

1. The underlying principles behind this guidance

Bourne Education Trust (BET) is committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a good education to maximise the learning potential of each individual. A fundamental part of our offer is that all pupils have the opportunity of an inclusive education that meets their specific needs.

Pupils who have additional health needs are, by the nature of their difficulties, at risk of failing to reach their true potential within an educational context. This is particularly the case for those pupils whose health needs prevent them from attending school for an extended period, or for those who are restricted by their health needs to attending school on a part-time or sporadic basis.

This guidance outlines the support available for pupils with additional health needs. This includes details of when and how alternative provision will be arranged if required, and the respective roles and responsibilities of the local authority, the school, parents/carers, providers, and other agencies.

2. Roles and responsibilities of BET schools for supporting pupils at their school with medical conditions

Schools are required by law to make arrangements for supporting pupils at their school with medical conditions.

This duty is detailed in Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and statutory guidance entitled Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions has been produced by the Department for Education to assist schools in understanding and complying with this legislation.

The key points detailed in the guidance indicate that:

- Pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education.
- Local governing committees must ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions.
- Local governing committees should ensure that school leaders consult health and social care professionals, pupils, and parents/carers to ensure that the needs of pupils with medical conditions are effectively supported.

- The statutory guidance also indicates that schools should develop a policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions and that there should be a named person who is responsible for the practical implementation of this policy within each school.

3. Ensuring that pupils who cannot attend school because of health needs receive a good education

There are a wide range of circumstances in which a pupil or young person who has health needs can receive an education which meets their needs, either through attending school with support or where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside school.

However, where a pupil cannot attend school because of health needs and it is clear that they will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, BET schools will, in consultation with parents/carers, contact the local authority and make a Medical Needs Referral.

The local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for pupils who cannot be provided with suitable education because of illness (unless the local authority considers that a pupil's condition means that full-time provision would not be in his or her best interests). The local authority's duty is set out in Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and in the statutory guidance, Education for Children with Health who Cannot Attend School because of Health Needs".

This duty applies to all pupils who live within the local authority's boundaries, regardless of the type or location of the school they would normally attend and whether they are on roll at a school.

Each local authority has a named person responsible for the education of pupils with additional health needs. The Medical Needs Coordinator is responsible, in liaison with schools and professionals, for ensuring that Children's Services fulfils its statutory duties in relation to medical needs provision for pupils who cannot attend school for medical reasons.

Parents/carers can contact the Medical Needs Coordinator to discuss their pupil's specific circumstances relating to medical needs education provision. This may be particularly appropriate in instances where they feel their pupil's educational needs are not being addressed due to a medical condition or ill health.

Schools can contact the Medical Needs Coordinator to obtain support, advice, and guidance in relation to medical needs education provision and their own statutory responsibilities in supporting pupils with additional health needs, both in general terms and in relation to specific cases.

The Medical Needs Coordinator will also liaise with professionals and colleagues within both health and education as appropriate to ensure pupils with additional health needs are able to access a suitable education.

4. Early years and post-16

Local authorities will normally provide support for pupils who are between the ages of 5 and 16 (Reception Year to Year 11). Where pupils who would normally be in Year 12 are repeating Year 11 due to medical reasons, requests for support will be considered on an individual basis.

For pupils attending BET schools in Years 12 and 13, the school will make any necessary reasonable adjustments for students who are unwell over a prolonged period.

5. Hospital in-patients

The local authority provides education for pupils who are in-patients at in-county hospitals, as well as offering transitional support for pupils being discharged from long stays in hospital or those who have repeat admissions.

In certain instances, particularly in the case of severe mental health needs, pupils may be placed in specialist residential hospitals outside of the county by the National Health Service (NHS). Many of these facilities have access to an on-site education provision or school that can offer education as part of the package of care. The council retains responsibility for the education of these pupils whilst they remain in hospital and upon their discharge.

6. Children with life limiting and terminal illness

The local authority will continue to provide education for as long as the pupil's parents and the medical staff wish it.

7. Pregnant pupils

It is an expectation that pupils who are pregnant will continue to be educated at school whilst it is reasonably practical, and it is in the interests of the pupil. Medical needs referrals for pregnant pupils will be considered on a case-by-case basis and support will generally be provided for six weeks prior to, and six weeks following, the birth of the baby. The pupil will remain on the roll of their school. If the pupil has not reached statutory school leaving age, it is expected that she will reintegrate into school. Evidence needs to be provided to the school to confirm when the baby is expected so that an appropriate medical needs referral can be made.

8. Medical needs referral criteria

Medical needs referrals will ordinarily be made by the BET school at which the pupil is on roll to the council's Medical Needs Coordinator. Referrals require the following accompanying documents:

- An appropriately completed medical needs referral form
- A letter from a medical consultant* that clearly states that the young person is unable to attend school because of their health needs (medically unfit to attend school)

Note * Where advice from a medical consultant is not yet available medical evidence will be expected from at least one of the following medical professionals:

- General Practitioner
- CAMHS professional (i.e. mental health nurse/mental health practitioner)
- The council's ME/CFS service (i.e. Specialist Physiotherapist)

The local authority will commission its short stay schools to provide education for pupils that are unable to attend school because of health needs. Following the acceptance of a referral, the Medical Needs Coordinator will contact the relevant short stay school to request that interim medical needs provision is implemented without delay.

A planning meeting will then determine the structure of the provision for an initial period of twelve school weeks (or for the period that the student is absent from school, whichever is shorter). The pupil, parent/carer, a school representative, a representative from the short stay school and the local authority Medical Needs Coordinator will be invited, along with the health professional that provided the medical advice.

The provision will ordinarily consist of one-to-one sessions within the pupil's home. The number and length of the sessions will depend on each individual case and be agreed upon in the planning meeting. There is an expectation that the pupil's home school will plan and provide appropriate feedback on the work delivered in these sessions.

If after this initial period, the pupil is unable to return to school, further medical advice will be required in order for the provision to continue.

Before it is agreed that teaching can take place in the home, risk assessments will be carried out by the school. Where a pupil is taught at home, a responsible adult must be in the house.

10. Reintegration

The aim of the provision from the Medical Needs Service will be to reintegrate pupils back into school at the earliest opportunity as soon as they are well enough. A reintegration programme will be put together following discussion with the pupil, parent/carer, school, relevant health professional(s), and other involved agencies as appropriate.

In some cases, it may not be possible for the pupil to return to school on a full-time basis initially. Arrangements for reintegration (or any future education arrangements) will need to take into account any ongoing health problems or disabilities they may have.

Published date:	Autumn 2025
Author:	Trust Safeguarding Lead

Approved by:	Performance and Standards Committee
This policy is written with reference to:	Education Act 1996 DfE Guidance - Ensuring a Good Education for Children who Cannot Attend School because of Health Needs - updated 2023. The Children and Families Act 2014
Next review:	Autumn 2028
Changes to this policy:	Minor changes to standardise terminology