



Eastnor Primary School

Children with Health Needs who cannot Attend School Policy

"Inspire and Achieve"



Let love guide your actions, thoughts and words.

Date	Review
September 2026	Updated and Approved LAB
September 2027	Date for review

1. Policy statement

Eastnor Primary School is committed to ensuring that every pupil has access to a suitable, high-quality education, including when a physical or mental health need prevents them from attending school normally. We will work in partnership with the child, parents/carers, the local authority, health professionals and other agencies so that education continues, barriers to attendance are addressed and the pupil is supported to return to school as soon as this is appropriate.

This policy applies to pupils who are unable to attend school because of health needs, including pupils whose attendance is intermittent. It should be read alongside the school's policies for attendance, safeguarding and child protection, SEND, supporting pupils with medical conditions, allergy safety and remote education.

2. Aims

- Ensure pupils with health needs continue to receive suitable education and remain connected to their school community.
- Clarify the responsibilities of the school, governing body, local authority, parents/carers and relevant professionals.
- Identify concerns early and seek appropriate support before absence becomes prolonged wherever possible.
- Support pupils' educational progress, wellbeing, safeguarding and social inclusion during periods of absence.
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are considered for disabled pupils and SEND needs are identified and supported.
- Plan carefully for reintegration and a sustainable return to school.

3. Legal framework and statutory guidance

This policy has regard to relevant legislation and Department for Education guidance, including:

- Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, under which local authorities have duties concerning suitable education for children of compulsory school age who cannot receive suitable education because of illness or other reasons.

- Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014, concerning arrangements to support pupils at school with medical conditions.
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school – statutory guidance for local authorities.
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – statutory guidance currently in force.
- Working together to improve school attendance – statutory guidance.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.
- Allergy safety in schools – statutory guidance, where relevant.

The Department for Education consulted on revised medical-conditions guidance in 2026. At the date of this policy, the existing Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions statutory guidance remains in force pending publication of revised guidance. The school will review this policy when new guidance is issued.

4. When this policy applies

A pupil may require support under this policy when a health condition means they cannot attend school, can attend only intermittently, or require a temporary adjusted programme while recovering. Health needs may be physical, mental health-related, or a combination of needs.

The school will not assume that every illness-related absence requires alternative provision. Short-term absence will normally be managed through the school's usual attendance and educational-support arrangements. Where it becomes clear that a pupil is likely to be away from school for 15 school days or more, whether consecutively or cumulatively during the school year, the school will liaise promptly with the local authority. The local authority's section 19 responsibilities cannot be delegated to the school.

5. Responsibilities of the governing body

- Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to support pupils with medical conditions and health needs.
- Ensure this policy is implemented effectively and reviewed regularly.
- Provide appropriate challenge and oversight regarding pupils whose health needs significantly affect attendance and access to education.
- Ensure relevant policies are consistent with safeguarding, equality, SEND and attendance duties.

6. Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- Ensure staff understand and implement this policy.
- Nominate an appropriate member of staff to coordinate arrangements for an individual pupil where needed.
- Ensure the school communicates promptly with parents/carers, the local authority and relevant professionals.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements remain effective during periods when a pupil is educated away from school.
- Ensure staff supporting a pupil have appropriate information and training.
- Oversee reintegration arrangements and ensure they are reviewed regularly.

7. The school's role

Where a pupil is unable to attend because of health needs, the Eastnor will, as appropriate:

- Maintain regular, supportive contact with the pupil and family without creating unreasonable pressure.
- Provide relevant information about the pupil's curriculum, attainment, SEND, medical support and educational needs to the local authority or education provider.
- Work with the local authority and any commissioned provider to support continuity of education.
- Provide suitable learning materials or remote education where this is appropriate, proportionate and agreed as part of the pupil's support arrangements.
- Ensure remote education is not treated as an automatic substitute for attendance where attendance is reasonably possible.
- Keep the pupil involved in school life where appropriate, for example through class contact, newsletters, celebrations or agreed activities.
- Consider reasonable adjustments and support which may enable attendance or increase attendance.
- Review the pupil's needs regularly and respond to changes in medical advice or circumstances.

8. Local authority responsibilities

The local authority has the statutory responsibility for arranging suitable education under section 19 where the legal threshold is met. Statutory guidance states that local authorities should arrange education as soon as it is clear that a child will be away from school for 15 school days or more during the school year, whether consecutive or cumulative.

Eastnor will cooperate fully with the local authority and provide information needed to plan appropriate education. The provision arranged should be suitable to the pupil's age, ability,

aptitude and any special educational needs, and should aim to give the pupil access to education equivalent to that available in school as far as their health allows.

9. Medical evidence and professional advice

Eastnor will listen carefully to the pupil and parents/carers and will seek appropriate professional advice where necessary. Eastnor will not create unnecessary barriers by insisting on medical evidence for every short illness. For prolonged or complex absence, information from appropriate health professionals may be needed to understand what the pupil can manage, what adjustments are appropriate and how a safe return can be achieved.

Where medical advice is unclear, delayed or professionals hold differing views, Eastnor will continue to work constructively with the family and local authority, focusing on the pupil's best interests and access to suitable education.

10. Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs)

An Individual Healthcare Plan may be appropriate where a pupil's medical condition is long term, complex, fluctuating or requires specific arrangements in school. An IHP is distinct from an education plan for absence, although the plans should work together. The pupil and parents/carers should be involved in developing and reviewing the IHP.

11. SEND, disability and EHCPs

Eastnor will consider whether a pupil's health needs amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments where required. Health needs may also interact with special educational needs.

