



BALDWINS HILL SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH HEALTH NEEDS WHO CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL POLICY

Source: Gov Guidance
Review Date: July 2027
Agreed by LGB: July 2026

Growing Great...

Respect, Compassion, Courage, Responsibility

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll who cannot attend school due to physical or mental health needs.
- Pupils, staff and parents understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority.
- Children remain connected to learning, their peers and school life during periods of absence wherever possible.
- Reintegration to school is carefully planned, appropriately supported and tailored to individual need.
- Pupils and families are actively involved in decisions regarding educational provision and support arrangements

Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- SEND Policy
- SEND Information Report
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and Department for Education statutory guidance relating to children with health needs who cannot attend school.

The school also recognises its duties under:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The SEND Code of Practice 2015

Where children have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), educational arrangements will continue to reflect identified needs and statutory provision wherever possible.

The school will consider its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the requirement to make reasonable adjustments where a pupil's health condition constitutes a disability.

The following guidance will be used:

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE, updated December 2023)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE)

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE)

Health needs may include:

- physical illness
- injury
- recovery following surgery
- chronic medical conditions
- mental health conditions
- anxiety-based difficulties where supported by appropriate evidence
- conditions causing intermittent attendance

The responsibilities of the school

At Baldwins Hill School, we aim to ensure that all children, regardless of circumstance or setting receive a good education to enable them to shape their own futures. Where children are unable to attend school because of their health, the schools will follow Department of Education Guidance and work with West Sussex Local Authority who have the responsibility to arrange suitable full-time education (or part-time when appropriate for the child's needs) for children who are unable to attend a mainstream school because of their health.

The Local Authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for children who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision. There will however, be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the Local Authority, for example, where the child can still attend school with some support. Where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child; or where arrangements have been made for the child to be educated in a hospital by an on-site hospital school, we would not expect the Local Authority to become involved in such arrangements unless it had reason to think that the education being provided to the child was not suitable or, while otherwise suitable, was not full-time or for the number of hours the child could benefit from without adversely affecting their health. This might be the case where, for example, the child can attend school but only intermittently.

Health Needs and Attendance

The school recognises that health needs may include both physical and mental health conditions, including those supported by medical professionals which significantly affect a pupil's ability to attend school.

The school will work closely with families, health professionals and the Local Authority to support attendance wherever possible and minimise interruption to education.

The school may seek appropriate medical evidence where required but will avoid placing unnecessary burdens on families where needs are already well evidenced through professional involvement.

Where attendance difficulties arise, the school will consider whether support is best provided through attendance, SEND, pastoral, medical or other appropriate pathways. The school recognises that some pupils may require a flexible and coordinated response involving multiple agencies.

Emotional, Mental Health and Attendance

The school recognises that emotional wellbeing, mental health difficulties and anxiety-related needs may significantly affect a pupil's ability to attend school. Where attendance concerns are linked to emotional or mental health needs, the school will work in partnership with families, health professionals and other relevant agencies to identify barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support.

Support may be considered through attendance, SEND, pastoral, medical or mental health pathways, depending on the individual circumstances. This may include reasonable adjustments, enhanced pastoral support, graduated attendance plans, referrals to external services, and other interventions aimed at maintaining a pupil's connection to education.

The school will follow current Department for Education guidance, including *Working Together to Improve School Attendance and Summary of Responsibilities Where a Mental Health Issue is Affecting Attendance*, when determining appropriate support arrangements.

If the School Makes Arrangements

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

This may involve:

- Initial contact will be made by the Inclusion Team to establish the child's individual health needs, strengths and barriers to attendance.
- The Inclusion Team, led by the SENCo, will coordinate support arrangements.

- Discussions with the pupil and family to ensure their views contribute to planning and decision making. Where appropriate, pupils will be involved in planning educational provision, reintegration arrangements, reasonable adjustments and review meetings.
- Arrangements being agreed and established, for example:
 - remote learning;
 - virtual learning platforms;
 - work sent home;
 - education provided off-site or through hospital schools;
 - adapted timetables;
 - additional adult support within school;
 - reasonable adjustments to enable continued access to learning.
- Ongoing discussions between families, school staff and relevant health professionals to review provision.
- Liaising with the SENCo for pupils who also have SEND.
- Planning reintegration from the earliest stage wherever appropriate.

If the local authority makes arrangements

If the school can't make suitable arrangements, West Sussex Local Authority will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.

The school will notify the Local Authority where it becomes clear that a pupil is likely to be absent from school for 15 school days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, due to health needs.

In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, the school will:

- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil
- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required
- Help make sure that the provision offered to the pupil is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully

Safeguarding Considerations

The school retains safeguarding oversight for pupils on roll receiving education away from the school site and will maintain appropriate welfare monitoring throughout the period of absence.

Reintegration Planning

When reintegration is anticipated, the school will work with families, health professionals and the Local Authority to:

- Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of absence.
- Enable pupils to remain connected to school life through newsletters, communication from staff, invitations to events and appropriate opportunities for social inclusion.

- Develop individually tailored reintegration plans.
- Consider phased attendance arrangements where appropriate.
- Identify and implement reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010. Where a pupil's health condition meets the definition of a disability, the school will take reasonable steps to prevent the pupil from being placed at a substantial disadvantage and will consider any necessary adaptations to the environment, curriculum, timetable, policies or support arrangements.
- Consider any curriculum adaptations, wellbeing support or SEND provision required.
- Ensure the pupil's views are considered throughout the reintegration process.
- Review arrangements regularly and adapt support according to need.

Monitoring arrangements

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring implementation of this policy. The Local Governing Board will receive updates where significant cases, trends or legislative changes indicate a need for review. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head teacher. At every review, it will be approved by the Local Governing Board.