

Children and Young People Unable to Attend School because of Health Reasons

Introduction and Aims

This policy document aims to ensure that all children and young people in Milton Keynes of statutory school age, who are unable to attend school or educational setting because of health reasons, continue to have access to as much education as their health condition allows, so that they are able to maintain the momentum of their education. Additionally, it aims to ensure that Milton Keynes Local Authority, Education and Health Services have the capacity to deliver appropriate education as soon as it is clear, according to the child/young person's medical consultant, that they will be away from school for 15 working days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, within an academic year.

This policy document should be read alongside the statutory guidance produced by the DfE: 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs. Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities – January 2013'.

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

Milton Keynes does not have a hospital school and the Local Authority does not have any educational provision specifically for children/young people who are not in hospital and unable to attend school for health reasons. However, the Local Authority is still required to ensure that every child/young person, no matter their background, needs or where they live, should receive a good education and the opportunity to fulfil their potential. This policy document sets out to provide detail about how Milton Keynes Local Authority aims to fulfil its duties in this regard.

Children and young people who are unable to attend school for health reasons include those with:

- Physical health issues
- Physical injuries
- Mental Health problems, including anxiety issues
- Emotional difficulties, including emotionally based school attendance issues
- Progressive conditions
- Terminal illness
- Chronic illnesses

General Principles

- All Milton Keynes children and young people (aged 4-18 years, or up to 25 years if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan) who are unable to attend their school or educational setting because of health reasons, should not be at home without access to education for more than 15 working days (consecutive or cumulative) in an academic year
- Where a health need (physical or mental) is creating a barrier to learning, the child/young person's needs will be met through the school's designated resources wherever possible.

However, where this is not possible and where absence is significant, a partnership approach to resourcing will be necessary between the school and the LA

- Partnership working between Milton Keynes families, schools / educational settings (including nurseries, pre-schools, college etc.), the Local Authority and Health Services is vital in ensuring that children/young people with health needs receive appropriate education in a timely manner and that they are supported in their reintegration back into their originating school/educational setting as and when they are well enough. This may, where appropriate, include remote/online learning as part of their education
- Children/young people admitted to hospital outside of Milton Keynes will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital school tuition team at the hospital concerned.

Expectations on the Local Authority

Milton Keynes Local Authority must ensure that:

- Any Milton Keynes child/young person unable to attend school because of a health reason must not be at home without access to education for more than 15 working days (consecutive or cumulative) across an academic year
- Children/young people who have a chronic illness or condition which is likely to result in prolonged or recurring periods of absence from school/setting, whether at home or in hospital, should have access to education, from day one of the absence as far as possible and by the latest, day six
- Children/young people who are unable to attend their school/setting because of health reasons receive a suitable full-time education as far as their illness / injury / condition allows:
 - The education provided should be of similar quality to that available in their school/setting, including a broad and balanced curriculum, which, where appropriate, may be delivered remotely
- Children/young people who are unable to attend school/setting because of health reasons should receive appropriate support enabling them to successfully reintegrate back into their originating school/setting. This may come from various sources as appropriate to the needs of the child/young person, for example, Special Educational Needs and Disability Services (SEND), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Children and Family Practice / Social Care Services, Educational Psychologists, and, where relevant, School Nurses
- There are named Local Authority Officers for children/young people with health needs: Caroline Marriott (Head of SEND Services); Vic Courtis (EHCP Service Leader); Nina Broderick (Inclusion Service Leader – children/young people without EHCPs)
- Children/young people unable to attend school/educational setting for health reasons are known about and monitored:
 - As acknowledged in the Statutory Guidance (2013), there will be a wide range of circumstances where a child/young person has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the LA. For example, where the child/young person can still attend school with some support; where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child/young person; or where arrangements have been made for the child/young person to be educated in a hospital by an on-site hospital school. The LA is not expected to become involved in such arrangements unless it had reason to think that the education being provided to the child/young person was not suitable or, while otherwise suitable, was not full-time or for the number of hours the child/young person could benefit from without adversely affecting their health. This might be the case where, for example, the child/young person can attend school but only

intermittently. However, this does mean that the LA needs to know about children/young people who are unable to attend school for health reasons for 15 or more days within an academic year, and therefore the LA is required to monitor this across schools and educational settings within Milton Keynes.

