



**SOUTHWICK CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

**Continuity of educational provision for children and young people with additional
health needs**

2022

1. Context and purpose

Wiltshire Council, together with all Wiltshire Schools, is committed to ensuring that children and young people with medical needs receive a good education which addresses the needs of the child or young person as a whole and maximises their learning potential.

Children and young people with additional health needs, may as a consequence of their health difficulties, have irregular attendance at school. This places them at greater risk of underachievement, social isolation and may impact upon their ability to sit public examinations. Wiltshire Council's commitment therefore extends to ensuring children and young people receive the encouragement and support they need to feel secure and confident, to enjoy their education, to make a positive contribution and to achieve their full potential.

This document aims to outline the support available within Wiltshire for children and young people with additional health needs. This includes how alternative education arrangements, if these are required, may be requested, alongside the roles and responsibilities of the local authority, schools, parents/carers and other agencies. This also includes the development of consistent practice in Wiltshire schools and the local authority (LA).

2. Roles and responsibilities of Wiltshire Council

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 sets out how local authorities should make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or elsewhere, for those children of compulsory school age who because of illness, may not receive suitable education. This duty is further explained in the following (statutory) Department for Education guidance documents:

For Local Authorities:

- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (2013)
- Alternative Provision (2013)
- Working together to improve school attendance. Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities (published May 2022; applies from September 2022)

For Schools (maintained and academies):

- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2015)
- Mental health and Behaviour in Schools (2018) – departmental advice document
- The Equality Act 2010 and schools (2014) – departmental advice document
- Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities (published May 2022; applies from September 2022)

The statutory guidance also states¹ there will be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive a suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the LA. For example where the child can still attend school with some support or where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child.

Wiltshire Council is responsible for arranging suitable full-time² education for children of compulsory school age³ who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The law does not define full-time education but children with health needs should have provision which is equivalent to the education they would receive in school. Tuition provided on a one-to-one basis is considered more concentrated in nature, and therefore the hours provided may be fewer⁴.

¹ 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' (2013).

² Unless the LA considers that a pupil's medical condition means that full-time provision would not be in their best interests.

³ Where a child or young person is ordinarily resident in Wiltshire LA area; including when they attend an out of area school.

⁴ 'Out of sight, out of sight? Ensuring children out of school get a good education' LGSCO Report (2022) and 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' (2013).

In discharging its duties under s19 of the Education Act 1996, Wiltshire Council has a Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service (MNERS) and also supports Wiltshire Secondary schools with additional funding through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). Further details of this support is given below.

Wiltshire Council also regularly monitors children and young people who may, for a numbers of reasons, be absent from school via its Children Missing Out of Education (CMOE) arrangements.

2.1 Local Authority Responsibilities:

In accordance with statutory guidance, Wiltshire Local Authority (LA) must:

- Have a designated senior officer with responsibility for access to education for children and young people with medical needs. In Wiltshire, this Officer is:
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- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their duties with regard to children with additional health needs
- Ensure that pupils with a medical condition that prevents attendance at their usual place of education, are not without access to education for more than 15 school days
- Maintain good links with all schools and promote the implementation of an Individual Health Care Plan/Personal or Medical Education Plan (MEP) for pupils who have illness/diagnosis which prompts prolonged or recurring periods of absence from school
- Ensure that children of compulsory school age are in receipt of an appropriate amount of teaching hours dependent on their medical need, and that such provision is regularly reviewed
- Respond to a school's request for assistance by considering the most appropriate educational provision and how it can be implemented by supporting the school in meeting their statutory responsibility for compulsory school aged children and young people. This may include supporting the school with regard to appropriate part-time arrangements and/or alternative provision (via use of additional SLA funding from the LA)
- Have appropriate monitoring systems in place with regard to children and young people who are absent from school and/or do not have a school place, in order to ensure such children and young people can access suitable education provision.

