



WIDNES
ACADEMY

ASPIRING AND ACHIEVING

CHILDREN WITH HEALTH NEEDS WHO CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL POLICY 2026-2027

Ratified by Governors: Spring 2026

Next Review Date: Spring 2027

Link: Mrs L.Kirchin

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PLACE
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Scope

This policy applies to all pupils of compulsory school age enrolled at Widnes Academy who are unable to attend school for medical or mental health reasons, whether the absence is temporary or longer-term, and includes pupils with long-term health conditions, mental health needs, and those receiving treatment in hospital or at home. It also covers pupils absent for 15 school days (consecutive or cumulative) and those for whom the school (with parental agreement) has arranged short-term remote or blended provision.

At Widnes Academy, we aim to ensure that all children, regardless of circumstance or setting receive a good education to enable them to shape their own futures. Where children are unable to attend school because of their health, the school will follow Department of Education Guidance and work with Halton Local Authority who have the responsibility to arrange suitable full-time education (or part-time when appropriate for the child's needs) for children who are unable to attend a mainstream or special school because of their health.

Roles and responsibilities

- **Principal:** ensure the school identifies pupils with medical needs, coordinates internal support, liaises with parents and the LA, and leads reintegration planning.
- **SENCo:** advise on reasonable adjustments, coordinate SEND support or EHCP amendments if needed, and contribute to Personal Education Plans (PEPs).
- **Class teachers:** provide curriculum planning and differentiated learning, set and monitor meaningful targets, and provide regular feedback.
- **Attendance Lead:** monitor absence patterns, escalate to LA when absence reaches 15 days (cumulative or consecutive) and maintain safeguarding checks.
- **Governing Body:** ensure policy is implemented, review annual effectiveness, and scrutinise outcomes for pupils educated off-site due to health.

Expectations of the Local Authority

Where the Local Authority is involved in arranging provision, the expectation from the school is that the LA will

- Arrange suitable full-time education (or as much education as the child's health condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education.
- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the child.
- Ensure that the education children receive is of good quality and allows them to take appropriate external tests, prevents them from slipping behind their peers in school and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- Address the needs of individual children in arranging provision. 'Hard and fast' rules are inappropriate: they may limit the offer of education to children with a given condition and prevent their access to the right level of educational support which they are well enough to receive. Strict rules that limit the offer of education a child receives may also breach statutory requirements.

- Where full-time education would not be in the best interests of a particular child because of reasons relating to their physical or mental health, provide part-time education on a basis they consider to be in the child's best interests. Full and part-time education should still aim to achieve good academic attainment particularly in English, Maths and Science. The nature of the provision must be responsive to the demands of what may be a changing health status.
- Where appropriate, use electronic media – such as ‘virtual classrooms’, learning platforms and so on – to provide access to a broader curriculum, but this should generally be used to complement face-to-face education, rather than as sole provision (though in some cases, the child’s health needs may make it advisable to use only virtual education for a time).
- Ensure that teachers who provide education for children with health needs receive suitable training and support and are kept aware of curriculum developments. They should also be given suitable information relating to a child’s health condition, and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the child.
- Set up a personal education plan, which should ensure that the school, the Local Authority, hospital school or other provider can work together.
- Ensure effective collaboration between all relevant services (LAs, CAMHS, NHS, schools and, where relevant, school nurses) in delivering effective education for children with additional health needs.

Referral and provision process:

- **Identification:** When a pupil is likely to be absent for 15 school days (consecutive or cumulative), the attendance lead/Headteacher will notify the LA and parents and start internal planning.
- **Medical evidence:** The school/LA will request (with parental consent) relevant medical evidence from the pupil’s GP or specialist to inform provision planning.
- **Timeline:** The LA will confirm proposed provision in writing within 10 working days of referral and start delivery as soon as practically possible thereafter.
- **Review:** The PEP (or equivalent) will be set within 10 school days of provision start and reviewed every 4 weeks (or as clinical circumstances dictate) to ensure responsiveness to changing health status.

Curriculum and assessment

- **Core focus:** Provision will prioritise English, mathematics and science alongside any subject-specific needs identified in the PEP, ensuring pupils do not fall behind in foundational knowledge.
- **Delivery:** Provision may include 1:1 tuition, small group teaching, hospital school input, blended remote learning or virtual classrooms. Remote learning will normally complement face-to-face provision unless medical advice recommends otherwise.
- **Assessment:** Pupils will have clear short-term learning objectives and access to formative assessment. The school will ensure access to statutory assessments and SATs where appropriate, seeking reasonable adjustments as necessary.

Safeguarding and welfare

- All off-site provision will comply with the school's safeguarding policy. The school retains responsibility for safeguarding; when provision is arranged by the LA or external provider, the school will confirm that appropriate safeguarding checks and protocols are in place and recorded.
- The school will maintain regular welfare contacts for absent pupils (minimum weekly contact for pupils at risk) and will escalate any safeguarding concerns immediately using existing safeguarding procedures.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed/updated annually. .