POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL AND OR HEALTH NEEDS

MISSION STATEMENT

Christ is our teacher.

At St Bernard’s we believe that all persons are created by God, unique and equal. We strive to create a caring Christian community in which we provide education based on Gospel values where all people reach their full potential. We aim to develop positive relationships with every individual and family, the parishes and the wider community.

“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full”

John 10:10

Reviewed by: E Hopper and T Howe, January 2017
Reviewed at: Student Welfare Committee Meeting, 7th February 2017
Approved at: Full Governing Body Meeting, 16th March 2017
Signed: Austin Senior, Chair of Governors
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council policy for the education of children and young people unable to attend schools and academies because of health needs

Introduction

This document sets out Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council’s policy for the education of children and young people who are unable to attend school because of health needs. The authority recognises that all children and young people are entitled to an education of high quality and is committed to ensuring that the needs of this vulnerable group of learners are met.

We recognise that there is a shared responsibility between the local authority, schools and partner agencies to successfully implement this policy. It is centred on high quality integrated service provision in order to promote better outcomes for this cohort of children and young people.

The Statutory Framework

In January 2013 the Department for Education published statutory guidance entitled ‘Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs – Statutory guidance for local authorities’. This replaces the previous guidance ‘Access to Education for Children and Young People with Medical Needs’ (2001). It provides comprehensive guidance to local authorities and related services. Roles and responsibilities, including those of the local authority and school, are outlined in detail. This policy should be read alongside this guidance and any future relevant guidance.

There is a requirement that each local authority publish a policy detailing standards, procedures and responsibilities for those pupils unable to attend school due to health or medical needs. In line with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 we have a duty to:

“make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.”

This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of the local authority, schools and the relevant alternative education service provider.

Start of provision

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that pupils with health needs are not at home or in hospital for more than 15 working days without access to education: this may be consecutive or cumulative with the same medical or health condition. Effective liaison with medical and other professionals should ensure that there is a minimum of delay in starting appropriate support.

1The term school will be used to refer to schools or academies.
Number of hours of education

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council will arrange suitable full-time\(^2\) education (or as much education as the child’s health condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education, as per statutory guidance (appendix 3).

Named officer

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that there is a named senior officer with responsibility for the provision of education for children and young people who are unable to attend school because of medical needs. In this authority the officer is Lorraine Lichfield, Strategic Lead – Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) & Exclusions.

Objectives of the appropriate provider

Educational provision for pupils, who are physically ill, injured or who have mental health problems is the responsibility of all schools and education services. Particular provision is made through the Rowan Centre in this authority.

The aim of this provision is to:

- Minimise disruption to learning
- Deliver an appropriate and personalised education and
- Successfully reintegrate pupils into mainstream provision at the earliest opportunity when they are well enough to return.

Medical Support

All referrals for Local Authority commissioned places require medical support (ie written confirmation from a consultant), except in exceptional circumstances. However, in the knowledge that medical evidence is not always readily accessible and to enable continuity of provision for the pupil, this policy has a built-in period, up to a maximum of six school weeks, for information gathering and this can be supported by a General Practitioner medical certificate or letter. This is to enable confirmation and, if necessary, reaffirmation of the validity of the medical information. **This must not preclude the referrer having sound and current information upon which to initiate the referral in the first instance.**

If supporting medical evidence is not received within 6 school weeks (and/or a statutory assessment has not been initiated) provision will either cease or schools can consider commissioning the place.

Reintegration

We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their mainstream school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream education at the earliest opportunity as soon as they are well

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\(^2\)Unless the pupil’s condition means that full-time provision would not be in his or her best interests. Full-time education” is not defined in law but it should equate to what the pupil would normally have in school – for example, for pupils in Key Stage 4 full-time education in a school would usually be 25 hours a week.
enough. Arrangements for reintegration will be discussed with school staff and each child or young person will have a personalised reintegration plan.

The Rowan Centre should also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage faced by disabled children, and plan to increase disabled children’s access to their premises and their curriculum.

**The role of the school; assessment, referral and communication**

The Rowan Centre will maintain good links with the child or young person’s home school and, through regular reviews, involve them in decisions concerning the educational programme and pupil progress. This should also include social and emotional needs, for example ensuring that learners feel fully part of their school community, are able to stay in contact with classmates, and have access to the opportunities enjoyed by their peers. In the case of pupils accessing home tuition, schools will be expected to encourage and help them maintain social contact with their peers wherever possible.

The school must be aware of its continuing role in the child or young person’s education whilst they are not attending for example, through providing relevant assessment information, supplying curriculum materials and books, liaising with The Rowan Centre staff over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate, and ensuring that there is a named teacher within school who can co-ordinate and support these links.

**All pupils will remain on roll of their home school and the prime responsibility for their education lies with that school.**

Please see Appendix 1 for an outline of Rowan’s offer and referral criteria.

**Assessment of pupils needs**

As soon as educational support via the Rowan Centre has been agreed, schools are required to provide baseline assessment information and curriculum plans to inform the planning of educational provision. This information, along with advice from relevant professionals, will ensure that the education provided is effectively matched to the child or young person’s unique needs. Once the pupil commences tuition through the Rowan Centre then the pupil will be dual registered with the home school as the ‘main’ provider, and Rowan as ‘subsidiary’.

Schools can commission places for pupils on health grounds but this will be dependent on Rowan’s capacity. If neither the Local Authority nor the school commission a place then it will be understood that the pupil is well enough to return to mainstream school and the pupil will be removed from Rowan’s roll. This would be covered through the half-termly review meetings.

