Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy, September 2026

Introduction

Durham Trinity School & Sports College is committed to promoting inclusion, equality of opportunity and continuity of education for children and young people with health needs.

A number of pupils may experience difficulties in maintaining continuity of education because of health concerns at some time during their school career. These concerns may be short or long-term, to which our school needs to respond in order to ensure that all pupils access their statutory entitlement to education.

This policy applies to pupils who are temporarily unable to attend school because of medical illness, injury, pregnancy, or an identified mental health need confirmed by a medical professional.

The purpose of this policy is to reflect and to confirm Durham County Council's statutory duties in accordance with:

- Section 19 of the 1996 Education Act which states that Local Authorities have a duty to '*make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who by reason of illness, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them*'
- DfE Statutory Guidance December 2023 – '**Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs**.'
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE, September 2014 (last revised Aug 2017), 'Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school'
- DfE, July 2026, 'Working together to improve school attendance'

Strategic planning for the delivery of provision for children and young people with health needs is carried out by the Education Health Needs (EHN) Team which is part of The Woodlands.

Shared Roles and Responsibilities

The shared responsibility is to ensure access to education for pupils with health needs. This is the responsibility of both the Local Authority and our school.

The Local Authority (LA) is responsible for ensuring:

- there is a named LA officer with responsibility for the co-ordination of educational provision for pupils who are unable to attend school because of health needs
- education is provided for pupils who cannot attend school because of health needs where the pupil is expected to be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative

- procedures are in place within school for early identification of a pupil's needs and for making some provision as quickly as possible i.e. from the sixth working day of absence
- the education pupils receive is of good quality, equivalent to the education they would receive in school
- parents are consulted before teaching begins
- pupils receive teaching each week as their health allows
- pupils with recurrent illness should access provision, as far as possible, from day one of absence
- there is close liaison between the pupil, their family, school, and other agencies
- provision is regularly reviewed to ensure it continues to be appropriate.

The Local Authority must arrange suitable education for pupils of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

Support and Alternative Arrangements provided by the Local Authority:

- information, advice and support for pupils, parents/carers, schools and other agencies about pupils with health needs (including physical, emotional and mental health needs)
- information about the provision the Education Health Needs Team can offer
- teaching, where appropriate, in Local Authority venues, at home or in hospital
- support towards school re-integration
- input into multi-agency meetings
- training to schools and other agencies from various services within the local authority.

The LA commissions the Education Health Needs team to provide:

- advice/information to pupils, parents/carers, schools and other agencies
- direct teaching, where appropriate at provisions including:
    - The Pines (Pupils In Need of Educational Support)
    - The Orchard (Previously GAP)
    - Education in hospital
    - Direct Reintegration
    - Home education may be available in exceptional circumstances
- support and guidance to families and schools to enable reintegration into school at the soonest possible opportunity
- input into multi-agency assessments and reviews including input at meetings where appropriate

School has a responsibility to follow the guidance within DfE '*Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs*' to:

- put in place or review a pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan that details their health needs
- formulate options for provision to put in place to educate the pupil whilst ill and or steps to reintegrate the pupil back into learning
- support continued learning by providing and sharing resources and strategies that maintain a pupil's individual progress with their curriculum
- maintain meaningful contact with pupils and parents when a pupil is absent through health needs (this may include cards and video messages from classmates, school newsletters, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons)
- considering strategies to improve attendance for pupils with medical conditions and disabilities, referring to paragraph 40 of the DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' documentation

- have a clear policy and a named person responsible for pupils who are unable to attend school because of health needs:

Durham Trinity School & Sports College's named person is Mr Jack Peacock (Assistant Headteacher)

- nominate a governor responsible for reviewing the procedures that apply to educating pupils with health needs:

