

# **EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WHO CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL DUE TO HEALTH NEEDS**

## **POLICY & GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

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## **1. Introduction and overview**

1.1 This policy details the arrangements made by the local authority in relation to their duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to arrange suitable full-time education for school-aged children who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education. It should be read in conjunction with the Department for Education statutory guidance, "Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs" (2013).

1.2 It applies to children and young people of compulsory school age who are resident within Stockport Council's area and are unable to attend school or access suitable education because of medical needs. This may be periods of physical illness or injury, or periods of mental ill health.

1.3 There will be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the local authority, for example where a pupil can still attend school with some support, where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child, or where arrangements have been made for the child to be educated in a hospital. This policy relates to those cases where suitable arrangements have not been made.

1.4 Local authorities should arrange education as soon as it becomes clear that a child will be away from school due to ill health for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative.

1.5 The law does not define full-time education, but children with health needs should have provision which is equivalent to the education they would receive in school. If they receive one-to-one tuition, the hours of face-to-face provision could be fewer as the provision is more concentrated than a classroom setting would be.

1.6 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, local authorities should 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.

## **2. Role of the Education Welfare Service**

2.1 The primary aim of educating children and young people who cannot attend school due to illness or medical reasons is to minimise, as far as possible, the disruption to their education and allow them to re-access their school as soon as it is appropriate.

2.2 In most cases, pupils unable to attend school due to health needs and receiving educational support will be having ongoing medical support from specialist medical teams, for example CAMHS or oncology. Pupils will generally return to school once the illness ceases and there is no ongoing medical intervention, with a reintegration plan devised by all agencies concerned.

2.3 In Stockport, the education of children and young people that cannot attend school due to health reasons is arranged and overseen by Stockport Family's Education Welfare Service. The Education Welfare Service aims to:

- Deliver good quality short term intervention to provide continuity of learning and promote engagement in education.
- Enable pupils to reintegrate into school or another appropriate provision as soon as their health needs allow.
- Help pupils who have experienced a period of illness to develop their self-confidence, resilience and academic progress.

- Work in partnership with parents, pupils and schools to minimise the negative impact of school absence.
- Ensure that sick children access an education suitable to their medical needs.

### **3. Making a referral for education support**

3.1 Referrals should be made by schools directly to the Education Welfare Service using the Home Tuition Referral Form (see Appendix to this policy). Medical evidence should be provided along with the supporting information detailed on the referral form.

3.2 Medical evidence will be accepted from:

- Hospital consultants
- Other CAMHS professionals (countersigned by a consultant where possible)
- Private in-patient mental health units

Where the above is not available, the Education Welfare Service will consider evidence from relevant professionals including:

- The Pendlebury Centre PRU Headteacher
- Private clinicians
- The School Nursing Service
- Education Psychologists
- GPs
- Social Workers

3.3 Incomplete referrals will not be accepted and will be followed up with the referrer.

3.4 Where referrals are not accepted, a reason will be given and recommendations for any relevant actions provided.

3.5 In some cases, the local authority may be contacted directly by parents, medical professionals and other services to request educational support. Where this occurs, the Education Welfare Service may contact schools to request supporting information.

3.6 The local authority may also identify possible cases through analysis of absence data, in which case, the Education Welfare Service will liaise with the pupil's school to ascertain the specific reasons for absence due to illness and determine whether a referral for home tuition is appropriate. Whether home tuition is agreed would depend upon the nature of the health needs.

### **4. Arrangements for education support**

4.1 If a referral is accepted, the school/referrer will be contacted by the Education Welfare Service to discuss arrangements. In most cases, a tutor will be arranged to work directly with the child at home or another venue as appropriate.

4.2 The Education Welfare Service will:

- Liaise with the parents regarding the child's needs and provide information about the service.
- Assess and provide teaching support as appropriate within 10 working days of the referral if agreed.

- Liaise with schools and ask for a named contact for whom the tutor can liaise with regarding appropriate curriculum work.
- Share information as appropriate with the assigned tutor to ensure they are aware of relevant information regarding needs.
- Keep the school informed of progress and any issues.
- Regularly review the type and amount of teaching support provided to a child and adjust as necessary to reflect changes in the child's needs and capacity to access education.
- Promote multi-agency working and liaise with other services as appropriate to ensure the pupils needs are met and there is a focus on reintegration, this will include seeking updated medical information and advice where necessary.
- Attend review meetings and any TAC or other meetings as appropriate.
- Recommend referrals to other agencies as necessary.
- Liaise with schools regarding reintegration and opportunities for the pupil to access other school-related activities.

