



# Children with health needs who cannot attend school Policy

November 2020

*This Policy will be reviewed by the Community and Safeguarding Committee annually, or sooner in the event of a change in legislation.*

**Signed**

Head Teacher: Rosalind Owen

Chair of Governors: Elaine S. Bardwell

Date: 19 November 2020

## 1. Aims

St Michael's C of E Primary School aims to work in partnership with children, parents/carers, medical services, other professionals, education providers and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to ensure continuity of access to education for all children unable to attend school because of health problems. Health problems can include physical illnesses, injuries and clinically defined mental health difficulties certified by medical evidence, such as that provided by a medical consultant.

This policy reflects the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and [government guidance](#). It is also based on guidance provided by [Oxfordshire County Council](#).

This policy applies to children on roll at St Michael's C of E Primary School who:

- Have an illness which will prevent them from attending school for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year and where suitable education cannot otherwise be arranged
- Have a health need and their absence has been validated as necessary by a medical professional, either a consultant community paediatrician or specialist consultant psychiatrist from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

For children in the above categories, school will work with OCC to source alternative educational provision for the child, while they remain on roll at St Michael's, but are unable to attend school.

## 2. Oxfordshire County Council's Provision and Oversight

Oxfordshire County Council has a statutory duty to arrange suitable full-time (or part-time when appropriate for the child's needs) education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

OCC's arrangements for alternative provision for children medically unfit to attend school are made in agreement with the Oxfordshire Hospital School (OHS).

The Council's senior officer with responsibility for education provision for children with health needs is Deborah Bell, Head of Service Learner Engagement.

OCC's Exclusion and Reintegration Team monitors and provides advice on pupils receiving alternative education provision. The team works closely with colleagues within the local authority, with schools and with partner agencies to reduce the length of time that children are on reduced timetables, which may be due to their medical needs.

The In Year Fair Access Panel oversees this work and will challenge barriers that prevent access to full time education provision.

OCC's intention in providing alternative provision is that all children, regardless of circumstances or education setting, should receive a good quality education to enable them to shape their own futures. This support should meet the child's individual needs, including social and emotional needs and enable them to thrive and prosper in the education system.

Working with OCC, school will do all it can to support provision for children who are medically unfit to attend school and to ensure that:

- Pupils make good progress in their education and do not fall behind their peers, particularly in key subjects
- Disruption to learning is minimised and there is a continuity of education provision within the school curriculum
- Pupils are able to obtain qualifications as appropriate to their age and abilities
- Pupils are able to reintegrate successfully back into school and that this takes place as soon as their health permits
- Pupils feel fully part of their school community and are able to stay in contact with classmates.
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### 3. Referral Process

In line with OCC policy, St Michael's C of E Primary School will work with parents and professionals to ensure that all referrals to OCC's alternative provision are verified, in writing, by a consultant community paediatrician or specialist consultant psychiatrist from Child and Mental Health Adolescent Services (CAMHS). Referrals should indicate:

- if the child/young person is unfit for school
- for how long support might be required
- a recommendation on the number of teaching hours the young person is able to manage based on their state of health
- an outline of what medical intervention is currently in place

For pupils who have returned from hospitals or other in-patient units out of county, medical evidence will be sought from the discharging hospital medical staff.

For children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who are unable to attend school because of their medical needs, we will work with OCC's SEN Casework team to review any changing needs of the child. The EHCP will link the long-term educational needs associated with the child's medical condition to the most appropriate teaching and learning provision.

### 4. Information about [Oxfordshire Hospital School](#)

OHS provides alternative education provision across three settings:

- A children's hospital teaching setting for pupils with a range of medical or surgical conditions located at the John Radcliffe Oxford Children's Hospital (Oxford), the Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital and the Helen and Douglas House Hospice.
- A psychiatric unit for pupils with mental health conditions located at the Highfield Adolescent Unit, Warneford Hospital Oxford.
- An outreach teaching programme for pupils in the community with medical or mental health conditions. This setting also supports teaching at the Horton Hospital, Banbury

OHS aims to:

- provide continued education as normally as the child's medical condition allows
- promote self-esteem and educational achievement
- promote equal access to education for all children and young people at OHS
- work as a team with all those involved with the child
- ensure a rapid response to need.

Subject to medical advice, OHS aims to teach **children in hospital** from day 1 or as soon as the child is well enough. When a child is in hospital, effective liaison between hospital staff, OHS and St Michael's C of E Primary School will ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum, helping the child to keep up rather than having to catch up with their education. If a child has complex long-term health issues and the pattern of illness may be unpredictable, regular liaison between the school, medical professionals and OHS will enable appropriate provision to be made.

School will refer children whose diagnosed medical need requires them to stay **at home** to the Hospital School's Outreach Teaching Service. Circumstances (not exhaustive) that may trigger requests for the Outreach Teaching Service involvement or support include children and young people with the following needs:

- Those with medical needs who are or will be absent for 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative absence due to the same illness) and who are declared medically unfit, by a consultant clinician, to attend their usual place of learning in spite of support offered by an Individual Health Care Plan.
- Children who are re-integrating into school after a period of illness or injury, in accordance with the terms agreed at initial and on-going reviews

School will collate the necessary evidence for the referral to the Outreach Teaching Service, with due regard for OHS's admissions criteria.

OHS alternative teaching provision:

- Children with health needs should have provision which is equivalent to the value of education they would receive in school. If they receive one to one tuition, for example, the hours of face to face provision could be fewer as the provision is more concentrated. The education will be tailored to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any other individual need (for example, health, social and emotional needs, special educational needs or disability).
- The education provision will be full time, unless this is not in the best interests of the child.
- Children and young people who are registered at OHS remain on roll at St Michael's C of E Primary School. Although such children are taught by the OHS, at all times, they remain the responsibility St Michael's and are recorded on the school's annual census return.
- The child's progress will be reviewed at least every 8 weeks by OHS, in consultation with the parent/carer, St Michael's and other relevant services. Reviews will be made more frequently according to need. A child's educational needs and ability to access education may change depending on their health and that the programme may need to be flexible to accommodate this.

#### **5. Working in Partnership**

- St Michael's C of E Primary School will work collaboratively with the alternative provider, parents/carers, the local authority and all relevant health services to ensure the delivery of effective education for children with additional health needs.
- Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education and will be involved in planning and on-going review. In the case of a looked after child, OCC Virtual School and primary carers will fulfil this role. Children will also be involved in decisions to ensure they are engaged as much as possible in this process.
- We will work with all relevant services including Special Educational Needs (SEN), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Education Inclusion/Attendance/ Improvement Services, educational psychologists and school nurses, who all have responsibilities to work together to support children who are medically unfit to attend school.
- We will work with alternative providers to make arrangements to reintegrate children at the earliest opportunity and as soon as they are well enough. Each child will have an individually tailored reintegration plan. In line with Equalities legislation, we must consider whether we need to make any reasonable adjustments to provide suitable access for the child as part of their reintegration.
- The plans for the longer-term outcome and the next steps will be agreed at the start of the commissioned support, intervention or provision, according to the statutory guidance
- Children will be supported by both St Michael's and the alternative provision to sit statutory tests and any necessary special arrangements will be made.