



Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy

Date approved:	29/09/2026
Approved by:	Executives
Version:	5.2
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Version History

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Change	Owners Name
0.1	01.09.2020	New Policy	Wendy Ainscough
1.1	07.09.2021	Annual Policy Review	Wendy Ainscough
2.1	06.09.2022	Annual Policy Review	Wendy Ainscough
3.1	05.09.2023	Annual Policy Review	Rachael Sharpe
4.1	25.06.2024	Annual Policy Review -updated links and minor updates to terminology.	Caroline Merritt
5.1	15.09.2025	Annual Policy Review	James Creek

5.2	2026	Targeted 2026 review; updated attendance, section 19, medical evidence, part-time timetable, registration, SEND and transfer arrangements	Alumnis
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Statement of Intent

Alumnis Multi Academy Trust aims to work with the Local Authority to ensure that children who cannot attend school because of health needs receive suitable, good-quality education, as much as their health condition allows. The Trust recognises that a child may remain on the school roll while receiving education elsewhere and that the school continues to have an important role in planning, supporting and reviewing the child's education and reintegration.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE – Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (December 2023)
- [DfE - Supporting children with medical conditions at school \(2017\)](#)
- DfE – Working together to improve school attendance (current statutory guidance, updated July 2026)
- Current Devon County Council guidance for schools supporting pupils with health/medical needs, where applicable
- [DfE - Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools \(2023\)](#)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- DfE – Children missing education: statutory guidance (current edition);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition), where safeguarding considerations arise.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Where possible, the child's health needs should be managed by the home school so that they can continue to receive suitable education there with appropriate support and adjustments. However, as soon as it is clear that the home school can no longer support the child's health needs and provide suitable education, the school should speak to the Local Authority about putting suitable alternative provision in place.

Local Authority Duties:

The Local Authority has the statutory duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to arrange suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not otherwise receive suitable education. This is normally full-time, but part-time education may be appropriate where full-time education would not be in the child's best interests because of their health. The school must work with the Local Authority to support the child's education.

The LA should:

- Arrange suitable alternative provision as soon as it is clear that a child will be away from school for 15 days or more because of their health needs. The 15 days may be consecutive or cumulative over the school year. The 15-day point is not an absolute legal deadline for education to start; the Local Authority and school should act as soon as the need becomes clear.
- When the Local Authority arranges alternative education, it should begin as soon as possible and, at the latest, by the sixth day of the child's absence. For planned hospital admissions or other planned absences, suitable arrangements should normally be made in advance so education can begin from day one, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- Ensure the education provided is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs, is of good quality and, as far as health allows, is equivalent to the education the child would receive in school. Provision should support appropriate qualifications, progress, wellbeing and successful reintegration.
- Address the needs of individual pupils in arranging provision.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs and ensure parents know who this is.
educate.educationinclusion-mailbox@devon.gov.uk
- 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 the child and that it is providing suitable education.
- Give clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.

The Local authority should 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 child is able to attend school rather than whether the child 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).

DEFINITIONS

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

- 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 mainstream education for health reasons may attend any of the following:

- **Hospital education:** a special 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.
- **Digital resources:** digital technology can complement face-to-face education and

support continuity, communication and reintegration, but should not normally be the sole form of education. Any remote/digital provision must be appropriate to the child's health, able to deliver suitable learning and consistent with current DfE remote education guidance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Local School Committee is responsible for:

The Local School Committee should also seek assurance that attendance information for pupils with long-term health needs is monitored, barriers to attendance are addressed and appropriate support is secured with the Local Authority and other partners.

- Ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- Ensuring the termly review of the arrangements made for pupils who cannot attend school due to their medical needs.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the 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, for both on- and off-site activities.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs are appropriately trained.

The Executive Team are responsible for:

- Approving and reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

The Headteacher should ensure that arrangements are coordinated with the school's attendance, SEND, safeguarding and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions procedures and that no child is denied suitable education because of a rigid health-condition threshold.

- Working with the Local School Committee to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils with health needs.
- Working collaboratively with parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of children.
- Ensuring the 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 healthcare needs and liaises with parents, pupils, the LA, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care.
- Ensuring the support put in place focuses on and meets the needs of individual pupils.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs.
- Providing teachers who support pupils with 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 reports to the Local School Committee on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils.
- Notifying the Local Authority when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs.

Each school will have a named member of staff responsible for pupils with health needs. The name and contact details should be kept current within the school's local arrangements. The named person will:

- Dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying pupils' education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Liaising with the Headteacher, education providers and parents to determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school.
- Keeping pupils informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Providing a link between pupils and their parents, and the Local Authority.

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with 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 supporting pupils with 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 the individual pupil's health needs.
- Ensuring they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and know what to do in an emergency.

- Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school.

Parents are expected to:

Parents/carers should provide relevant information and medical evidence where it is available and reasonably required, but lack of immediately available medical evidence should not in itself delay consideration of suitable educational provision where other reliable information is available.

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible.
- Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the school 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 and, where available, relevant advice or evidence from health professionals. The school and Local Authority should not create unnecessary delay by requiring repeated or continuing medical evidence without good reason.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

MANAGING ABSENCES

Attendance arrangements for pupils with health needs must operate alongside the current Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance and the statutory Children missing education guidance. The school should act early where absence is persistent or severe and should work with the Local Authority to remove barriers to attendance.

Parents are 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.

