

Medical Conditions

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

Aims

An increasing number of children and young people with health needs, including long-term conditions and highly complex needs, are attending mainstream and special schools. Some of these pupils have short-term needs for support, such as being helped to take prescription medicines. However, many require continuous and ongoing care and intervention while at school, including intimate or invasive care procedures.

Leicester City schools aim to be inclusive communities that welcome and support pupils with medical conditions and strive to provide pupils with any medical condition the same opportunities as others at school.

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (Department for Education, December 2015)

Pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. Children and young people with medical conditions are entitled to full-time education and they have the same rights of admission to school as other children. In effect, this means that no child with a medical condition should be denied admission or be prevented from taking up a place in school due to arrangements for their condition that have not been made.

Living with a medical condition can be challenging for children, young people and their families. Schools should work with families so that they can help to remove barriers and can make adaptations so that the child or young person has the support they need. Medical needs can change over time and arrangements will need to be reviewed regularly, and immediately if there are changes. Schools will need to make clear arrangements to support students with medical needs, and how to support them if they become unwell, including knowing what to do in the event of an emergency.

When children and young people are unwell, whether physically or mentally, those around them (family, friends, medical professionals, educational professionals and others) all contribute to their wellbeing. The Public Health England briefing paper for schools and governors, 'The Link between pupil health, wellbeing and attainment', identified the fact that well-being impacts on academic attainment. Therefore, schools can have a positive impact on the child's health, wellbeing and progress. In practice, schools have an important role to play in terms of the health and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care and this becomes even more significant when children have medical needs. Schools will need to work in collaboration with families, medical professionals and support services. Without well-informed, carefully planned and targeted support, children with health issues can suffer from lost opportunities, isolation, diminished wellbeing, bullying, lower attainment and unmet potential. Significant mental health issues may result from other medical needs being unmet and unsupported in school. Without intervention,

children with medical needs can become disenfranchised and the 'hidden excluded'. Students with medical conditions often want to be able to take full part in school life, and always should be able to do so safely.

Leicester City's approach to supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.

People and services for children and young people with medical conditions

Role and expectations of the school:

Senior management team & the specialist education needs coordinator (SENCO) should:

- ensure that there is a policy for students with medical needs. They should refer to the statutory guidance "Supporting pupils with at school with medical conditions" (Department for Education, December 2015).
- ensure there is a named person with responsibility for implementing the statutory policy.
- meet with families and liaise with medical professionals to understand the child's needs and the families wishes.
- write an Individual Health Care Plans, with the support from health care professionals/Community Nursing Team, which identifies the measures needed in school, what to do if the child becomes unwell and how to recognise when there is an emergency.
- ensure all relevant staff are informed of provision for the child or young person's medical needs, so the child can follow their plan. This can include reception staff so they will welcome a child arriving at a different time of day, premises staff who may manage grounds and buildings when special access arrangements have been made, or lunchtime supervisors who may find the child and friends in a previously unused room at social times.
- ensure that staff who are supporting are fully trained, including supply staff.
- make arrangements for monitoring and reviewing Individual Healthcare Plans.
- take responsibility for ensuring the plan is effective, that the measures in the plan are sufficient to enable to students to access school and feel safe, and to review the plan as necessary.
- have a policy for the administration of medicines.
- create an ethos in the school where students can flourish, be encouraged and can conduct their life with dignity and where children with medical needs are free from discrimination, judgement, hostility and bullying.
- intervene if a student with medical needs is adversely affected by other people or arrangements in the school.
- ensure that safe arrangements, with fully trained staff, are provided in school so that parents are not obliged to attend school to tend to their child.
- manage both physical and mental health needs with the same rigour.
- assess students to see if they need exam concessions and consider their exam arrangements.
- have a whole school approach to promote mental health and wellbeing.

- prepare for planned admissions to hospital and provide information and work in advance. For patients at Leicester Royal Infirmary contact The Children's Hospital School on 0116 258 5330.
- when notified by the Children's Hospital School (or other hospital schools) that a student has been admitted to hospital, identify a single point of contact for liaison. Ensure contact is made with the hospital school to share information. Points of contact could be:
 - Head of year or SENCO for secondary age students at The Children's Hospital School.
 - Class teacher or SENCO for Early years Foundation Settings (EYFS), primary and Special Education Needs and disability (SEND) students.
- when a student at The Children's Hospital School has a complicated situation such as has been diagnosed with a limiting, changing, or degenerative conditions, cancers or profound and multiple learning disabilities, maintain communication with leaders at the Leicester Royal Infirmary department of The Children's Hospital School.
- ensure good reintegration plans are made to support students to return after an illness. Continue to monitor and maintain regular contact with the family after a return to school.

