

# St John's Catholic Primary School



## Children with Medical Needs and Non School Attendance Policy

*"Christ is the Centre of our School Community where we live, love and learn together"*

### Introduction

This policy guidance applies to children and young people who are not able to attend school due to health needs.

This may include both physical illness linked to medical needs, including recuperation from surgery and periods of significant mental health needs.

St John's Primary School and Liverpool City Council have a duty to provide education for children who are not able to attend due to health needs. This should help children to receive education while they are unwell for extended periods.

These duties are set out in the guidance: *Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs* (DFE; 2013).

If a health-based absence is for less than 15 days, schools are expected to continue to employ local arrangements, for instance to send work home or arrange access to work through an online app – at St. John's we use Seesaw. This period can be extended for additional time if parents, children and school colleagues agree.

## **Aims**

This policy aims to ensure that:

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

## **Responsibilities of St. John's**

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs and ensure:

- It is equivalent to the education the child would receive in school.
- Possible part time attendance is arranged where full time education is not in a child's best interests if the child is not well enough to manage full time.
- A good quality, in order to ensure positive outcomes in terms of progress for the child.
- St John's is responsible for reviewing support and wider educational provision in place, in line with the SEND graduated approach and are to be a consistent contact.
- Multi-agency reviews should be regularly arranged and attended, to support the child or young person's return to full time education where possible and identify steps towards increasing independence. Family and school partnership is important.
- St John's will continue to maintain and update records for the child or young person, which may include: assessment data, exam arrangements, SEN support plan, early help or safeguarding as relevant and health-based support. Advice should be gained from external agencies and regular reviews should take place.

- Mrs Melarangi is the named person in St. John's Primary School to contact. Mrs A. Williams is the named governor who would review support and school policies for children with medical needs.

### **Process:**

- Parents would be invited into school initially to discuss arrangements in how best to support the child. At the earliest stage possible parents should share with school any reports from health professionals that are involved in the health care of their child or have the health professional's direct input via attendance at the meeting or direct communication with school through telephone or email.
- St John's will either send work home/ or to a hospital school as a paper pack to complete and/or use the online app, Seesaw where the class teacher will provide online learning tasks for the pupil. The use of Seesaw will provide a form of communication between school and home in relation to the child's learning.
- Multi agency reviews will take place regularly to support the child's return to full time education where possible.

### **Supporting return to full time school**

Regular reviews (at least termly) should be arranged to discuss the child's progress, including the relevant health and care professionals, who should provide an update on the child's health or well-being and advice on support. Plans should be in place to support the child's gradual or full time return to full time education when this is possible.

If the child has been attending Alder Centre for Education (ACE) then support is provided to aid transition back to school. For other children, high needs support and multi-agency advice can be gained through the local authority and consortia arrangements.

For further information please contact: Wendy Henshaw, Deputy Head Teacher

(Responsible for ACE and the Hospital School)

<https://www.sandfieldparkschool.com/alder-centre-for-education.html>

### **The Local Education Authority**

If the school can't make suitable arrangements Liverpool City Council will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these pupils.

Education support for children with medical needs can be requested by schools in partnership with health professionals, through the Alder Centre for

Education (ACE). This is delivered through outreach tuition and some on site learning. Support is also in place in Alder Hey Children's Hospital and in partnership with Dewi Jones, Sunflower House (mental health facility).

The ACE service provides an education to children who cannot attend their home school for a prolonged period due to issues relating to their health either physical or mental health including: physical medical problems; chronic fatigue/pain, social phobia, depression, anxiety and other mental health needs. A school referral must be accompanied by evidence from a health professional working with the child who can support the need for ACE intervention.

Support is available to children from KS1 to KS4, with onsite facilities for secondary age children. The aim is to ensure there is as little interruption as possible in their education during recovery. There is opportunity to extend time in ACE for children who are not ready to return to school due to their combination of needs. At times there may be a waiting list if places are full though support can be discussed.

## **Referral**

ACE is a local authority service so parents or guardians cannot apply directly but should be involved in meetings. This is based in Sandfield Park and other sites. The referral pathway to this service is either by the hospital on discharge or the home school. A referral form will need to be completed, available through:

<https://www.sandfieldparkschool.com/information-for-schools.html>

Early identification and intervention is important particularly for children with mental health needs who are not attending school. It is the responsibility of schools, in partnership with multi-agency colleagues to identify these children.

Advice can be gained from colleagues including health and care professionals. There will also be a review at the children out of provision panel (COPP), which is for all children who are not attending education full time.

Children who do not meet the criteria for ACE support can be signposted to the panel for children who are not in receipt of full-time education (COPP) Alison Cain, Service Manager (EWS, CME, EHE) at School Improvement Liverpool.

A multi-agency meeting should be arranged to discuss educational support through a team around the child meeting or an EHAT (Early Help Assessment Tool). It is also expected that most children will have an existing EHAT prior to referral.

All referrals are reviewed by the Head of ACE, Wendy Henshaw, in partnership with the relevant health services and professionals, schools and parent/carers.

Children continue to have a named school who would remain responsible for the pupil.

In cases where the local authority makes arrangements St. John's Primary School will:

- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil
- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required
- Help make sure that the provision offered to the pupil 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 pupil to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible
  - Enable the pupil to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, 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

### **Children with health needs and an Education, Health and Care Plan**

Support for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) should be reviewed in line with the SEND Code of Practice Statutory Guidance (2015).

If a child or young person with an existing EHCP has a period of absence due to health related needs then a referral can also be made by ACE for support.

When children with EHCPs are not attending due to health needs, this should be communicated at the earliest opportunity by school to the local authority SEN officer. Parents or carers may signpost non-attendance to the officer and request a review.

Discussion should take place with ACE and other partner agencies, including the COPP panel, as relevant. This should be completed via a formal annual or interim review, in partnership with family.

Temporary support can be arranged via ACE, if there is an underlying health condition preventing the child from attending school, while this should not be a named school in a plan.