



HEARTS ACADEMY TRUST

Children with health needs who cannot attend school

Date reviewed: March 2024

Next date to be reviewed: March 2025

Guidance used to compile this policy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

HEARTS Academy Trust is committed to providing a happy, caring and safe learning environment for all within a values led context, where everyone feels valued and grows in confidence and independence.

We promote **HAPPINESS** through a creative, exciting and practical curriculum, which generates a love of, and interest in, learning and a resilience and hope which supports us through challenging times.

Great value is placed on pupils' self **ESTEEM** which is developed through a positive and motivated attitude to learning, a healthy lifestyle, good social skills, self-discipline and a positive self-image.

We promote the highest standards of **ACHIEVEMENT** in all areas of the curriculum and help all pupils to fulfil their potential regardless of gender, race or ability.

We foster **RESPECT and RESPONSIBILITY** for all by establishing good relations between the school, home and community. Pupils are taught respect for themselves, others and the environment. They are also taught to take full responsibility for their own choices and responsibility for themselves and their community.

We encourage **TRUTH** and honesty in all aspects of school life – relationships, work and the curriculum and learn to trust and accept others' individuality and uniqueness.

We develop **SPIRITUALITY and SERVICE** so that calm, quiet, reflective times which support deep thought are part of school life and beauty is appreciated. We promote a service culture that reflects our duty to support and show compassion to all members of the community and not just ourselves.



Children at the HEART

Statutory Duty

HEARTS schools will work with parents, carers and medical professionals to ensure every opportunity to attend school is given to pupils with health needs. However, there are rare occasions when this is not possible. The Local Authority (LA) has a statutory duty to provide education other than at school for pupils unable to attend school due to health needs.

Procedures for pupils unable to attend school because of health needs

The majority of children's educational needs are best met in school, but for some children, at specific times, an education either in an alternative venue or at home may be appropriate.

Schools will make appropriate referrals to the Essex Education Access Team for pupils unable to attend school due to health reasons where it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. Supporting medical evidence will be required. The referrer will need to specify how long the absence is likely to last and how many hours of tuition the pupil will be well enough to receive.

For pupils diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue/ME the medical letter should specify the programme the pupil should be following. This may include, for example, periods of school attendance, periods of rest and/or periods of 1:1 tuition at home.

For pupils with mental health issues there is an expectation that the evidence is provided by the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health service (EWMHS). For pupils who are receiving support through other Counselling Services, evidence should be supplied from the relevant organisation.

Procedures for all cases

Where there is difficulty in obtaining evidence the school will contact Education Access Team to discuss the individual case.

Schools will provide, with the referral form, any other appropriate information; e.g. notes of school meetings, details of strategies the school has used to support and engage the pupil.

Notification of decision

Once the referral form and evidence has been considered and a decision about the referral has been made, Education Access Team will notify the School accordingly. The School will liaise with the parents and pupil.

If the referral is agreed, Education Access Team will notify the School and the provider will contact the School and the family to make the necessary arrangements to provide support. Depending on the circumstances, this may involve a school based meeting.

If the referral is not agreed Education Access Team will contact the School to confirm why the referral does not meet the criteria. Other avenues of support may be suggested. Further evidence may be submitted in order that the referral can be reconsidered.

In some circumstances there will need to be a meeting with the relevant professionals before a final decision can be made. If this is the case the School will convene a meeting, issuing an agenda and list of attendees, normally including school staff, parents, carers, a representative from the Education Access Team, a representative from the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS), social services and/or other relevant agencies. Sometimes further information will be sought before a final decision is made.

Ensuring children have a good education

When home/group tuition is agreed, teachers from the identified provider will educate pupils in alternative suitable venues, or, where appropriate, in the pupil's home. Before it is agreed that teaching can take place in the home, it will be necessary to carry out appropriate risk assessments. Where a pupil is taught at home there must be a responsible adult in the house. Close liaison with the pupil's school will be kept and pupils will be kept informed about school activities and events.