- The SENCO will be involved where a pupil has, or may have, SEND.
- Existing SEN Support plans or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) will be considered when education is arranged.
- Where needs have changed significantly, the school will work with parents/carers and the local authority to consider whether an EHCP review or other SEND action is required.
- Absence arising from disability or health needs will be considered carefully so that pupils are not disadvantaged unlawfully.

12. Mental health needs

Mental health needs can be a legitimate reason why a pupil is unable to attend school. The school will take such needs seriously while continuing to work towards improved access to education and attendance. Support will be individualised and may involve the SENCO, school nursing, mental health services, the local authority and other relevant professionals.

Eastnor will avoid arrangements that inadvertently reinforce long-term non-attendance. Plans will be reviewed regularly, with realistic steps towards participation and attendance where clinically and educationally appropriate.

13. Attendance and absence recording

Attendance will be recorded using the statutory attendance framework and the appropriate attendance or absence code for the circumstances. Decisions about coding will be based on the facts of the case and current Department for Education attendance guidance. Staff will not use an attendance code merely because it appears more favourable to attendance figures.

Where absence is persistent or prolonged, the school will maintain close oversight and work with the local authority and family to ensure that the pupil is receiving appropriate education and support.

14. Reduced or part-time timetables

A reduced or part-time timetable will not be used as a long-term solution to absence or as an informal exclusion. Where exceptionally used as part of a time-limited support or reintegration plan, it will be agreed with parents/carers, have a clear purpose, be regularly reviewed and include an intended route towards increased attendance. Safeguarding, SEND, equality and local-authority responsibilities will be considered.

15. Remote education

Remote education may form part of an individual programme where a pupil's health prevents attendance and it is suitable for their needs. It should be flexible enough to reflect the pupil's health, treatment and capacity to learn. Eastnor will ensure that remote provision does not become a barrier to returning to face-to-face education when the pupil is able.

- Work should be appropriately pitched and manageable.
- The pupil should receive feedback and opportunities for interaction where practicable.
- Access to devices, connectivity and reasonable adjustments should be considered.
- Safeguarding expectations continue to apply to remote contact and education.

16. Safeguarding

Pupils who are absent because of health needs remain pupils of the school and continue to be covered by the school's safeguarding arrangements. Staff must remain professionally curious and should not assume that a medical explanation removes safeguarding risk.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed where absence or circumstances create safeguarding concerns.

- Eastnor will agree appropriate frequency and methods of contact with the pupil and family.
- Concerns about a child's safety or welfare will be acted upon in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE 2026.
- Where another provider educates the pupil, safeguarding responsibilities, information sharing and reporting routes will be clear.

17. Keeping in touch and belonging

Prolonged absence can lead to isolation. Subject to the pupil's wishes, health and safeguarding considerations, the school will seek to maintain the pupil's sense of belonging. This may include contact with trusted staff, class messages, invitations to suitable events, access to school resources and opportunities to maintain friendships.

18. Reintegration into school

Planning for return should begin as early as appropriate and should be led by the pupil's needs rather than an arbitrary date. A reintegration plan may include:

- A meeting with the pupil and parents/carers before return.
- A named adult or safe space.
- Reasonable adjustments to the school day, curriculum, movement around school, uniform or activities where appropriate.
- A phased increase in attendance where necessary and lawful.
- Catch-up support focused on essential learning rather than overwhelming the pupil with missed work.
- Pastoral and peer support.
- Review dates and clear arrangements for responding if the pupil's health deteriorates.

The school will recognise that recovery may not be linear. Adjustments will be reviewed and changed in response to the pupil's health and progress.

19. Parents' and carers' responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected, as far as reasonably possible, to:

- Inform the school promptly about the pupil's health needs and absence.
- Provide relevant information from health professionals where this is reasonably required for longer-term planning.
- Keep the school informed about changes in the pupil's condition, treatment or ability to access education.
- Participate in planning and review meetings.
- Support agreed educational and reintegration arrangements.

- Raise concerns promptly so that difficulties can be addressed collaboratively.

20. Pupil voice

The pupil's views will be sought and taken seriously in a way appropriate to their age, understanding and circumstances. Pupils should be involved in decisions about communication, learning, adjustments and reintegration wherever possible. Their wishes will be balanced with safeguarding responsibilities and the duty to secure suitable education.

21. Information sharing and confidentiality

Information about a pupil's health will be handled sensitively and in accordance with data-protection requirements. Relevant information will be shared with staff and professionals on a need-to-know basis where necessary to support education, health, safety or safeguarding. The school will explain information-sharing arrangements to families wherever appropriate.

22. Complaints and concerns

Parents/carers should raise concerns about the school's actions initially with the Headteacher, using the school's complaints procedure where necessary. Concerns about education that the local authority is responsible for arranging should be raised with the relevant local authority service and through the local authority's complaints procedure.

23. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher will monitor implementation of this policy and report significant issues to the governing body as appropriate. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes.

24. Key contacts

Acting Headteacher	Sarah Tart head@eastnor.hereford.sch.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sarah Tart head@eastnor.hereford.sch.uk
SENCO	Josh Marchant jmarchant@eastnor.hereford.sch.uk
Attendance lead	Sarah Tart head@eastnor.hereford.sch.uk

Specialist Community Public Health Nurse – School Nursing	Caitlin Johns caitlin.johns2@wvt.nhs.uk
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25. Reference documents

- Department for Education – Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (statutory guidance; updated 14 December 2023).
- Department for Education – Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (statutory guidance; currently in force).
- Department for Education – Working together to improve school attendance (statutory guidance; updated July 2026).
- Department for Education – Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Department for Education – SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Department for Education – Allergy safety in schools (statutory guidance, July 2026), where relevant.
- Equality Act 2010; Children and Families Act 2014; Education Act 1996.