Thornleigh Salesian College

Supporting Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy

Person Responsible:	Victoria Hargreaves SENCO
Last Reviewed:	Autumn 2026
Adopted by Governing Body:	Autumn 2026
Next Review due:	Autumn 2027

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. LA duties
3. Definitions
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Managing absences
6. Support for students
7. Reintegration
8. Record keeping
9. Training
10. Examinations and assessments
11. Monitoring and review

1. Statement of intent

Thornleigh Salesian College aims to support the LA and ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows, to enable them to reach their full potential.

Due to the nature of their health needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, students should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate students back into school as soon as they are able.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a student's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work with the LA, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

Signed by:

	Headteacher	Date:	
	Chair of Governors	Date:	

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2013) 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting students at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2023) 'Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'

2. LA duties

2.1. The LA must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The school has a duty to support the LA in doing so.

3. Definitions

3.1. Children who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs may include those with:

- Physical health issues.
- Physical injuries.
- Mental health problems, including anxiety issues.
- Emotional difficulties or school refusal.
- Progressive conditions.
- Terminal illnesses.
- Chronic illnesses.

3.2. Children who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend any of the following:

- **Hospital school**: a special school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment.
- **Home tuition**: many LAs have home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and students on occasions where students are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment.

- **Medical PRUs**: these are LA establishments that provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. The **governing body** is responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for students who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented.

4.2. The **headteacher** is responsible for:

- Working with the **governing body** to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting students with health needs.

4.3. The named member of staff is **The Director of Inclusion**. They are responsible for:

Commented [1]: Should this now be the SENCO?

- Dealing with students who are unable to attend school because of medical needs.
- Actively monitoring student progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying students' education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Providing a link between students and their parents, and the LA.

4.4. Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of students' health needs.
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate fully and ensuring students are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason.

4.5. Parents are expected to:

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible.
- Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.

- Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

5. Managing absences

5.1. Parents are advised to contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.

5.2. Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.

5.3. The school will provide support to students who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the student's parents to arrange schoolwork as soon as the student is able to cope with it or part-time education at school. The school will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the student, their family and relevant members of staff.

5.4. For periods of absence that are expected to last for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, the attendance officer will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the student and their education.

5.5. Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the LA to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the student's absence.

5.6. For hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the student is in hospital.

5.7. The LA will set up a personal plan for the student which will allow the school, the LA and the provider of the student's education to work together.

5.8. The school will monitor student attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a student is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school.

5.9. The school will only remove a student who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where:

- Neither the student nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

5.10. A student unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent.

5.11. Where a student is expected to be absent for 15 or more school days, the LA will arrange provision to begin no later than the sixth day of absence (or immediately for known long-term conditions). The school will ensure interim work is provided from day 1.

6. Support for students

6.1. Where a student has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the student's needs and how these may be best met with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the student. Student plans will be reviewed every three weeks during the schools alternative provision student meeting.

6.2. The LA expects the school to support students with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to students' programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.

6.3. Students admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital concerned.

6.4. Where appropriate, the school will provide the student's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.

6.5. Where a pupil already has a Health Care Plan (HCP), this will be used to inform and align with their alternative education plan, ensuring continuity between school, hospital, and home tuition.

6.6. To help ensure a student with additional health needs is able to attend school following an extended period of absence, the following adaptations may be considered as appropriate:

- **A personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with the named staff member**
- **Access to additional support in school**
- **Online access to the curriculum from home**
- **Special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue to ensure that students are not disadvantaged further during exams**

7. Reintegration

7.1. When a student is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the parents.

7.2. As far as possible, the child will be able to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in school.

7.3. If appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in the development of the student's reintegration plan and informed of the timeline of the plan by the appointed named member of staff, to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the student.

7.4. The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the student.

7.5. For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the student's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill student or their parents in the early stages of their absence.

~~7.6. The school is aware that some students will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the student, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.~~

7.7. The reintegration plan will include:

- A graduated approach following a robust Assess, Plan, Do, Review process.
- The date for planned reintegration, once known.
- Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration.
- Details of the named member of staff who has responsibility for the student.
- Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved.
- Details of social contacts, including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period.
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration.
- Updated Pupil Passports
- Consideration of safety plans depending on the health needs of the student.

7.8. It is essential that all information about students with health needs is kept up-to-date and recorded on the schools Management Information System.

7.9. When a student is discharged from hospital, or is returning from another education provision, the school will seek the appropriate information to allow for a smooth return to the school. The named member of staff will liaise with the hospital or other tuition service as appropriate.

8. Record keeping

8.1. In accordance with the **Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy**, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to students

8.2. Proper record keeping protects both staff and students and provides evidence that agreed procedures have been followed.

9. Training

9.1. Once a student's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant information before the student's anticipated return.

9.2. Healthcare professionals should be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required.

10. Examinations and assessments

10.1. The named member of staff will liaise with the alternative provision provider over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate.

10.2. Relevant assessment information will be provided to the alternative provision provider if required.

10.3. Awarding bodies may make special arrangements for students with permanent or long-term disabilities and learning difficulties, or temporary disabilities and illnesses. Applications for such arrangements will be submitted by the school, or LA if more appropriate, as early as possible.

11. Monitoring and review

11.1. This policy will be reviewed by the **governing body** on an **annual** basis.

11.2. Any changes to the policy will be clearly communicated to all members of staff involved in supporting students with additional health needs, and to parents and students themselves.

11.3. Complaints will follow the school's Complaints Policy. Where concerns remain unresolved, parents may escalate to the LA or the DfE.

11.4. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2027.**