

Children Who Cannot Attend School for Health Reasons Policy

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Prepared by: Assistant Principal, G Kenlin 18th July 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy should be read, and used, in conjunction with:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

1.2 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
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2013) 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' e. DfE (2015) 'Supporting students at school with medical conditions'

2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR COORDINATION OF PROVISION

2.1 Assistant Principal - SEND Coordinator – Gail Kenlin
Assistant SENDCo - Claire Scane

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Thomas Deacon Academy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for any student on roll who cannot attend school due to a medical need.
- Pupils, staff and parents understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the Local Authority.

3.2 We recognise that, whenever possible, students should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate students back into school as soon as they are well enough in a way that meets their current needs.

3.3 We understand that we have a continuing role in a student's education whilst they are not attending school and will work with the Local Authority, healthcare partners, families and other relevant agencies to ensure that all children with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 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 long-term anxiety
- Progressive conditions
- Terminal illnesses
- Chronic illnesses

4.2 Children who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend any of the following:

- Hospital school: Special school within a hospital setting, where education is provided to give continuity whilst the student is receiving treatment.
- Home tuition: Home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and students on occasions where students are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment.
- Medical PRUs: Local Authority establishments that provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The Local Authority must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. Thomas Deacon Academy has a duty to support the Local Authority in doing so.

5.2 The Local Authority:

- The Local Authority are 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.
- If a student is going to be away for a long time, the Local Authority will make sure they get as normal an education as possible. This could include arranging:
 - home teaching
 - a hospital school or teaching service
 - a combination of home and hospital teaching

- The Local Authority must make sure the student continues to receive a full-time education - unless part time is better for their health needs.
- The law does not define full-time education, but children with health needs should receive a provision which is equivalent to the education they would receive in school.
- Peterborough City Council's medical needs provision takes the form of one-to-one support within the home environment. As a consequence, the hours of face-to face provision could be fewer than a "normal" school day as the provision is more concentrated.
- This would be agreed between the parent, school and the Local Authority and reviewed on a six-weekly or half termly basis
- The Local Authority should also:
 - have a senior officer in charge of the arrangements and a written policy explaining how they'll meet their responsibilities;
 - make sure the student is not without access to education for more than 15 school days;
 - arrange education from the start of a student's absence if it's clear they're going to be away from school for long and recurring periods.

5.3 Thomas Deacon Academy will:

- Let the Local Authority know if a student is likely to be away from school for more than 15 school days, as certified by a Consultant.
- Give the Local Authority information about the student's needs, capabilities and the programme of work.
- Host and chair regular review meetings when a student is accepted onto medical tuition (normally every 6 weeks).
- Produce action plans and distribute notes of these meetings and ensure that the tuition support provided is of suitable quality.
- Provide a named teacher with whom each party can liaise.
- Provide a suitable working area within the school for the student / education provider where necessary.
- Ensure weekly safeguarding checks are undertaken by a member of Thomas Deacon Academy staff, including having sight of the child.
- Help the student reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the student is kept informed about school events and activities.
- Encourage the student to stay in contact with other students, for example through visits or online meetings.
- Actively monitor student progress and reintegration into school.
- Provide relevant teachers with appropriate information relating to a student's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the student.
- Approve and review this policy on an annual basis.

5.4 The Tuition Provider will:

- Liaise with the named person in school.

- Liaise, where appropriate, with outside agencies.
- Provide a flexible teaching programme.
- Provide regular reports on the student's progress and achievements.
- Provide an opportunity for the student to comment on their reports.
- Attend review meetings.
- Help to support an appropriate reintegration programme as soon as the student is ready.

5.5 Health and other support services will:

- Offer medical treatment and advice and support where appropriate.
- Attend or provide advice to review meetings.
- Provide written reports where necessary.
- Work collaboratively with the School, Parent and the Local Authority to reintegrate the student back into school as soon as is possible.

5.6 Parents / carers will:

- Provide current medical advice and guidance when requested.
- Provide early communication if a problem arises or help is needed.
- Attend necessary meetings.
- Reinforce with their child, the value of a return to school.
- Take responsibility for safeguarding their child when they are not receiving education in school.