The expectation of Wiltshire LA is that all absence from school for medical reasons which may necessitate alternative educational provision or arrangements being requested via the LA is supported by confirmation at Consultant clinician level of the young person's condition and consequent inability to attend school due to a *medical* need. Referral to the MNERS Team is made by the pupil's enrolled school using the DART system and is subject to referral criteria. Further information is detailed in section 4.1 below.

In order to support pupils who may have difficulty in attending school, but do not meet the referral threshold for MNERS, the LA has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with secondary schools in Wiltshire. Funding from the SLA can assist pupils who may have attendance difficulties for a range of reasons, including for illness. Advice may be sought from the LA/MNERS Manager in these circumstances.

Long term absences from school attributed to stress, anxiety and school refusal or avoidance should be referred to specialist mental health agencies for assessment, thereby enabling advice to be obtained regarding appropriate educational provision and reintegration to the young person's usual place of education. Specific 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance' (EBSA) information and resources for use by schools is available from the LA's Educational Psychology Team at [Emotionally Based School Avoidance \(EBSA\) | Right Choice](#)

2.2 Pupils with SEND:

See section 4.2 below.

2.3 Education of non-compulsory school age pupils (Early Years and Post-16):

The Local Authority has responsibility for those in part-time education, but who have not yet attained the age of 5 years. This means children who are on the roll of a maintained school in a reception class. For early years children with additional health needs who are outside of this age category and attending an early years provision (nursery, pre-school or childminder), further advice is available from the Local Authority's Early Years Inclusion Advisory Team.

For young people above compulsory school age, the Local Authority will not provide educational provision. In exceptional circumstances, where pupils who would normally be in Year 12 are repeating Year 11 due to medical reasons, requests for support may be considered on an individual basis. Where young people are on the roll of a school, the Local Authority will assist the school in considering suitable support for ongoing educational (and/or employment and training skills) achievement. This may include signposting and/or referral to the Local Authority's Education, Employment and Training (EET) Service: [Young Work Wiltshire - Work Wiltshire](#). The Local Authority will not fund alternative education provision; this responsibility will sit with the school or education provider on whose roll the young person is entered.

For children and young people who are above compulsory school age and admitted as in-patients to a Hospital or Child and Adolescent in-patient Mental Health Unit, then the Local Authority may consider requests for continuing educational support from registered Hospital School services, as detailed in the "Participation of young people in education, employment or training – statutory guidance for local authorities" (2016, DfE) document.

For children and young people who are above compulsory school age and have and a statutory Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), arrangements for post-16 education and/or training will be coordinated by the SEND Service.

2.4 Education of pupils who are not on a school roll:

Wiltshire Council has responsibility for children who are not on a school roll and/or are identified as Children Missing Education (CME). Review of CME cases is undertaken by the Education Welfare Service under the LAs Children Missing Out on Education (CMOE) monitoring arrangements.

The children of parents/carers who have registered them as being electively home educated (EHE) are not regarded as CME, as their parents/carers have elected to accept responsibility for their education. Therefore, MNERS support is not available in such cases.

2.5 Pregnant pupils and young parents:

Pregnancy is not an illness and therefore schools should make any appropriate and reasonably practicable adjustments needed to assist pregnant pupils to continue to attend their usual school setting. Should the pregnant pupil however have additional health needs (which may be pregnancy related) that prevents them from attending school, then referral to MNERS may be made in the usual way, with supporting medical evidence.

