





St Augustine's Catholic High School and Sixth Form

Children who Cannot Attend School due to Health Reasons Policy

Approved		Date
Chair, Academy Representatives C Hubble		09.11.22
Principal G T O'Connor		09.11.22
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ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

DEVELOPING THE WHOLE PERSON

Children who cannot attend School due to Health Reasons

"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?"

Luke 15:1-7

Please note that for the purpose of this policy, the term 'medical condition' also refers to mental health conditions.

Aim

St Augustine's Catholic School, has a duty set out in Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and the DfE Statutory Guidance 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'.

St Augustine's should provide support for our pupils with medical needs under their statutory duties as defined in "Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school" (DfE, 2014). It is only when the pupil's medical condition becomes too complex to manage in school that this policy would then apply.

In line with this duty, Worcestershire Children First will support suitable full-time education (or as much education as the child's health condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education. This applies whether or not the child is on the roll of a school and whatever the type of school they attend. It applies to children who are pupils in Academies, Free Schools, special schools and independent schools as well as those in maintained schools.

The law does not define full-time education but children with additional health needs should have provision which is equivalent to the education they would receive in school, "unless the pupil's health means that full time education would not be in his or her best interests" (DfE, 2013). If they receive one-to-one tuition, for example, the hours of face-to-face provision could be fewer as the provision is more concentrated. Full time could also be made up in one or more settings.

Where full-time education would not be in the best interests of a particular child because of reasons relating to their physical or mental health, Worcestershire Children First will accept part-time education as advised by health practitioners who are also working with the child. The part time education will be regularly reviewed, and a plan for increasing hours will be put in place where appropriate. Full and part-time education will still aim to achieve positive educational progress (particularly in English, Maths and Science) and improved social and emotional health.

Responsibility for alternative provision remains with St Augustine's or when this is not possible, Worcestershire Children First. The nature of the intervention, the objectives, the expected outcomes and timeline to achieve the objectives should be made clear. Where reintegration to school is an objective, there should be an agreement on how to assess when the pupil is ready to return and the school should provide or commission a package of support to assist reintegration. Objectives and plans should be set out in writing and regularly monitored.

Commissioners (St Augustine's or WCF) should recognise any issues or barriers and hence a potential requirement for alternative provision as early as possible and carry out a thorough assessment of the pupil's needs. A personalised plan for intervention should be prepared by the commissioner, setting clear objectives for

improvement and attainment, timeframes, the monitoring of progress and a baseline of the current position from which to measure progress. Plans should also link to other relevant information, such as Education, Health and Care plans for children with SEND.

St Augustine's will review the provision offered regularly, with the family and all professionals concerned, to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education.

Responsibilities of the School:

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

Arrangements could include:

- Creation of an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP)
- Sending work home
- Making a referral to the Medical Education Team (MET)
- Liaising with hospital schools and other agencies such as CAMHS, WCF
- Agreeing a time-limited reduced timetable
- Creating a reintegration support plan
- Providing online lessons through support packages available and commissioned by the school

In the first instance parents will be invited in to meet key staff and an Individual Health Care Plan will be drawn up in accordance with the school's "Supporting students with medical conditions policy". Where possible the student will be involved in this process. At this meeting a plan for reintegration back into school will be discussed with agreed review times. Issues around ensuring the child is being safeguarded will be discussed at this meeting. Parents are always advised 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 students who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the student's parents to arrange school work as soon as the student 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 student, their family 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 school will notify the Local Authority (LA), who will take responsibility for the student 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 student's absence.
- For hospital admissions, an appointed member of the school's Attendance Team will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the student is in hospital.
- The school will monitor student attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a student is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school.
- The school will only remove a student who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where: the student has been certified by a Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to ever attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and neither the student 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 student unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent and certification from the Medical Officer, even if the LA has become responsible for the student's education

Alternative Provision

Alternative provision can be defined as education for students who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education (DfE, 2013). Alternative provision for children with medical difficulties can be arranged by the school or by the Local Authority. In cases where the child's medical difficulties are likely to be short term (typically less than 15 days) or result in only small amounts of school being missed, it is often simpler for the school to make these arrangements. To ensure the wellbeing and safety of students accessing off-site provision, with the exception of the Worcestershire Local Authority's Medical Education Team (MET), the school will only send students to providers who are registered with Ofsted. In cases where the child is not able to attend school for long periods it may be more appropriate for the Local Authority to make arrangements.

Medical Education Team

In Worcestershire the statutory duties for children unable to attend the school because of medical difficulties are discharged by the Medical Education Team. The Medical Education Team ensure that arrangements are in place for children and young people who are unable to attend school because of their medical needs so that they have appropriate and ongoing access to education. The Team consists of qualified teachers and teaching assistants who are skilled in teaching children /young people of statutory school age with a wide range of physical, emotional and psychological health needs.

The Medical Education Team service level agreement and referral form can be found on the Worcestershire Children First website:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/WCFEducationServices/info/1/support-services/22/medical-education>

Where it is not appropriate or possible for the needs of children with medical difficulties to be met by the Medical Education Team and the school has not made alternative arrangements, Worcestershire Children First will work with schools and families to agree provision. The school will alert Worcestershire Children First when there is evidence to suggest that a child is unable to attend school and alternative provision is not yet in place to ensure they access full time education.

Contact will be made with the Local Authority as a matter of utmost priority to ensure there is no delay in provision being made for the child.

Links to documentation referred to in the policy:

Department for Education (2013) *Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs*. – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

Department for Education (2014, update 2017) *Supporting children at school with medical conditions* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

Also has the templates for use by schools and links to other resources.

Department of Education (2013) *Alternative provision*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision>