

Woodlands Secondary School	Policy for children with health needs who cannot attend school		
Date	Review Date	Author	Nominated Governors
November 2025	November 2026	Lindsey Lucas Sandra Clarke	Governing Board
Website	Statutory Policy	Source	Ratification Date
Yes	Yes	The Key for School Leaders	24/11/25

Introduction

Some young people at Woodlands Secondary School may have health conditions which significantly impact on their ability to attend school. This could be due to a particular incident e.g. an accident or illness where the student is absent for a period of time but they are expected to recover and to return to school. Some young people may have long term and serious medical condition or mental health difficulties and it is difficult to predict whether they will be able to access their education in the Woodlands school setting. Some of these students may transition to Woodlands when they have previously been on roll at a primary special school and accessed alternative provision.

Regardless of the young person's situation, this policy sets out how the school will support these young people.

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- A suitable education is arranged for students on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs
- Students, staff and parents understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the following legislation:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

It is also based on the following statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [Alternative provision](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#)

It is also based on guidance provided by our local authority. [Education provision for children unable to attend school due to health needs](#) The Inclusion and Alternative Provision Team. Sept 2024

3. 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 issues, including anxiety
- Emotional difficulties or school refusal
- Progressive conditions
- Terminal illnesses
- Chronic illnesses

4. Responsibilities of the school

- Ensuring that all students receive a suitable education taking into consideration the student's individual medical or mental health needs.
- Working with students and parents in planning and providing a suitable education, making reasonable adjustments, where necessary.
- Carrying out individual risk assessments for students who do not attend school due to significant medical needs or those who attend school on a part time basis.
- Carrying out welfare checks where students attend part time or those that are not attending school who have medical needs.
- Working constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies, and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the student. Sharing information with the local authority and relevant health and social care services as required.
- Making sure that the provision offered to the student is as effective as possible and working towards the student reintegrating successfully back into school.

4.1 If the school makes arrangements

- **Lindsey Lucas, Assistant Head has oversight of students unable to attend school due to health needs.**
- Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.
- The Assistant Head will co-ordinate meetings with parents and, where appropriate, relevant professionals, to decide upon the best support option for the student.
- The type of arrangement that will be made, will vary depending on the student's individual situation and circumstance.
- Support arrangements may include the following (this list is not exhaustive)
 - If a child is absent due to a particular incident e.g. an accident, illness, or recovering from surgery, provided they are well enough to engage in some learning, the school will send home some work.
 - If a child is an inpatient at hospital, but well enough to access learning, we will liaise with the hospital school service.
 - If a child's medical or mental health means they are unable to attend school full time, we will consider adjusted hours, for a period of time, or a reduced or part time timetable.
 - In some cases students, students may be referred to the Luton Borough Council's medical tuition service - see the local authorities policy Education provision for children unable to attend school due to health needs, IAPT, Luton Borough Council, September 2024
 - For some students, the school may use the services of their EOOS team, (Education Out of School), or an alternative provider (subject to funding received via EHC top up funding), this may be at home or in an alternative venue.
- A plan will be drawn up in consultation with parents and other relevant professionals
- In the case where alternative provision may be used, the school will contact the Alternative Provider (AP) to request an assessment and a learning proposal. Before an AP provider will start working with a student, the school will ensure that all safeguarding checks are carried out and that there is suitable

funding for the provision. If there is insufficient funding, the school will contact the local authority and request additional funding via the SENDAT provision panel.

- The school will make arrangements for ongoing welfare/safeguarding checks.
- The school will monitor attendance/ participation and progress towards EHCP priorities.
- Arrangements will be reviewed half termly.
- The LA SENDAT team will be notified when a student is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health need
- The school will offer support, advice, and transition planning when the child is ready to return to school in the future.
- The school will liaise with medical professionals and the Local Authority to ensure suitable provision continues.
- Regular reviews (every half term, or sooner if required) will take place to assess the child's progress and readiness for reintegration.

The school will maintain communication with both the student and family to support wellbeing and ensure continuity of learning.

4.2 If the local authority makes arrangements

If the school cannot make suitable arrangements, Luton Borough Council will be informed and become responsible for arranging suitable education for these students.

In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, the school will:

- Provide to the local authority, at agreed intervals, the full name and address of any pupils of compulsory school age who are not attending school regularly due to their health needs
- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the student.
- Share information with the Local Authority and relevant health services as required.
- Help make sure that the provision offered to the student is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully.

