**St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School**

Kirkley Cliff, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 0DG
Tel: 01502 565384  Email: office@stmarysrcps.org
www.facebook.com/stmarysrcps

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Helen Armstrong

Head of School: Mrs Abigail Goddard

Interim Chair of Governors: Mr Jeremy Gaskell

# Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

Policy Status: Statutory.  Reviewed By: Executive Local Governing Body
This Policy was ratified in: **November 2026** It will be reviewed in: **November 2028**
*This document will be reviewed annually but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary.*

## Our Mission Statement

As God's family we are STARs within a loving and thriving community, celebrating our diversity. We ignite lifelong learning where everyone becomes a positive influence on our world.

At St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, 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 Suffolk 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.

The Local Authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for children who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision. There will however, 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 the child 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 by an on-site hospital school, we would not expect the Local Authority to become involved in such arrangements unless it had reason to think that the education being provided to the child was not suitable or, while otherwise suitable, was not full-time or for the number of hours the child could benefit from without adversely affecting their health. This might be the case where, for example, the child can attend school but only intermittently.

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**1. 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

**2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy reflects the requirements of the Education Act 1996.
It is also based on guidance provided by our local authority.
https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/education/equality-and-inclusion/medical-needs/
This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

**3. The responsibilities of the school**

The key responsibilities for schools within the statutory guidance document supporting pupils at school with medical conditions include:

• Children with medical conditions should be able to access and enjoy the same opportunities at school as any other child

• Staff should undertake appropriate training to provide the support that pupils with medical conditions require

• Staff must not give prescription medicines or undertake healthcare procedures without appropriate training

• No child with a medical condition can be denied admission or prevented from taking up a place in school because arrangements for their medical condition have not been made. However, governing bodies do not have to accept a child in school at times where it would be detrimental to the health of that child or others

• Schools should develop a policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions that is reviewed regularly and readily accessible to parents and staff

• Details should be made available on how the school's policy will be implemented effectively, including a named person who has overall responsibility for policy implementation

• The school's policy should cover individual healthcare plans (IHPs) and who is responsible for their development. Individual healthcare plans (IHPs) should be reviewed at least annually

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**3.1 If the school makes arrangements**

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

**Individual Healthcare Plan**

Every child with a medical condition should have an IHP which is readily accessible for school staff. An IHP is an agreement between parents/guardians, the school and healthcare professionals about what care a child needs and how this will be carried out. Headteachers, school governors and responsible bodies should make sure each child with a medical condition has an IHP which is being followed.

**Children and young people with a medical condition and Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

If a child or young person has SEN and a medical condition, their provision should be planned and delivered in a coordinated way with the IHP. IHPs are not the same as Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), which set out the support needed by children with SEN, although some children may have both types of plan. If a child has both a medical condition and an EHCP detailing provision to meet their special educational needs, they will still need an IHP. The IHP can be used as advice to help with an EHCP, particularly in relation to sections C and G (Health needs and provision).

**What if a child is too ill to attend school?**

The school will look at ways to ensure that children are supported to minimise the disruption to their studies. For a short-term absence, this might mean sending some work home to complete. This should be as closely matched to the work being completed by the child's class as possible. School may also look at setting work electronically, either via email or via the school's 'online portal' software. Consideration of using an external e-learning provider may also be appropriate in certain instances. For longer term absences (ie 15 days or more) Suffolk County Council offer educational provision via the Medical Needs Service.

**3.2 If the local authority makes arrangements**

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If the school can't make suitable arrangements, Suffolk County Council will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.
In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, the 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

**Medical needs coordinator**

The medical needs coordinator is responsible for the education of children with additional health needs in Suffolk. They work with schools and professionals to ensure children and young people with medical needs and those who cannot attend school receive a good education.

**Services provided by the coordinator**

• Parents can contact the coordinator to discuss their child's specific circumstances. This may be particularly appropriate if they feel their child's medical needs are not being addressed
• Schools can contact the coordinator to get support, advice and guidance in relation to medical needs
The coordinator will also liaise with professionals and colleagues. This is to ensure children with additional health needs are able to access a suitable education

**Contacting the Family services coordinator**

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**Website: https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/education/equality-and-inclusion/medical-needs/**

**Lowestoft & Waveney Family Services based at Riverside, Lowestoft (email: SENDLW@suffolk.gov.uk)**

**Making a medical needs referral**

Schools can make a medical needs referral for a child who cannot attend school because of health needs. It must be clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. Medical needs referrals will normally be made by the school where your child is on roll and need to be accompanied by appropriate information from a health professional. All medical needs referrals are sent to our medical needs coordinator using the contact information above.

**What happens next?**

Following the acceptance of a referral:

• A planning meeting will be held to decide how provision will be delivered. This will be for an initial period of 12 school weeks (or for the period that your child is absent from school, whichever is shorter). If after this initial period, your child is unable to return to school, further medical advice will be required in order for the provision to continue.

**4. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of School. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

**5. Links to other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

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