For shorter periods of absence, the school will maintain contact with the pupil and family and provide suitable educational support where the pupil is well enough to receive it. The nature and amount of support should be tailored to the child's health, age, SEND and ability to engage.

Where an absence is expected to last for 15 or more school days, either consecutively or

cumulatively over the school year, the school will notify and work with the Local Authority so that the section 19 duty can be considered and suitable provision arranged. The school remains involved and should continue to support the pupil's education and reintegration.

Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the Local Authority to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence.

For hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the Local Authority regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital.

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

The school will monitor attendance and complete the admission and attendance registers in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the current Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance, including recording where education is being provided otherwise than at school.

A pupil must not be removed from the admission register simply because they cannot attend school because of health needs or because the Local Authority is arranging alternative education. The school may only delete a pupil's name where one of the lawful grounds in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met, and must make any required notification to the Local Authority.

- The former ground allowing deletion because a medical officer certified that a pupil was unlikely to be fit to attend school has been removed from the current pupil-registration regulations. Illness or a long-term medical condition is not, by itself, a lawful ground for removing a pupil from the school roll.
- 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 with health needs should remain on the school roll unless and until a lawful ground for deletion under regulation 9 is met. Schools must not use absence arising from health needs as a reason to off-roll a pupil.

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 Local Authority, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil.

Where the pupil has an EHC plan or may have SEND, the school should involve the SENCO and relevant Local Authority SEND team as appropriate. The educational provision must remain consistent with the child's EHC plan and statutory SEND duties.

The school should support pupils to access full-time education wherever possible, while making reasonable adjustments and adapting the educational programme where required by the child's medical needs, disability, SEND or other circumstances. Attendance should not be pursued through arrangements that are unsuitable for the child's health.

The school will make reasonable adjustments under pupils' individual healthcare plans (IHCPs), in accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions 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, the school will work with the provider of the pupil's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

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

- digital learning platforms,
- school newsletters,
- emails; and
- invitations to school.

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

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 temporary part-time timetable, where exceptionally required because of a health need, should be agreed with the parent/carers, have a clear purpose and ambition, form part of the pupil's wider support/reintegration plan, include regular review dates and a proposed end date, and be used for the shortest time necessary. It must not be used to manage behaviour.
- Access to additional support in school
- 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

REINTEGRATION

When a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, the school should develop a tailored reintegration plan with the pupil, parent/carer and relevant professionals and Local Authority. Reintegration should be planned around the child's health needs and should aim to increase access to education as soon as is reasonably possible.

The school will work with the Local Authority 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 child will be able to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in school.

If appropriate, the social inclusion 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.

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.

For longer absences, reintegration planning should start early enough to allow practical arrangements, reasonable adjustments, staffing and support to be put in place, while avoiding unnecessary pressure on the pupil and family.

The school is 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 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.

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 Local Authority in seeking feedback from the pupil regarding the effectiveness of the process.

INFORMATION SHARING

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

To protect confidentiality, health information must be shared only where necessary and proportionate for the purpose of supporting the pupil, safeguarding, education or another lawful purpose. The pupil's and parents' views should be considered, but consent is not the only lawful basis for sharing information and must not be treated as an absolute requirement where safeguarding or another legal duty applies.

Relevant teachers, TAs, supply and support staff should be given access to the health information they need to keep the pupil safe and support their education. Access should be proportionate, secure and limited to those who need the information for their role.

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.
- Use appropriate privacy information and, where consent is the relevant lawful basis, obtain and record consent for information sharing. Where another lawful basis applies, the school should record the reason for sharing and ensure that only the minimum necessary information is disclosed.
- Consider how friendship groups and peers may be able to assist pupils with health needs.

When a pupil is discharged from hospital or is returning from another 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.

RECORD KEEPING

In accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, written records will

be kept of all medicines administered to pupils

Proper record keeping protects both staff and pupils and provides evidence that agreed procedures have been followed.

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

Health information is likely to include special category personal data. Records should be accurate, factual, securely stored, access-controlled and retained only for as long as required under the Trust's records retention arrangements and applicable data protection law.

TRAINING

Staff will receive appropriate training before supporting a pupil with health needs where training is required for safe and effective support. Training needs should be identified with relevant healthcare professionals and should be refreshed when the pupil's needs or treatment change.

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

Healthcare professionals should 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.

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

EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

The named member of staff will liaise with the alternative provision provider over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate.

Relevant assessment information will be provided to the alternative provision provider if required.

Awarding bodies may make reasonable adjustments or special arrangements for pupils with disabilities, long-term health conditions or temporary illness. The school should make applications as early as possible and in accordance with the relevant awarding-body requirements.

School Email Addresses

Bampton CofE School - bampton.sch@alumnismat.org

Burlescombe CofE Primary School: burlescombe.sch@alumnismat.org

Combe Martin School: combemartin.sch@alumnismat.org

Webber's CofE Primary School: webbers.sch@alumnismat.org

Woolacombe School: woolacombe.sch@alumnismat.org

Trust transfer / closure: Where a school transfers to a successor Trust or employer, live arrangements for pupils with health needs should be handed over securely and lawfully. The handover should include current education provision, attendance information, reintegration plans, healthcare information that is necessary and lawful to share, EHC/SEND information where relevant, Local Authority contacts and any outstanding actions. The transfer should not create a gap in education, safeguarding or healthcare support.