The pupil will remain on the school roll and the school will arrange review meetings (normally every 6 weeks). Up-to-date medical evidence will be required. It is important to link with other agencies in order to support the pupil's educational opportunities and good multi-agency working is crucial.

Where support is agreed upon, there is an expectation that all parties will engage with and contribute to the agreed plan.

The School's role is to:

- ensure all of our children are safe; senior school staff will arrange a weekly well-being meeting to take place remotely to establish this. A record of this will be made and stored on the child's Scholar Pack attendance record;
- host and chair regular review meetings (normally every 6 weeks); produce action plans and distribute notes of these meetings;
- provide materials for an appropriate programme of work and work plans;
- maintain a plan, such as a One Plan, which records the progress made towards a return to school. Due consideration will be given to circumstances that present as life-limiting;
- ensure all staff are kept informed;
- provide the pupil's academic attainment levels including any relevant examination requirements;
- make arrangements for SATs and other statutory assessments;
- provide a named teacher with whom each party can liaise (usually the SENDCo or Learning Mentor);
- provide a suitable working area within the school, where necessary;
- be active in the monitoring of progress and the reintegration into school, using key staff to facilitate the reintegration into school, if appropriate;
- ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school, are kept informed about school social events, are able to participate.
- encourage and facilitate liaison with peers, for example, through Google Classroom.

The pupil's role is to:

- be ready to work with the provider;
- be prepared to communicate their views;
- engage with other agencies as appropriate;
- prepare for reintegration as soon as possible.

The parents' role is to:

- commit to a plan of reintegration;
- be willing to work together with all concerned;
- provide early communication if a problem arises or help is needed;
- attend necessary meetings;
- reinforce with their child, the value of a return to school.

The provider's role is to:

- liaise with the named person in school;
- liaise, where appropriate, with outside agencies;
- be sensitive to the needs of the child and family;
- provide a flexible teaching programme;
- provide regular reports on the pupil's progress and achievements;
- provide an opportunity for the pupil to comment on their report;
- ensure appropriate work and any other relevant material is returned to school;
- attend review meetings;
- help set up an appropriate reintegration programme at the earliest opportunity as soon as the pupil is ready to return to school.

Health Service's role is to:

- offer medical treatment and advice where appropriate.

Other involved agencies, for example Social Services, Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service's roles are to:

- work, with others, for the benefit of the pupil;
- attend review meetings if possible;
- provide written reports where necessary;
- give appropriate advice and support.

Withdrawal of the programme

The commissioned alternative education programme may be withdrawn if, for example, the pupil fails to be available on a regular basis without appropriate medical evidence.

Pupils who are not of compulsory school age

The LA will not normally be able to provide support for pupils who are under or over compulsory school age.

Request and referral forms to Education Access for educational support for Essex pupils missing education due to their health needs can be found using the link below.

https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Education_Access/Pages/default.aspx

This can be:

- Physical medical needs
- Mental health needs
- Pregnancy

Please refer to the Essex medical policy 'Children missing education due to health needs' before completing any referrals.

Key points;

- All referrals must be made in writing to Education Access who will determine whether the referral meets the criteria to enable support to be provided
- Schools will be expected to convene the initial meeting to consider support, where requested and to organise review meetings if the provision is needed for longer than 6 weeks
- Schools are responsible for liaising with parents to obtain updated medical guidance prior to each review meeting
- Schools will retain responsibility for pupils who will remain on the roll of the referring school
- Referrals will only be closed following discussions between Education Access, the school, the parent / carer, pupil, and other relevant professionals

If you wish to discuss the referral in advance please email medical@essex.gov.uk and a member of Education Access will be in touch

To avoid any delay, please complete all relevant sections and email the completed form, together with the appropriate evidence, to medical@essex.gov.uk

Please note if the pupil you wish to refer has an EHCP, SEND or is undergoing a needs assessment please first discuss the referral with SEND Operations first and ensure you carry out a review before making the referral.