## 5. Expectations of schools

### 5.1 Schools are expected to:

- Monitor absence data relating to illness and medical needs and make referrals for pupils who have been absent for 15 days or more in a single period due to medical reasons, or where there is evidence that a pupil's ongoing medical condition is likely to cause them to have 15 or more days absence in a school year. Schools may not need to refer such pupils if other suitable educational arrangements have been made that meets their needs.
- When making referrals, provide the requested information and follow up requests for further information/evidence in a timely manner.
- Assign a main point of contact with whom the Education Welfare Officer can liaise directly in relation to the pupil's needs and progress.
- Keep the pupil on the school roll and mark the attendance register in accordance with statutory guidance.
- Maintain safeguarding responsibilities for the pupil throughout the period of education support.
- Supply the assigned tutor or education provider with information about the pupil's capabilities, educational progress, and programmes of work together with appropriate resources.
- Arrange and participate in review meetings as requested by the Education Welfare Officer assigned to the case.
- Make referrals to other services as appropriate, if agreed appropriate and with the necessary consent from parents.
- Maintain contact with the pupil, their parent and professionals involved and actively monitor progress.
- Support the pupil to maintain peer relationships and maintain connection to the school community, for example through encouraging visits or other communication with peers, keeping the pupil informed about school events/activities and facilitating attendance where possible.
- Ensure KS4 pupils have access to independent careers advice and guidance, for example through Stockport Council's Education and Careers Advice Service.
- Make arrangements for pupils to take public examinations if their health needs allow, with reasonable adjustments as necessary.
- Work in partnership with the pupil, their parents and professionals to ensure all opportunities to return to school are explored creatively and that reintegration is arranged at the earliest opportunity as appropriate.

## **6. Role of The Pendlebury Centre Pupil Referral Unit**

6.1 The Pendlebury Centre is a specialist Alternative Provision that supports secondary-aged pupils resident in Stockport Council's area who require additional help with their social, emotional and mental health needs. Referrals are made by schools and other professionals where appropriate and agreed by the Secondary Panel for Inclusion.

6.2 Pupils admitted to The Pendlebury Centre undertake a range of assessments and are observed by professionals with a high level of expertise in SEMH (social emotional and mental health) difficulties. To facilitate a quick return to mainstream, pupils are kept on the roll of their mainstream school and opportunities are created for pupils to attend their mainstream school as part of their placement. All pupils at Key Stage 3 attend their mainstream school for at least one session each week. From October 2022, pupils referred to The Pendlebury Centre may be accepted for support from the 'Pendlebury Paths' provision as an alternative to a placement at the Pupil Referral Unit, which provides additional targeted support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and entrenched attendance concerns.

6.3 In some cases, pupils referred to The Pendlebury Centre may be struggling to access the provision due to health needs, particularly mental health concerns. In such cases, it may be appropriate for the pupil to receive a short-term period of home tuition with a view to stepping back into The Pendlebury Centre provision or reintegrating into their school when appropriate. In such cases, the Headteacher of The Pendlebury Centre will liaise with the Education Welfare Service and complete a referral for home tuition.

6.4 In other cases, it may be appropriate for pupils receiving home tuition to be referred to The Pendlebury Centre as a way of supporting their reintegration into school. Where this pathway is identified, the pupil's school would be expected to complete the referral, with the Education Welfare Service providing supporting information as appropriate.

## **7. Named Officer and contact details**

The named senior officer for the education of children who cannot attend school due to health needs is Emma Storer, Operational Lead, Education Welfare Service.

For further advice and information, please contact the Education Access Team by email: [eas@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:eas@stockport.gov.uk) or telephone 0161 474 3805.

Information about other relevant areas and services, for example Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), Educational Psychology and school nursing can be found on Stockport Council's Local Offer website: [Stockport SEND Local Offer](#)

## **8. Referral form**

See Appendix 1

**CHILDREN WHO CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL DUE TO HEALTH NEEDS  
HOME TUTORING REFERRAL FORM**

<b>PUPIL INFORMATION</b>			
Name of pupil:		School:	
DOB:		Year Group:	
Address:			
Name of parent(s):		Tel:	
Email:			
LAC: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	CP Plan: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	TAC/TAF: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	EHA: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
PP: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date pupil last attended school:		

<b>SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS</b>			
SEND Status:	No SEND <input type="checkbox"/>	SEND Support <input type="checkbox"/>	EHCP <input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of needs:			

<b>AGENCY/SERVICE INVOLVEMENT</b>		
Agency/Service		Contact
Children's Social Care	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
School Age Plus	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
CAMHS	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Education Psychology	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Primary Jigsaw	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Secondary Jigsaw	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Mental Health in Schools Team	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Inclusion Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Autism Team	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
School Nursing Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Education & Careers Advice Worker (KS4 referrals)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other – please specify	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

**REASON FOR REFERRAL & SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Outline of health needs and information to explain why the pupil cannot attend school:

Summary of support and interventions with outcomes:

Summary of medical information/endorsement for referral:

Likely timescale for education support (if agreed) and plans for reintegration (**schools are expected to facilitate reintegration at the earliest opportunity that health needs allow**):

**REFERRER INFORMATION**

Name:

School/Service:

Tel:

Email:

**Please email completed referral form to [eas@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:eas@stockport.gov.uk) with the following supporting documentation**

- Recommendation/endorsement for home tuition/support
  - *Ideally this should be from a hospital consultant*
  - *See Section 3 of the 'Children who cannot attend school due to health needs policy and guidance document' for further information about the information/evidence that will be considered if not available from a consultant*
- Any relevant health and emotional well-being information, assessments and reports
- Attendance certificates for current and previous academic year
- Latest academic report
- SEND information including SEND Support Plan or EHCP (if applicable)
  - *Please note that there is an expectation that pupils with ongoing mental health difficulties will have a SEND Support Plan in place*
- Current EHA (if applicable)
- TAC/TAF Plan and minutes of last meeting (if applicable)
- Education Psychology assessment (if applicable)

For further information or advice relating to referrals, please email [eas@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:eas@stockport.gov.uk)