Schools would retain the same responsibilities for the pupil as those with medical evidence. A pupil agreement would be required between the home school and the Rowan Centre for such pupils which will include a financial contribution from the school (as per the Academies & Schools High Needs Protocol – Feb 2014)
Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs who are on school rolls should have detailed School Support Plans which should be regularly reviewed by the school. The school’s Special Educational Needs co-ordinator should be regularly involved in the ongoing liaison between the school and the Rowan Centre and should contribute to the tuition review process.

Pupils with statements of Special Educational Need or Education, Health & Care Plans who are not on a school roll will continue to have Annual Reviews. Where pupils are on Rowan’s roll Rowan will be responsible for making the appropriate arrangements. The expectations in respect of liaison as well as contributions to review processes apply.

Monitoring pupil progress

The pupil’s objectives and plan will be prepared by the home school in partnership with The Rowan Centre. The Support Plan will be in writing and will be regularly reviewed and monitored by all parties, including the learner and their parent/carers. Reviews will take place at least half-termly and will be led/driven by the home school. Reviews will be integral to the long term planning for the educational provision for the child and the ultimate reintegration back into the home school.

Good quality provision - flexible to meet individual need

Education provided will be tailored to the learner’s individual needs and the impact of their health or medical condition on their ability to access education. Use of baseline assessment information from the home school will inform individual plans, which should be suitable and flexible enough to be appropriate to the learner’s needs. The nature of the provision should also reflect the demands of what can be a changing or fluctuating health or medical condition.

Schools are responsible for monitoring the quality of the provision for the individual learner e.g. through regular reviewing. The Rowan Centre is a registered pupil referral unit and is quality assured through the Ofsted inspection process.

Parents/carers and pupils will be consulted before teaching begins. In order to support reintegration back into school at the earliest opportunity and reduce isolation, tuition will only take place in the home as an exception and may include an element of on-line learning.

Children receiving education outside of school should do so in the most appropriate setting to their needs, usually The Rowan Centre or using libraries or other appropriate venues as a ‘halfway house’ between the school and the home.

Pupils will be taught in groups wherever possible according to their medical needs to provide a more rounded education and social experience.

Teaching at home will only be carried out if there is an agreed ‘named adult’ also in attendance.

3“suitable” means suitable to the child’s age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs that he or she may have.
The pupil’s experience will be an extension of their school experience and will seek to maintain their studies and social contacts with the school (as their medical condition allows).

Close liaison and sharing of information will be maintained by the pupil’s home school with an identified teacher from the service, and other key professionals, which will include some or all of the following: medical professionals, educational psychologists, specialist advisory teachers, Educational Welfare Officers, pupil referral units, Connexions and Integrated Youth Support Service.

**Online learning tools**

Online learning tools can be used to support the learner’s education. The learner should, where available, have access to Information and Communications Technology equipment and to the school’s intranet and internet. However, this will not be used in isolation and should complement face to face education. Where possible online links with schools will be explored to support social inclusion and maintain friendship groups.

**Areas of responsibility – a summary**

Schools will:

1. Have a policy and a named person responsible for dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of health or medical needs.
2. Have a policy that supports pupils in school with health or medical conditions (as per statutory guidance – appendix 4)
3. Notify Education Welfare Service if a pupil is likely to be away from school due to health or medical needs for longer than 15 school days.
4. Make an appropriate referral to the Rowan Centre (as per Appendix 1) in a timely manner so that the Centre can ensure that pupils with health or medical needs are not without access to education for more than 15 working days.
5. Remain responsible for:
   - Producing a medical education plan in which half-termly work programmes are available in core curriculum subjects which the pupil would normally be studying in accordance with statutory requirements
   - Half-termly reviews that will include discussion of any special arrangements required for taking external examinations
   - Setting and marking work
   - Resources
   - Examination entry fees
   - Ensuring learners are prepared for and entered for public examinations and national tests
   - Making arrangements for Standard Assessment Tests
   - Assessment of course work
   - Career guidance
   - Work experience placements (if appropriate)
   - Informing all other agencies of any alterations to the agreed programme of action
6. Provide appropriate support for reintegration at the earliest opportunity.
7. Provide work for pupils who request it who are absent from school for less than 15 days on health or medical grounds.
8. Support The Rowan Centre with appropriate Continuing Professional Development

The Rowan Centre will:

1. Support schools in producing a health or medical education plan which will include arrangements for the delivery of a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum, ongoing homework and marking.
2. Ensure clear lines of communication between all agencies and particularly ensures that parents are informed about whom to contact in respect of education provision.
3. Attend all review and reintegration meetings, submitting relevant reports as appropriate.
4. Provide Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council with relevant reports as appropriate with regard to pupil progress and achievements
5. Ensure that pupils with health or medical needs are not without access to education for more than 15 working days.
6. Ensure, as far as possible, that pupils with a prolonged or recurring illness will have access to education from day one of the absence.
7. Work with Education Welfare Service to ensure good attendance whilst receiving teaching outside of school and if necessary making the appropriate referral requesting a home visit.
8. Complete attendance records which will be sent to the pupil’s home school.
9. Ensure that the service teachers receive appropriate in service development.
10. Liaise with appropriate agencies.

Equal Opportunities

We will strive to ensure that equal opportunities are fundamental to our assessment of circumstances and to the service provided, recognising strengths and addressing areas of difficulty on an individual basis.

Appendix 1 - Rowan referral process

Appendix 2 - ‘Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs’ – statutory guidance for Local Authorities – revised May 2013

Appendix 3 - ‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions’ – statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors’ of academies in England – April 2014