Teachers and TAs should:

- keep students safe by allowing them to follow their plan.
- be aware of the medical needs of students in their classrooms and school.
- understand how the medical need with impact on the child's learning.
- be alert to how well the child is, what to do to support, and how to recognise when to get help.
- ensure that if a child becomes unwell and needs to go to the medical room they are accompanied by a suitable person, and that unwell children are not left unsupervised.
- have patience and understanding if the student needs to miss work.
- make materials available so that students can catch up missed work but also understand it isn't always easy for a student to 'catch up' with all the work that is missed. Priority work might need to be decided on.
- provide feedback and encouragement to children and their families that are completing work away from the classroom.
- maintain good links with the family so that families have open lines of communication about their child's health needs and their learning experiences.
- provide support in the classroom so that students can be helped with understanding missed work so they can access their lessons fully.
- allow anxious students to handle a fidget toy.
- take into account that children and young people with medical conditions may be affected psychologically by their condition. For instance, conditions that:
 - will bring restrictions or pain over their whole life, such as with diabetes or with Ehlers-Danlos syndromes, can cause resentment and despair.

- are life-limiting or there is a higher than usual risk of dying, cause fear and sadness.
- cause them to be vulnerable, can bring emotions of embarrassment or shame, such as not having full control of bladder and bowel through fits or palsy.
- when notified by The Children's Hospital School, or other hospital school, that a student has been admitted to hospital, provide work in the form of learning objectives, materials or curriculum information in a timely manner.
- provide materials through a Virtual Learning Environment or otherwise to students who are in hospital and identify priorities for learning.
- liaise with The Children's Hospital School about progress and plans for reintegration.
- keep the child in the thoughts of the class by mentioning them in the process of the day and exchanging news between the class and the student.
- in assessment periods, provide examination board information for students and liaise with the exam coordinator at the hospital school.

Role and expectations of the local authority

The specialist teaching staff member should:

- investigate absences from school to see if they are due to medical conditions.
- should challenge schools where students are becoming anxious and ill because their learning needs are not met.
- liaise effectively with health professionals.

Provisions and practice for children and young people with medical conditions

Role and expectations of the school

Schools should:

- have procedures for managing medicines on school premises.
- have staff who can confidently and competently supervise the administration of medication in school.
- ensure students have full access to their medication when needed.
- allow pupils to drink, eat or take toilet or other breaks whenever they need to in order to manage their medical condition effectively.
- review the timetable and curriculum so that students can succeed.
 - enable a part time timetable so that school attendance is manageable and keep this arrangement under review.
 - if necessary, and with agreement of child or young person and family, reduce the curriculum so that the child's efforts and energy are not too widely spread and they can be successful with their studies.
 - maintain their opportunities even if a child or young person is (temporarily) unable to attend. For instance, not removing a child from a subject because they have fallen behind with their work.
- make allowances and ensure that students can attend medical appointments without penalty.
- ensure that expectations are clear and unambiguous about the need to actively support pupils with medical needs so they can participate in school trips and visits, or in sporting activities, and not prevent them from doing so.
- consult with parents and medical professionals to carry out a risk assessment so that planning arrangements take account of any steps needed to ensure that pupils with medical conditions are included in trips and visits.
- teachers should be aware of how a child's medical condition will impact on their participation, but there should be enough flexibility for all children to participate according to their own abilities and with any reasonable adjustments, for example:
 - allowance for homework deadlines / suspension of homework.
 - 'Time Out' card to enable child to leave the classroom without unnecessary attention.
 - facilitating communication outside of the classroom, for example, through TEAMS or via email.
 - having access to a designated quiet area for rest periods
 - allowance for time required between lessons.
- Schools should make arrangements for the inclusion of pupils in all activities with any adjustments as required, unless evidence from a clinician such as a GP states this is not possible. For example:

