

Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

Document Management Information

Applicable to:	All staff and pupils at The Abbey School, Faversham
Dissemination:	The document will be available to staff via the Academy's Policy Centre on the shared area of the IT system. The document will also be published and shared electronically within the school.
Training:	Available to staff on request
Review frequency:	This document will be reviewed annually
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School Policy Owner:	Rowland Speller - Principal / Jackie Lucas - Vice Principal / Sara Spring - Vice Principal
Approval by:	Local Academy Board / Principal
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1. Aims and scope

The Abbey School is committed to supporting students who cannot attend school, or whose attendance is significantly restricted, because of physical or mental health needs. This policy sets out how the school will maintain educational access, coordinate support and work with families, Kent County Council and other providers.

- Support students to access suitable education as fully as their health allows, reducing academic, social and emotional disadvantage.
- Identify needs and act promptly, including where absence is intermittent, recurring or anticipated.
- Maintain appropriate contact with students and families and support safe, individually paced reintegration.
- Consider SEND, equality and safeguarding duties alongside health and attendance needs.

This policy applies to students on roll, including students in the sixth form. The Local Authority's duty under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 applies to children of compulsory school age who would otherwise not receive suitable education because of illness or other reasons. For students above compulsory school age, the school will apply the principles of coordinated support and liaise with appropriate services; Section 19 does not extend to this age group.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is informed by the following legislation and the current versions of relevant guidance:

- Education Act 1996, Section 19.
- Children and Families Act 2014, including Section 100 and relevant SEND duties.
- Equality Act 2010; UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- DfE guidance on arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, supporting pupils with medical conditions, school attendance, mental health and attendance, remote education, and alternative provision.
- Current Keeping Children Safe in Education, SEND Code of Practice, and Kent Educational Health Needs Policy.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing body and Headteacher

The governing body will oversee implementation and approve this policy. The Headteacher will ensure that responsibilities are allocated, staff understand the policy and concerns about access to education are escalated promptly.

Assistant Principals for Key Stage 3 and 4 and Heads of Year

The Heads of Year will normally coordinate each student's support, unless the Headteacher assigns another named lead. The family and any external provider will be told who their point of contact is. Tasks may be delegated, but the lead will retain oversight.

- Liaise with parents/carers and the student to understand health-related barriers and agree a written support plan.
- Coordinate teachers, Heads of Department, the Attendance Lead, SENCo and DSL according to need.
- Arrange accessible learning resources, teaching contact and feedback, and monitor whether the student can engage with the provision.
- Record arrangements, review dates and actions; coordinate referrals and reintegration.

SENCo

The SENCo will advise on SEND, reasonable adjustments, individual healthcare plans and the relationship between health needs and special educational provision. Where a student has an EHCP, the SENCo will liaise with the Local Authority about delivery of Section F provision and any need for an early review.

Attendance Lead

The Attendance Lead will monitor consecutive and cumulative health-related absence, alert the named lead to emerging concerns, ensure accurate attendance coding and complete required notifications to the Local Authority.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will oversee safeguarding arrangements, including welfare contact, information sharing, risks during periods away from school and responses to concerns or loss of contact. Safeguarding responsibilities will be agreed with any external provider.

Teachers and Heads of Department

Teaching staff will provide curriculum information, appropriately adapted learning and feedback. Heads of Department will help maintain continuity and identify essential learning, assessments and qualification requirements.

Parents carers and students

Parents/carers will be asked to share relevant information, notify the school of changes, maintain agreed contact and participate in reviews. Students' views will be sought in ways appropriate to their age, communication needs and wellbeing. Difficulty engaging with support will prompt exploration of barriers and a review of arrangements.

4. School arrangements and early support

The school will assess each student's circumstances individually. Health needs may be physical or mental, temporary, long term or fluctuating. Support will focus on their impact on education rather than rely solely on a diagnosis.

The named lead will contact the family promptly when a health need prevents or significantly restricts attendance. Where absence is planned, such as hospital treatment, the school will liaise in advance with the family, health professionals and hospital education staff where relevant.

