropriate governing-body committee/full governing board in accordance with the school's governance arrangements.

Monitoring will include the timeliness and suitability of education arranged for pupils unable to attend because of health needs, attendance and reintegration outcomes, the impact of reasonable adjustments, and the effectiveness of liaison with families, the local authority, health services and education providers.