Referral to the family nurse partnership scheme and grant for childcare costs (care to learn) may also be made. Following the birth, if the pupil remains of compulsory school age, then it is expected that the pupil will reintegrate back into their registered school, with appropriate support arrangements (e.g. to accommodate breastfeeding, for example). The Education Welfare Service can provide information and advice to schools, in these circumstances.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of Wiltshire schools

At all times, the pupil remains the responsibility of the school where they are on roll. In accordance with statutory and other advisory guidance, Wiltshire schools must:

- Have a policy and named person responsible for dealing with pupils unable to attend school because of their medical needs

- Keep the pupil on roll and include them in any planning
- Schools retain a full safeguarding responsibility for all pupils on their school's roll. Schools should ensure they carry out any necessary welfare checks. Schools must decide how to fulfil this responsibility, based upon their knowledge of the child and family. Further advice for Wiltshire schools on their safeguarding arrangements is available from the LA's Safeguarding Effectiveness Team: [Safeguarding Effectiveness Service Information | Right Choice \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/safeguarding-effectiveness-service-information-right-choice)
- Provide work and materials if pupils are absent for up to 15 school days
- Co-ordinate, implement and regularly review Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP) / Personal or Medical Education Plans (MEP); be active in the monitoring of pupils who may attend school for partial days; monitor the progress and reintegration into school of those who have been absent because of their medical needs, liaising with other agencies (including the LA and Education Welfare Service) as necessary
- Where appropriate, complete and register a Reduced Educational Provision (REP) Plan
- Where appropriate, consider any additional 'first line' adjustments and support to assist pupils with medical needs. This may include alternative provision and/or online learning arrangements, for example. Where schools have arranged alternative provision, the pupil's attendance and progress at the AP setting/intervention remains the responsibility of the 'home' or registered school and should be regularly reviewed
- Draw up an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) / Personal or Medical Education Plan (MEP) for any pupil with diagnosed medical conditions to be reviewed at least annually in continuing partnership with the pupil, parents and professionals (also see Section 4 below)
- Understand the school's duties under the Equalities Act with regard to reasonable adjustments for pupils who have a disability
- Ensure that pupils who have SEN but do not have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have their SEN mentioned in their IHCP or MEP
- Ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs are kept informed about school social events and can participate. Examples of these are homework clubs, study support and other activities
- Ensure that arrangements are made for pupils who are due to undertake public examinations, including entrance arrangements and any assistance requirements such as help with scribing, alternative venue and/or invigilation needs and the submission of mitigation or special consideration requirements, where appropriate
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers for example through visits, use of Information Technology and social events.

Further information for referring schools can be found in Section 8 of this document.

3.1 Ofsted:

Evaluating schools' use of alternative provision on graded inspections⁵

Inspectors will evaluate how well a school continues to take responsibility for its pupils who attend alternative or off-site provision. Inspectors need to be assured that leaders have ensured that the alternative provision is a suitable and safe placement that will meet pupils' academic/vocational/technical needs, pastoral needs and, if appropriate, SEND needs. Inspectors will speak to a selection of pupils who attend off-site provision, where possible, including potentially through video or telephone calls. Inspectors will ask the school about the registration status of any alternative providers that they use. Any provider of alternative provision must be registered as an independent school if it caters full time for 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one pupil who is looked after or has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. If a school uses alternative provision that should be registered but is not, inspectors will carefully consider whether this affects the likelihood that pupils are safeguarded effectively. Inspectors will consider the quality of registered alternative provision using our latest inspection report and assess its impact on the overall quality of education for pupils in a proportionate way.

Inspectors will consider:

- the reasons why leaders considered off-site provision to be the best option for the pupils concerned, and whether leaders have kept that under review
- whether leaders have made the appropriate checks on the registration status of the provision and how that has influenced their decision to use that provider

⁵ Ofsted: Guidance – School Inspection Handbook (updated 11 July 2022)

- what safeguarding checks leaders have made and continue to make to ensure that the provision is a safe place for their pupils to attend
- the extent to which leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a well-planned and sequenced, well-taught, broad and balanced curriculum
- the attendance and behaviour of the pupils who attend the provision
- how well the provision promotes pupils' personal development

4. Local Authority Services in Wiltshire

4.1 Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service (MNERS)

Who is eligible?