A written support plan will identify:

- The student's needs, views, ability to learn and relevant professional advice.
- Learning priorities, teaching arrangements, accessible resources and feedback.
- Adjustments, equipment and support required, including SEND provision.
- A named contact, welfare arrangements, responsibilities and review dates.
- Any referral or escalation needed and the next steps for reintegration or transition.

Short-term arrangements may include adapted work, remote learning, teacher contact or liaison with hospital teaching staff. The school office may help collate and send resources at the named lead's request. The school will consider access to devices, connectivity and alternatives to online work.

Providing worksheets alone will not automatically be treated as suitable education. The school will review the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of arrangements, including whether the student receives appropriate teaching and feedback. Expectations will reflect the student's health, fatigue, treatment and capacity to engage.

Healthcare plans and reasonable adjustments

Where appropriate, an Individual Healthcare Plan will set out health support, emergency arrangements and responsibilities. It will be developed with the family and relevant professionals and reviewed at least annually, or earlier when needs change.

The school will consider reasonable adjustments for disabled students under the Equality Act 2010. These may include rest breaks, adapted timetables, accessible spaces, equipment, modified learning activities or additional pastoral support. Relevant staff will receive the information and training needed to implement agreed support.

Review and escalation

The named lead will set review frequency according to individual need and record education received, engagement, wellbeing and unresolved barriers. If school arrangements are unsuitable or insufficient, the school will contact the Local Authority promptly rather than wait for a fixed absence threshold.

5. Local Authority arrangements and Kent referrals

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Local Authority to arrange suitable education for compulsory-school-age children who, because of illness or other reasons, would otherwise not receive it. Suitable education must reflect age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs. This duty is not simply transferred to the Local Authority after the school has failed to make arrangements.

The school will contact the Local Authority as soon as it is clear that school support cannot provide suitable education. Where a student is likely to be absent for 15 school days or more because of health needs, consecutively or cumulatively during the school year, the school will seek timely Local Authority arrangements. The 15-day expectation is not a requirement to wait until day 15 before acting.

The school will seek provision without unnecessary delay, including advance planning for known hospital admissions. DfE guidance expects Local Authority provision to begin as soon as possible, at the latest by the sixth day of absence once such arrangements are required, and from day one for planned absences unless exceptional circumstances apply.

The Rosewood School

Kent County Council commissions The Rosewood School to provide education where health needs prevent access to suitable education at the home school. The school will use the current Kent referral form and procedures, consulting parents/carers and the student and supplying attendance information, evidence of adjustments, learning needs and relevant health advice.

Medical evidence will help establish the effect of the health need and appropriate provision. The school will not apply a blanket rule that GP evidence is insufficient. Kent's published policy provides for GP-supported referrals where the GP evidence states that further consultant investigation has been sought. Current referral requirements will be checked when a referral is made.

Where specific medical evidence is not readily available, the school will discuss other available evidence with the Local Authority and relevant professionals so that support is not unnecessarily delayed. Physical and mental health needs will both be considered. Local referral criteria do not replace the statutory Section 19 test.

If a referral is declined or provision is delayed and the student remains without suitable education, the named lead will obtain the reasons, discuss next steps with the SENCo and Headteacher, and escalate to Kent's health needs coordinator. Interim school support will continue and be reviewed while an appropriate response is sought.

Full time and part time provision

Local Authority provision should normally be full time. Where full-time education would not be in the student's best interests for reasons relating to physical or mental health, the Local Authority must arrange suitable part-time provision. Its intensity, accessibility and educational quality will be considered, with regular review and increased access as health allows.

6. Continuing school responsibilities

While a student receives education at home, in hospital or through another provider, the school will continue an active role. The named lead will agree responsibilities and communication arrangements with the Local Authority, provider and family.

- Share relevant curriculum, prior attainment, learning resources, SEND information and support plans securely.
- Agree who monitors attendance, participation, educational progress and welfare, and how concerns are reported.
- Maintain suitable contact and offer appropriate connections with school life, peers and events, taking account of the student's wishes and health.
- Review the effectiveness of provision and contribute to meetings, reintegration and transition planning.

SEND and EHCP provision

Health-related absence does not remove SEND duties. The school will work with the Local Authority and provider to coordinate support. Where a student has an EHCP, the Local Authority remains responsible for securing the special educational provision specified in Section F. Any difficulty delivering that provision will be raised promptly; an early review will be considered where needs or arrangements have changed.

