

Pickwick Academy Trust



Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School

Policy Group:	
Policy Ref:	PWS/08
Responsible Reviewing Officer and Job Title:	James Passmore CEO
Date Written:	November 2025
Date Approved by the Board:	25 November 2025
Date of Next Review:	November 2026

1. Introduction

- a. Pickwick Academy Trust is committed to meeting our statutory obligation to ensure that children who cannot attend school due to their health or medical needs are supported to continue their education.
- b. Pickwick Academy Trust acknowledges that it can be an extremely difficult time for a child and their family when a child is seriously ill. We are committed to following the advice of professionals, and of working closely and collaboratively with families, to reduce the burden and stress on everyone during such a difficult time.

2. Purpose and Scope

- a. This policy applies to Pickwick Academy Trust and all its schools.
- b. The policy aims to ensure that suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll at any of the Trust's schools who cannot attend school due to their health or medical needs.
- c. This policy only applies where pupils have been or are likely to be away from school for 15 days or more due to an illness or injury, whether consecutive or cumulative.
- d. This policy applies to any students who have health needs which prevent them from attending school. See Section 5 – Definitions.
- e. The policy also aims to ensure that pupils, staff and parents/carers understand the responsibilities of the Trust, school and the Local Authority (LA).

3. Legal Framework

- a. The Policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, but not limited to, the following:
 - Data Protection Act (2018)
 - DfE (2023) Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
 - DfE (2015) Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
 - DfE (2022) Working together to improve school attendance
 - Education Act (1996)
 - Equality Act (2010)
 - The SEN Code of Practice
 - Children and Families Act (2014)
 - The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

4. Responsibilities and Accountabilities

a. The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements are in place, and effectively implemented, for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their health or medical needs.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those throughout the Trust involved in the arrangements to support the needs of pupils are clear and understood by all
- Ensuring systems across the Trust for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents are robust and fit for purpose

b. The CEO is responsible for:

- The implementation and promulgation of this policy.

c. The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring the arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school due to their health or medical needs are reviewed on a termly basis.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of pupils are clear and understood by all.
- Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with healthcare needs and for liaison with parents, pupils, the LA, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care.
- Working collaboratively with the LA, parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of children and ensuring those arrangements are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Ensuring the support put in place focuses upon the needs of the pupil.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health or medical needs.
- Providing teachers who support pupils with additional health needs with suitable information relating to a pupil's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil

d. Named Member of staff is responsible for:

- Dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of health or medical needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying the LA-provided education providers with information about the pupil's capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Liaising with the Headteacher, LA-provided education provider, parent and pupil to determine the pupil's programme of study while absent from school.
- Keeping the pupils who are being educated by LA-provided education providers informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.

- Providing a link between pupils, parents and the LA.

e. All school staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of the medical needs of pupils they teach or interact with, and follow the agreed strategies on any individual support plans.
- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health or medical needs.
- Designing school-based activities, including lessons, in a way that allows pupils with additional health needs to participate fully and ensuring pupils are not excluded (without a clear evidence-based reason) from activities that they wish to take part
- Understanding their role in any school-based support for pupils with additional health needs and ensuring they attend any required training
- Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in school-based education

f. Pupils will:

- Be fully involved in discussions about their medical support needs.
- Contribute to the development of any plans, e.g. individual health care plan, education plan while unwell, and plans for reintegration back to school.

g. Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Communicating regularly with the school about their child's health and medical needs, illness or injury and for passing on up-to-date information from qualified medical professionals where appropriate.
- Attending meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.
- Attending meetings to discuss how any school-based support, including reintegration, should be planned
- Working in partnership with the school, LA and any LA-arranged provision to ensure the best possible outcome for their child.
- Ensuring, where school-based provision is in place, the regular and punctual attendance of their child, where possible

5. Definitions / explanations of terms used

- a. 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 challenges or school refusal
 - Progressive conditions

- Terminal illnesses
 - Chronic illnesses
- b. Children who are unable to attend mainstream education for health or medical 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 which act as a communication channel between home and school where the child is too ill to attend school and is receiving specialist medical treatment.
 - Medical Pupil Referral Unit: these are LA establishments which provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

6. Local Authority Duties

- a. The Local Authority must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. Pickwick Academy Trust has a duty to support the LA in doing so when necessary.

b. The LA should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil.
- Ensure the education pupils receive is of good quality, allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind their peers in school, and allows them time to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- Address the needs of individual pupils when arranging provision.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs and ensure parents know who this is.
- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards children with additional health needs.
- Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education.
- Give clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.

c. The LA should not:

- Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child from getting the right type of provision and a good education.

- Withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a child because of how much it will cost.
- Have policies based upon the percentage of time a child is able to attend school rather than whether the child is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.
- Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not they will arrange education for children or have inflexible policies which result in children going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in).

7. Managing Absences

- a. Parents are required to contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness. Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- b. The school will provide support to pupils who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 days by liaising with the pupil's parents to arrange schoolwork as soon as the pupil 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 pupil, their family and relevant members of staff.
- c. Where absences are known in advance, the school will liaise with the LA to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence. For hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital.
- d. The school will monitor pupil attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a pupil is, or should be, receiving education other than at school. The school will only remove a pupil from the school roll if they are unable to attend school because of additional health needs where:
 - The pupil has been certified by a Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and
 - Neither the pupil nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

8. Support for Pupils

- a. Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the pupil's needs and how these may be best met with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil.
- b. Medical evidence will be used where available to best understand a pupil's needs and identify the most suitable provision. Pupils admitted to hospital will receive

education as determined by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital involved.

- c. The school will make reasonable adjustments to a pupil's programme of study where medical evidence supports those adjustments.
- d. During a period of absence, the school will work with the provider of the pupil's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.
- e. Whilst a pupil is away from school, the school will ensure the pupil can successfully remain in touch with their school. This could be through school newsletters, digital learning platforms, remote meetings, emails, invitations to school events, cards or letters from peers and staff.

9. Reintegration

- a. Pickwick Academy Trust understands that it can sometimes be difficult for a pupil to reintegrate back into school after a period of absence. When a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, a detailed reintegration plan will be formed in order to ensure the reintegration is as successful as possible and no unnecessary pressure is placed on the pupil or their family.
- b. The school will liaise with the pupil, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return to school.
- c. The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and to the curriculum.

10. Information Sharing

- a. It is essential that all information about pupils and their health needs is kept up-to-date. To protect confidentiality, all information-sharing techniques will be agreed with the pupil and their parents in advance of being used.
- b. All teachers, Teaching Assistants, supply and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures, via the agreed procedures.
- c. Parents and pupils will be made aware of their own rights and responsibilities regarding confidentiality and information-sharing.

11. Equal Opportunities

An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment has been completed in order to ensure it complies with equality obligations outlined in discrimination legislation. The policy positively reflects the aims and ambitions of Pickwick Academy Trust.

12. References, acknowledgements and associated documents

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with other Pickwick Academy Trust policies in the same group of policies.

- Attendance Policy
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
- Accessibility Plan

13. Appendices

None