Expectations on schools / educational settings

- Ensure there is a named person who is responsible for children/young people who cannot attend school as a result of their health (mental and physical)
- Establish a written policy statement and clear procedures which may stand alone or be incorporated into the school's SEN/D policy and /or the LA policy
- In the case of children/young people who are expected to be absent for 15 working days or less, and where this is not part of a pattern of absence related to chronic or recurring illness, make arrangements in liaison with the child/young person's parents to provide them with schoolwork to complete at home as soon as they become able to cope with it
- Ensure that the LA is made aware as quickly as possible (at the latest on the sixth day of absence) using the 'School to LA Notification Form – Part A' via the SEND Service SEN Support email (SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk) once it is recognised that a child/young person is unable to attend school because of health reasons, and where the absence is expected to last for more than 15 days (consecutive or cumulative)
- If the school are unable to manage the needs of the child/young person without the intervention of the LA:
 - The school should complete and send in Parts A & B of the 'School to LA Notification Form' requesting support from the LA SEND Support Team
 - The LA should be invited to an Individual Health Plan (IHP) meeting via the SEND Services Support Line (01908 657825) or SEN Support email (see above)
- Monitor attendance and mark registers so that they show if a child/young person is, or ought to be, receiving education otherwise than at school for health reasons:
 - Schools should not remove a child/young person from the school register unless written medical evidence states that they will be unable to attend school for the rest of their compulsory schooling
- Work in partnership with the LA, hospital and/or medical professionals involved and family:
 - Develop and share the child/young person's IHP with appropriate professionals and parents/carers, and review the IHP at least half termly or whenever the child/young person's health condition changes
 - Where LA support is required, schools/settings should invite the LA to the child/young person's IHP development meeting and email the finalised IHP to SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk
 - Invite the LA to IHP review meetings where relevant and appropriate
 - Share promptly as appropriate information about the child/young person's curriculum, achievements, and any special educational needs / disabilities
 - Provide appropriate work and materials promptly and regularly
 - Be active in the monitoring of progress and attainment where appropriate
 - Be active in the smooth reintegration back into school, liaising with the LA and other agencies as necessary, through use of the IHP
- Ensure that children/young people who are unable to attend school because of health reasons are kept informed about school social events and are enabled to participate in homework clubs, study support and other activities as appropriate
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers, for example, through visits, videos etc.

Expectations on Health Services

To ensure smooth transitions between school/setting education and LA educational support for children/young people who cannot attend school/educational settings because of health reasons, Health Services should:

- Provide confirmation to the child/young person's school/setting, and to the LA via the 'Simple Notification Form' from a relevant health consultant e.g., GP, community paediatrician, hospital consultant or consultant psychiatrist or psychologist, of the child/young person's physical or psychological/mental health difficulty, condition, illness or injury
- Provide an estimated timescale during which alternative educational provision will be required
- Indicate whether the child/young person's absence will likely be for longer than 15 working days and whether their condition means that they are likely to require recurring educational support
- Comment on the child/young person's ability to cope with educational provision given their health condition and on the kind of arrangements that would be needed to ensure the child/young person's continued access to education, including, for example, whether they could access remote learning
- Indicate the review arrangements, treatment or support required to ensure the child/young person returns to school as soon as they are able to do so, and any reintegration needs / arrangements that should be considered, e.g., remote learning; a phased return due to fatigue or other medical changes.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

- The LA will maintain a record of children/young people in Milton Keynes who are unable to attend school for health reasons for 15 or more working days within an academic year:
 - This information will be provided by schools/settings via the 'School to LA Notification Form' to SEND Services Support Line (01908 657825) / email SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk by the latest on the sixth day of absence from school for health reasons
 - Information will be provided on an at least weekly basis by MKUH and CAMHS staff via the 'Simple Notification Form' to the SEND Services Support Line email SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk
- The progress of children/young people receiving Local Authority support and education because they are unable to attend due for health reasons will be monitored by MK SEND Services, in conjunction with the named member of school staff at the child/young person's originating school/setting and the child/young person's medical consultant/GP
- Monitoring of the LA record of children/young people out of school due to health reasons will be managed by relevant staff within MK SEND Services
- Evaluation of the child/young person's education and progress will be carried out by:
 - Schools/settings collating attainment data where appropriate (this should be included in the IHP)
 - LA SEND Services requesting and collating feedback from children/young people and parents/carers via evaluation form – seeking their views on the service received
 - LA SEND Services requesting feedback via evaluation form from relevant professionals, including school staff, LA staff and health professionals
- Evaluation data will be periodically collated and included within wider monitoring of SEND Services. This will be used to review and improve services to children/young people with health needs.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Children/young people with SEND in Milton Keynes who also have health needs should have EHC Plans or SEN Support Plans and should continue to receive Annual Reviews or equivalent for SEND Support organised by the school. LA SEND Services may also be supporting those children/young people with EHC plans and Social Care needs. These children/young people should have an Individual Health Plan (IHP) developed and maintained by their school/setting specifically for their health needs in relation to their education and the school/setting SENCo should be regularly involved in liaison between the school and LA SEND Services.

Public Examinations

Efficient and effective liaison is important when children/young people with health needs are approaching public examinations. The school/setting and LA SEND Services should be able to arrange a suitable focus on the child/young person's education at this stage in order to minimise the time lost while s/he is unable to attend his/her school/setting. Awarding bodies must be made aware through appropriate means and should make arrangements for children/young people with permanent long-term illnesses or indispositions when taking public examinations. School/settings, supported by those working with the child/young person, should submit applications for special arrangements as early as possible.

Equal Opportunities

The Local Authority, schools/settings and the Health Services will strive to ensure that equal opportunities are fundamental to the assessment of circumstances and to the service provided, recognising strengths, and addressing areas of difficulty on an individual basis.

The Local Authority, schools and the Health Services aim to provide an education comparable to that available in school, and is:

- Of good, broad, balanced quality
- Appropriately able to address the individual needs of each child/young person
- Appropriate and sensitive to the child/young person's background and individuality (gender/religion/culture/identity)
- Responsive to the demands of what may be a changing health status
- Sufficient to enable them to take appropriate qualifications
- Sufficient to prevent them from slipping behind their peers in schools
- Delivered so that they can continue to feel fully part of their school/setting community
- Flexible enough to enable them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as they are deemed able to. This may include periods of remote / online learning.

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