5.7 Students will:

- Be ready to work with the provider.
- Be prepared to communicate their views.
- Engage with other agencies as appropriate.
- Prepare for reintegration as soon as they are able.

6 MANAGING ABSENCES

6.1 Parents must contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.

6.2 Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.

6.3 Thomas Deacon Academy will provide support to students who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 days by liaising with the student's parents, to arrange schoolwork as soon as the student is able to cope with it or part-time education at school. Thomas Deacon Academy will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in

consultation with the student, their family and relevant members of staff.

- 6.4 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, as certified by a Consultant, the Local Authority will be informed, who will take responsibility for the student and their education as detailed above.
- 6.5 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 student's absence.
- 6.6 For hospital admissions, TDA will liaise with the Local Authority regarding the programme that should be followed while the student is in hospital.
- 6.7 The Local Authority will set up a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for the student which will allow the school, the Local Authority and the provider of the student's education to work together.
- 6.8 Thomas Deacon Academy 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 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.
- 6.9 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 Local Authority has become responsible for the student's education.

7 SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

- 7.1 Where a student has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the student's needs and how these may be best met with the Local Authority, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the student.
- 7.2 The Local Authority expects the school to support students with health needs to attend full time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to a student's programmes of study, where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.
- 7.3 The school will make reasonable adjustments under students' Medical Healthcare Plans (MHCPs), in accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.
- 7.4 Pupils admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital concerned.
- 7.5 During a period of absence, the school will work with the provider of the student's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

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

- School Newsletters
- Emails
- Invitations to school events
- Cards or letters from peers and staff

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

7.8 To help ensure a student 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, drafted in consultation with the student and parents, and notified to the Local Authority
- Access to additional support in school
- Places to rest at school
- Special exam access arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue

8 REINTEGRATION

8.1 When a student is considered well enough to return to school, Thomas Deacon Academy will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the Local Authority and parents.

8.2 If appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in the development of the student's reintegration plan and informed of the timeline of the plan to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the student and training for staff.

8.3 Thomas Deacon Academy will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the student.

8.4 For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the student's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill student and their parents in the early stages of their absence.

8.5 Thomas Deacon Academy is aware that some students will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the student, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return

8.6 Thomas Deacon Academy will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage students and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

9 MEDICAL REFERRALS – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 9.1 Medical Needs referrals will ordinarily be made by the school at which the student is on roll.
- 9.2 All referrals should be sent to Peterborough City Council's Medical Needs Co-ordinator via email.
- 9.3 Referrals will be considered with the following documents:
- An appropriately completed medical needs referral form. Incomplete forms or those that do not contain sufficient detail will be returned.
 - A letter from a medical professional/clinician (but not a GP alone) that clearly states that the young person is unable to attend school because of their health needs (medically unfit to attend school)
- 9.4 Where advice from a medical consultant is not yet available medical evidence will be expected from at least one of the following medical professionals:
- General Practitioner
 - CAMHS professional (i.e. mental health nurse/mental health practitioner)
- 9.5 Following the acceptance of a referral, the Medical Needs Co-ordinator will request that interim medical needs provision is implemented without delay.
- 9.6 A planning meeting will then determine the structure of the provision for an initial period of 6 school weeks (or for the period that the student is absent from school, whichever is shorter).
- 9.7 The provision will ordinarily consist of one-to-one sessions within the student's home. The number and length of the sessions will depend on each individual case and be agreed upon in the planning meeting.
- 9.8 There is an expectation that the student's home school will plan the work delivered in these sessions in collaboration with a tutor, in order to ensure consistency of learning.
- 9.9 Planning meetings will ordinarily take place within the school which submitted the referral or the student's home. Invitees should include: student, parent/carer, home school, Local Authority Medical Needs Coordinator. An invite should also be sent to the health professional that provided the medical advice.
- 9.10 Before it is agreed that teaching can take place in the home, it will be necessary to carry out appropriate risk assessments. Where a student is taught at home it is necessary for there to be a responsible adult in the house.
- 9.11 If after this initial period, the student is unable to return to school, further medical advice will be required in order for the provision to continue.