Durham Trinity School & Sports College's named governor is Mrs Sarah Glover

- seek confirmation of ill health and make reasonable adjustments to maintain continuity of access to education
- ensure that the pupil remains on the school roll, although some may be dual registered with The Woodlands
- establish guidelines for school staff on maintaining meaningful contact with pupils and parents when a pupil is absent through health needs (this may include cards and video messages from classmates, school newsletters, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons)
- notify the Education Health Needs Team if a pupil is, or is likely to be, absent from school because of health needs for more than 15 school days
- work in partnership with the Education Health Needs Team and provide information about a pupil's strengths, needs, capabilities, target grades and progress
- provide robust information and relevant resources about the pupil's curriculum and programmes of study to ensure continuity of progress
- work in partnership with the Education Health Needs Team to monitor provision, attend reviews and support a return to school
- work closely with the Education Health Needs Team to arrange suitable reintegration plan, implementing appropriate strategies and reasonable adjustments
- ensure pupils have access to public examinations
- ensure that the needs of pupils with an SEN Plan (Special Educational Needs Plan) or EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) are met
- ensure that the views of pupils and parent/carers are taken into account
- maintain a regular review system
- potentially make further reasonable adjustments to maintain good attendance and progress once the pupil has resumed attendance at school

County Durham's range of provision for children with health needs

All pupils who are unable to attend school because of health needs should remain on the roll of their school. The Education Health Needs Team will consult with each pupil's school and family to ensure appropriate support and programmes of study are followed.

The offer available to pupils will be bespoke to their individual needs and will be regularly reviewed.

All pupils taught by the Education Health Needs Team receive regular reviews. Provision is centred around reintegration into school at the soonest point in line with each pupil's individual needs.

It is the responsibility of schools to create an Individual Health and Care Plan (IHP) for pupils with medical needs. The Education Health and Needs Team will work with schools and parents/carers to review and update a pupil's IHP to ensure it is appropriate for a school setting and to ensure a smooth reintegration.

The Education Health Needs Team will contribute to multi agency requests for pupils.

In collaboration with schools, the Education Health Needs Team will work to promote positive attendance. This will include following up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence. Contacting parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality. Attendance will be shared with schools at review meetings.

Referral

Referrals to the Education Health Needs Team should be from the school. Once a referral and the supporting medical evidence have been received, documents are quality assured. All referrals are then discussed at a weekly panel.

Before teaching and learning can commence confirmation of the pupils health needs and treatment pathway must be provided to ensure that teaching and learning can support and will not inhibit recovery.

Referrals can be made as soon as it is anticipated that a pupil is likely to be absent from school for more than 15 school days. The team will seek further medical information and advice as and when required.

Referrals should be made to The Woodlands EHN Team via email ehnreferrals@woodlandsdurham.net

Working in Partnership with the Pupil, Parents/Carers and Other Agencies

The Education Health Needs Team works in collaboration with each pupil's family and school. CAMHS, school nurses, Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) caseworkers, health professionals and other relevant agencies are consulted as necessary.

Parents hold key information and have a critical role to play in their child's education. They have unique knowledge and experience which contributes to the shared view of a child's needs and the best way of supporting them. All parents/carers are consulted by one of the team's caseworkers before teaching begins and are offered clear information about their child's provision. Parents are involved in their child's educational programme and the review process that monitors progress.

The pupil is entitled to receive and give supporting information, to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into consideration. Each pupil is encouraged to participate in their review meetings.

Durham Trinity School & Sports College will contact the below teams if further information and guidance is required.
(EqualitiesEducation@durham.gov.uk or EHNReferrals@woodlandsdurham.net).

Monitoring and evaluation

This school policy will be reviewed and revised annually in line with government and local authority advice and provision. The named person in school will report annually to the governing body. The report will contribute to the self-evaluation of our provision for pupils with health needs.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in preparation for the next academic year.

Headteacher:	**Mrs Rachel Grimwood**
Chair of Governors:	**Mrs Michelle Mulholland**
Date:	**04.11.26**
Review Date:	**November 2027**