Safeguarding and information sharing

The DSL and named lead will agree regular welfare contact and how the student can raise concerns. Contact frequency and method will reflect individual risk and need. Missed contact, unexplained non-attendance at provision or emerging risks will be followed up under school safeguarding procedures.

The school will confirm safeguarding responsibilities with providers, including reporting routes and arrangements for learning online or at home. For looked-after children, the Designated Teacher will liaise with the Virtual School and relevant social worker.

Health and other sensitive information will be shared lawfully, securely and only as necessary. Appropriate consent will be sought where required; lack of consent will not prevent lawful information sharing needed to safeguard a child.

Attendance and registration

The Attendance Lead will apply the current statutory attendance codes according to the actual arrangements and circumstances, liaising with any dual-registration provider. Accessing remote learning does not itself mean that a student is present at school. A health-related absence will not automatically lead to deletion from roll; any deletion must meet the applicable legal requirements.

Qualifications and examinations

The Exams Officer, SENCo and relevant departments will coordinate with providers about entries, teaching, non-examination assessments, deadlines and examination venues. Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will follow current JCQ and awarding body rules and evidence requirements. Special consideration will be considered separately where relevant. Responsibility for applications will be agreed with the entering examination centre and applications made promptly.

7. Reintegration and reduced timetables

Reintegration will be planned collaboratively when the student's health allows, with the student, parents/carers, school staff, provider, Local Authority and relevant health professionals. The pace will respond to current needs and avoid undue pressure.

The written reintegration plan will identify:

- A named lead, proposed start date and agreed attendance or education arrangements.
- Reasonable adjustments, rest breaks, safe spaces and pastoral support.
- Curriculum priorities, support for gaps in learning and appropriate assessment arrangements.
- Any updated healthcare plan, risk assessment, SEND provision and staff information.
- Review dates, measures of progress and a response if health deteriorates.

Any temporary reduced school timetable will be used only in exceptional circumstances, in the student's best interests and with parental agreement. It will have a clear purpose, recorded arrangements for education and safety during non-attendance, regular reviews and a proposed end date. It will not be used to manage behaviour or compensate for insufficient staffing.

The school will follow current attendance guidance and Kent notification requirements and involve the Local Authority where appropriate, including for students with an EHCP. If reduced attendance leaves a compulsory-school-age student without suitable education because of health needs, Section 19 involvement will be considered promptly.

Following return, the named lead will monitor settling, learning, attendance and wellbeing for an appropriate period according to individual need. Further internal support or external referrals will be arranged where necessary, in consultation with the family. Where return is not appropriate, the school will support a planned transition, including to post-16 education or training.

8. Monitoring review and concerns

Mrs S Frorath, SENCo, will review this policy annually and sooner if legislation, guidance or local arrangements change. The governing body will approve each review. Implementation will be monitored through educational access, referral timeliness, participation, progress, wellbeing, reintegration outcomes and feedback from students and families.

Parents/carers should initially raise concerns with the named lead, then the SENCo or Headteacher. Unresolved concerns about school support may be raised through the school's Complaints Policy. Concerns about Local Authority provision will be directed to the relevant Kent service and, where necessary, Kent's complaints process.

9. Links to other school policies

This policy should be read alongside the SEND Policy, Accessibility Plan, Attendance Policy, Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Examinations Policy, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments guidance, Word Processor Policy, Data Protection Policy and Complaints Policy. Remote education arrangements should also be read alongside any separate Remote Education Policy.

Reference sources

The following official sources inform this revised policy. Current versions should be checked at each policy review. Sources checked on 2 October 2026.

DfE Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs December 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

DfE Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

DfE Working together to improve school attendance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

DfE Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools>

DfE Providing remote education guidance for schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-guidance-for-schools>

Kent Educational Health Needs Policy

https://www.kelsi.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/225275/Educational-Health-Needs-Policy.pdf

KELSI The Rosewood School referral information

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/kent-PRU-and-attendance-service-KPAS/pupil-referral-unit-and-alternative-provision/the-rosewood-school>