MNERS can assist children and young people of compulsory school age where there is a diagnosed medical illness or health need, which prevents the pupil attending their usual place of school. Educational support will be dependent upon the individual needs of the young person and informed by advice from treating medical professional/s. MNERS in Wiltshire does not accept referrals for children and young people who are electively home educated (EHE) or attending school on a part-time timetable. For children and young people with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), any bespoke education provision needs will be managed by the SEND Team. Further general service information about MNERS is available on the Right Choice website: [Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service | Right Choice](#)

Supporting medical information:

Up to date written medical evidence (from a Consultant level clinician) is required for referral to this service and should be provided by the school; in conjunction with the consent of parents/carers with parental responsibility. Medical evidence should detail the diagnosis, treatment plan, expected period that a young person cannot attend the usual school setting and the support required to enable them to reintegrate back into their school. For pupils diagnosed with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), medical evidence should, where possible, specify the recovery programme the pupil is following. This may include, for example, periods of school attendance, periods of rest and periods of activity that may be completed at home or in school. Please note that MNERS requests updated medical information every 6 months.

Referral information:

Where schools (in Wiltshire) consider they are unable to manage an Individual Health Care Plan / Personal or Medical Education Plan and 1st line interventions (including for example alternative provision options using additional LA SLA funding for schools) have not been successful, a referral using the DART (Diagnostic Assessment and Referral Tool) system may be made. For non-Wiltshire Schools or external agencies, a 'MNERS Referral Form for Out of Area Schools' is available. The referral will require a detailed account of how the young person has been supported to date and provide an indication of why additional support is required. It is expected that all students referred to MNERS will have an existing support plan in place at school (e.g. My Support Plan, Early Support Assessment, IHCP or MEP) and schools are also asked to complete and submit a MNERS 'pre-referral checklist'.

To avoid delays; Consultant level medical evidence must be included with the DART/SARF to support the referral being made. Medical evidence will continually be reviewed with the expectation that medical advice is updated within each 6-month period. This assists the service to make ongoing decisions about education provision and/or reintegration planning. Should medical evidence no longer be available, or recommends a return to school, then MNERS input will cease.

Continuance of provision:

Where a referral to MNERS is accepted, the education arrangements will be dependent upon the particular needs of the young person and subject to ongoing review (usually at ½ termly intervals). This will routinely incorporate consideration of return to school or a phased reintegration into school.

Where a DART referral is declined or is unsuitable, advice and information will be provided to the referrer. Cases may also be referred by the MNERS Manager for further consideration and review via the LA's CMOE monitoring arrangements.

4.2 Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Support teams

Specialist Advisory Teachers can provide information, guidance and advice to Wiltshire schools for children and young people with complex medical needs (and/or physical, visual and hearing impairments and SEN). Advice can be provided to assist schools to adapt their practices and/or make reasonable adjustments to accommodate individual medical needs in school. Advice can be sought regarding reintegration back into school, liaising with health professionals, and advise on appropriate resources to enable access to the curriculum and school environment which can contribute to the production and review of IHCPs or MEPs. Information regarding Inclusion Support and other LA Services in Wiltshire is available on the Right Choice and Wiltshire Local Offer websites: [Wiltshire Local Offer](#) and [Services | Right Choice \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](#)

For some pupils with degenerative or progressive medical conditions their progress may not reflect that of their peer group. In such cases consideration of formal request to the LA for a statutory assessment of Education, Health and Care Needs (EHCNA) to determine appropriate provision, may be required. Further information is available on the [Wiltshire Local Offer](#) website.

A medical diagnosis does not imply that a pupil has SEN. For those whose progress is significantly affected guidance is available in the SEN Code of Practice www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Where a pupil has a life limiting or terminal illness, Wiltshire Council will work supportively with parents/carers and medical staff to provide education where it is deemed appropriate to do so. If the pupil and parents/carers wish to withdraw from education, and this is supported by medical advice, such wishes will be respected.

4.3 Traveller Education and Ethnic Minority Achievement Service

The Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) can provide expert advice and support to schools and other professionals where there may be specific cultural issues in relation to illness or medical needs.