When reintegration is anticipated, work with the local authority to:

- Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the student to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible.
- Enable the student to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through Parentmail, emails, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school).
- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school.
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made.

4.3 The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for students who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- Ensuring that arrangements made for students who cannot attend school due to their medical needs are reviewed regularly.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of students 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 students with health needs are appropriately trained.
- Providing those who support students with health needs with suitable information relating to a student's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the student.

4.4 Parent Responsibilities

Parents play a key role in supporting the education of their child when the child is unable to attend school due to medical needs. Parent responsibilities include:

- Providing the school with relevant and updated medical information
- Attending meetings and participating in discussions with the school, healthcare providers, and local authority regarding their child's education and any necessary adjustments.
- Ensuring that their child engages with the education provided, whether it is through part-time attendance, online learning, or alternative provision organised by the school.
- Maintaining regular communication with the school regarding their child's health status and educational needs.

4.5 Attendance Tracking and Communication

- Attendance will be monitored closely for students unable to attend school due to medical reasons to ensure they remain engaged with their education.
- Attendance will be tracked by the individual services working with the child (e.g., medical tuition providers, home-based education services, or hospital schooling).
- These services will send regular attendance data to the school to ensure accurate monitoring of the student's participation.
- The school will maintain a record of the student's attendance based on the information received from these services. This data will be regularly reviewed as part of the student's overall education plan.

4.6 Communication with school

- Parents are expected to maintain regular communication with the school regarding any changes in their child's health or ability to engage with the education provided.
- They should inform the school immediately if the child is unable to participate in education on a particular day, similar to how they would report an absence when the child is attending school in person.

4.7 Attendance Concerns:

- If there are any concerns about the student's attendance or engagement with alternative education, the school will arrange a meeting with the parents and relevant services to review the student's health needs and adjust the education plan if necessary.

4.8 Request for Medical Evidence

The school may request medical evidence from a relevant consultant or healthcare provider to explain why the student is unable to attend school. This evidence is necessary to:

- Ensure that suitable educational provisions are made in line with the student's medical condition.
- Facilitate any adjustments to timetables, educational materials, or reintegration plans
- Inform decisions about whether the student can return to school on a part-time basis or needs alternative provision.

4.9 Review Process for Medical Absence Plan

- Each plan will be reviewed every half term, or more frequently if required.
- Medical professionals will be part of the review process, where appropriate.

5. Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Head, Lindsey Lucas.

6. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting students with medical conditions policy
- Safeguarding policy

- Attendance policy
- SEND policy

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance

DfE February 2023

The table pulls out from the Working together to improve school attendance expectations relating to social, emotional and mental health issues and attendance.

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends school.

Work with the school and other partner organisations such as the LA to establish a shared understanding of perceived barriers to attendance, with a view to supporting their child to maintain full-time attendance at school.

Proactively engage with any support offered.

Keep in touch with the school and be open in communicating information that will help improve the quality and nature of support being provided.

Take action as best they can to support their child(ren) recognise and manage their social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing. Support is available at Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters.

School staff are expected to:

Set and maintain high expectations for attendance for children with mental health concerns and work with pupils and parents/carers to maximise their attendance.

Facilitate support for pupils experiencing mental health problems as well as for those experiencing normal but difficult emotions through sensitive conversations with pupils and parents/carers.

Consider additional pastoral care inputs, where appropriate making referrals.

Engage with parents at an early stage in conversations to support their child experiencing anxiety to ensure robust support for the child.

Support parents if they feel the child needs to visit a specialist in relation to a mental health concern.

There is no need to routinely ask for medical evidence to support recording an absence as authorised.

Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours where possible.

Only request medical evidence of a mental health-related absence where there is a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, whether the illness should constitute an absence or to inform any agreed actions to support attendance.

Local authorities are expected to:

Work in conjunction with relevant services and partners such as local mental health services, and provide access to voluntary sector support and council services where necessary.

Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of the school-age population.

Work with partner organisations to signpost schools to support available in the local community and prioritise targeting support for children and young people most in need.

Where support is provided but not engaged with voluntarily, consider whether to formalise support or to enforce attendance through legal intervention in the normal way under their existing powers.

Determine whether alternative provision should be provided under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 as outlined in statutory guidance where pupils are likely to miss more than 15 days. Review EHC plans where required.