- when planning trips staff can identify when and where students will be able to access medication, who can support the child if they need to rest, along with suitable places. Complete individual risk assessments for children with medical needs.
- when planning residential visits, liaise with the family and medical professionals who are well placed to anticipate needs. For example, a student with eczema could take her own bed linen, washed in familiar products, so that her eczema is not aggravated by unfamiliar products. complete individual risk assessments for children with medical needs.
- when planning events in school ensure that the student's day is planned so that they can take part and can also manage their health condition. This could mean access to seats or perching stools or being able to withdraw from the event during the day.
- schools should provide additional adult support if needed.
- allow students with medical needs to have the company and support of friends within their arrangements, as is enjoyed by well children.
- provide access to the school nurse, who will be able to support with counselling, refer with other professionals or signpost further support.
- when a student is unable to attend due to medical needs provide a weekly pastoral meeting with the family:
 - to facilitate communication between the home and the school.
 - to establish shared expectations of both the school and family in relation to work and support.
 - to help students at home to access work provided by school.
 - so that students can hear feedback on their work.
 - and so, the child knows that they are being thought about in school.
- provide additional support to students who are returning to school after (sometimes prolonged) absences, through special arrangements. These can include:
 - meet and greet to address any barriers identified for the day.
 - additional support in class.
 - planned breaks.
 - part time timetables

Role and expectations of the local authority

The local authority should:

- provide transport on the grounds of medical needs, and this should be put in place in a timely manner.

Environment for children and young people with medical conditions

Role and expectations of the school

Schools should:

- provide safe spaces where the child or young person can attend to their medical needs, such as access to medical rooms.
- make provision for needs such as providing a quiet place to rest.
- ensure students privacy and dignity with full access to appropriate toilet facilities.
- consider the physical demands of school life on a student with medical needs and make arrangements such as:
 - rooming of groups that the student belongs to.
 - organising room changes to reduce the distance that the student travels.
 - providing access to lifts as required.
 - allowing students to use different routes to enable short cuts.
- ensure that students have an appropriate place to eat.
- support students with medical needs to maintain friendships in school. This could include providing a space for a group to socialise in at break and lunchtime.
- make adequate exam arrangements for students with medical needs. This can include arrangements such as:
 - rest breaks, extra time, scribes, readers and prompts as necessary.
 - accommodation in small or separate rooms. For example:
 - students with diabetes will require a separate room so that they can test bloods and take any remedial action needed. They should be supervised with staff who are trained.
 - students with physical conditions may need a separate room so they can stand and stretch and keep themselves physically comfortable.
 - students with conditions such as Tourette's or tics may need a separate room so that they are able to concentrate on their exam and are not worried about distracting others.
 - very anxious students may need to be in a small or separate room and be supervised by a familiar adult, so that they feel safe and can perform at their best.

Role and expectations of the local authority

The SEND Quality and Inclusion Manager will:

- ensure the environment is accessible to the student.
- ensure that the school has an evacuation plan for students with medical needs.

Resources for learning for children and young people with medical conditions

Role and expectations of the school

Schools should:

- understand that the student may not attend fully if they are unwell or have medical appointments. Schools may want to consider their attendance reward systems and ensure they are not discriminatory against those learners with medical conditions.
- ensure that resources for missed work are provided.
- provide additional support to help students to catch up.
- fully explore all uses of ICT to keep a pupil fully in contact with school during absence.
- make a Virtual Learning Environment so that students can access resources when not in school.
- provide remote teaching if the student is well enough to access lessons from home.
- plan for effective use of low-tech, mid-tech and high-tech assistive technology, if a child's physical ability is permanently or temporarily affected by their medical condition, for example:
 - Low-Tech: adapted pencil (weighted, fat, slim, triangular etc), pencil grip, tactile ruler, adapted scissors, adapted cutlery, visual schedules, etc.
 - Mid-Tech: adapted keyboard, adapted mouse, word prediction software, screen magnifier etc.
 - High-Tech: laptop, electronic tablet, text to speech / speech to text, AAC device, alerting device etc.

A referral to a Leicester City Assistive Technology Centre can be made by the school to have a child assessed by a specialist Assistive Technology Teacher.

Role and expectations of the local authority

The SEND Quality and Inclusion Manager will:

- liaise with Assistive Technology Assessment Centre around assistive technology assessment referrals.

Guidance documents

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(Department for Education, December 2015\)](#)

[The Equality Act 2010 and schools - Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities](#)

[Children and Families Act 2014 Public Health England: The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment; a briefing for head teachers, governors and staff in educational settings \(November 2014\)](#)

[Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Wellbeing and health policy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Further advice to support medical needs

[Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools Review of published policies and information Research report October 2018](#)

[Health Conditions in Schools Alliance \(medicalconditionsatschool.org.uk\)](#)

[Health & Wellbeing | Council for Disabled Children](#)