



Thornley Primary School

# Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

February 2022

Procedure Review Period	Biennial
Procedure Review Date	February 2024

## **1. Introduction**

This policy sets out how Thornley Primary School will comply with its statutory duty to arrange suitable full-time (or part-time when appropriate for the child's needs) education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

This statutory duty applies to all children and young people of compulsory school age, permanently living in County Durham who would normally attend mainstream schools or special schools, including academies, free schools, and independent schools, or where a child is not on the role of a school.

*Ofsted places a clear emphasis on meeting the needs of pupils with SEN and Disabilities, also including those pupils with medical conditions*

## **2. Aim of the policy**

It is Thornley Primary School's intention that all children, regardless of circumstances, should receive a good education to enable them to shape their own futures. Therefore, alternative provision for children medically unfit to attend school is paramount to the school's commitment in this regard. The support should meet the child's individual needs, including social and emotional needs and enable them to thrive and prosper in the education system.

The provision for children who are medically unfit to attend school will ensure that:

- Pupils make good progress in their education and do not fall behind their peers, particularly in key subjects.
- Disruption to learning is minimised and there is a continuity of education provision within the school curriculum.
- Pupils are able to successfully reintegrate back into school and that this takes place as soon as their health permits.
- Pupils feel fully part of their school community and are able to stay in contact with classmates.

## **3. Legislation and Guidance**

Key legislation covering the duties and powers relating to this policy:

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, as amended by section 3a of the Children, Schools and Families Act 2014

Some complex and/or long-term health issues may be considered disabilities under equality legislation. This legislation provides that Local Authorities (LA) must not discriminate against disabled children and are under a duty to eliminate discrimination, foster equality of opportunity for disabled children and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children. LAs should make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage faced by disabled children, and plan to increase disabled children's access to premises and the curriculum.

Local authorities must have regard to statutory guidance when carrying out their Section 19 duty. The relevant guidance is: **"Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs"**

This policy has been developed in line with this guidance.

**The Governing Body of Thornley Primary is responsible for:**

- \*Ensuring arrangements are in place to support pupils with medical conditions.
- \*Ensuring the policy is developed collaboratively across services, clearly identifies roles and responsibilities and is implemented effectively.
- \* Ensuring that the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to protected characteristics: ethnicity/national/ origin, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, disability, or sexual orientation.
- \* Ensuring that relevant training is delivered to a sufficient number of staff who will have responsibility to support children with medical conditions and that they are signed off as competent to do so. Staff to have access to information, resources, and materials.
- \* Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.

**Role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- \* Ensuring the policy is developed effectively with partner agencies and making staff aware of this policy.
- \* The day-to-day implementation and management of the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and Procedures of Thornley Primary School.
- \* Liaising with healthcare professionals regarding the training required for staff.
- \* Identifying staff who need to be aware of a child's medical condition.
- \* Ensuring confidentiality and data protection
- \* Keeping a medical conditions register, which is regularly updated.

**4. Role of Local Authority**

The LA's SEN Casework team will work with schools to review any changing needs of a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), who is unable to attend school because of their medical needs. The EHCP will link the long- term educational needs associated with the child's medical condition to the most appropriate teaching and learning provision.

The LA expects that all schools will work in partnership with it to ensure continuity of access to education for all children unable to attend school because of serious illness or injury. All schools must have a written policy and procedures for dealing with the education of children and young people with medical needs and governing bodies also must have regard to relevant statutory guidance, Supporting Pupils with medical conditions4.

**5. Identification of children who need provision**

\* Those who have an illness which will prevent them from attending school for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year and where suitable education is not otherwise being arranged.

- Those who have a health need, and their absence has been validated as necessary by a medical professional, either a consultant community paediatrician or specialist consultant psychiatrist from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). (Health problems can include physical illnesses, injuries and clinically defined mental health difficulties certified by medical evidence, such as that provided by a medical consultant. From CAMHS consultants, the evidence would be in the form of letter and copy of care plan)

The education provision will be full time, unless this is not in the best interests of the child. Children with health needs should have provision which is equivalent to the value of education they would receive in school. If they receive one to one tuition, for example, the hours of face-to-face provision could be fewer as the provision is more concentrated. The education will be tailored to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any other individual need (for example, health, social and emotional needs, special educational needs, or disability).

*The use of electronic media - such as 'virtual classrooms', learning platforms and so on - can 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)*

The child's progress will be reviewed regularly, in consultation with the parent / carer, the home school provider and other relevant services. Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education and are to be involved in planning and on-going review. Reviews will be made more frequently according to need. It should be recognised that a child's educational needs and ability to access education may change depending on their health and that the programme may need to be flexible to accommodate this.

Where children have **complex or long-term health issues**, the pattern of illness can be unpredictable. LAs should discuss the child's needs and how these may best be met with the school, the relevant clinician and the parents, and where appropriate with the child. That may be through individual support or by them remaining at school and being supported back into school after each absence. How long the child is likely to be out of school will be important in deciding this. LAs should make provision available as soon as the child is able to benefit from

#### **SENCO is responsible for**

- Dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying pupils' education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress, and outcomes.
- Liaising with the headteacher, education providers and parents to determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school.

(Relevant services including Special Educational Needs (SEN), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Education Inclusion/Attendance/ Improvement Services, educational

psychologists and school nurses all have responsibilities to work together to support children who are medically unfit to attend school.)

#### **Responsibilities of teachers and support staff.**

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate fully and ensuring pupils are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason.
- Understanding their role in supporting pupils with health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their pupils through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual pupil's health needs.
- Ensuring they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and know what to do in an emergency. Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school.

#### **Returning to school**

Thornley Primary and alternative providers will make arrangements to reintegrate pupils at the earliest opportunity and as soon as they are well enough. Each child should have an individually tailored reintegration plan. Under Equalities legislation, schools must consider whether they need to make any reasonable adjustments to provide suitable access for the child as part of their reintegration.

#### **6. Complaints and Review**

Complaints about provision for children who are medically unfit to attend school should be made to Thornley Primary.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or in line with any changes made to statutory guidelines.

**Further sources of information** 'Alternative Provision: A guide for local authorities, head teachers and governing bodies of schools, pupil referral units and other providers of alternative provision': <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00211923/alternative-provision>