4.4 Education Welfare Service

Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) can offer guidance and support to school staff on the procedures and requirements for continuity of education in respect of children with medical needs.

EWOs will conduct routine inspections of registers in schools and will identify pupils who may have recurrent patterns of absence due to illness and who may require additional support. In such cases, a referral may be made to the LAs CMOE monitoring group for further consideration and review. EWOs may also advise schools to carry out an assessment of identified pupils using the Early Help Support Assessment (ESA).

5. Health Services

Health professionals are essential in providing advice and support to parents/carers and education professionals in matters of medical absence from school. Such advice may include predicted length of absence from an educational setting, appropriateness of educational provision and specialist information relating to the management of specific conditions.

School nurses are instrumental in developing and reviewing IHCPs and MEPs and monitoring the reintegration of pupils back into school settings. Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists can advise on the development of physical skills following surgery or during rehabilitation. For children and young people with chronic or recurrent

conditions that may be managed within their usual place of education, specialist nurses and school nurses can assist schools in drawing up Individual Health Care Plans (IHCPs); which could include information on the general management of the condition and the administration of medication. Specific guidance for schools on the writing of effective IHCPs is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

6. Parents, Carers and Young People

Wiltshire LA will, as far as is reasonably practicable and following the advice of the medical practitioner involved, take account of the wishes and views of parents, carers and young people in the planning of educational provision where attendance at the young person's usual place of education is not possible because of medical need.

In cases where it is necessary to implement an IHCP or MEP, there is a section included which considers the views of the young person and their parent/carers. It is anticipated that parents/carers and young people will be actively involved in drawing up such support plans, including at review.

7. Hospital in-patients

Children and young people who are in-patients on Sarum Ward at Salisbury District Hospital (Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust) may receive education support provision either at the bedside or by accessing the Hospital Classroom Unit (dependent on COVID-19 restrictions) on site, as provided by Wiltshire's MNERS Team.

Children and young people who are being treated in hospitals outside of Wiltshire LA may receive education from Hospital Schools or Ward Teaching Units at their place of treatment. On occasions, the NHS may place children and young people in privately funded hospitals, for example for the treatment of some mental health conditions. These pupils remain the responsibility of Wiltshire Council. In such circumstances, it is expected that the hospital school within the privately funded organisation provides the LA with details of the pupil's hospital admission, timetable and attendance records with regard to payment of any consequent education provision fees. For such pupils with an EHCP, oversight of any education arrangements will be coordinated by the SEND Service. (See also information in section 2.3 regarding pupils in hospitals who are above compulsory school age).

8. Additional information

8.1 This policy is informed⁶ by and should be read in conjunction with the following legislation, statutory guidance and advice:

- Education Act 1996 Section 7 and Section 19
- Children Act 2004 Section 10
- Equality Act 2010
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs – a statutory guidance document for Local Authorities, January 2013
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, 2014 (updated December 2015) and Supporting pupils with medical conditions – templates (May 2014)
- Mental health and behaviour in schools (non-statutory, departmental advice from the Department for Education, November 2018)
- Participation of young people in education, employment or training – statutory guidance for local authorities, September 2016
- Alternative Provision - statutory guidance for local authorities, January 2013
- The Equality Act 2010 and schools – departmental advice for schools leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities, May 2014

⁶ Acknowledgement: Norfolk County Council.

- SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years
- Out of school, out of sight? Ensuring children out of school get a good education - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Report, July 2022.

8.2 Information for referring schools:

- Department for Education: Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, December 2015 and Templates (for use by schools), May 2014: [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- Equality Act 2010: [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#)
- SEND Code of Practice: [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)
- General service and referral information for MNERS: [Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service | Right Choice](#)
- Wiltshire Local Offer: [Wiltshire Local Offer](#)
- Education Welfare Service: [Education Welfare Service Information | Right Choice](#)
- For guidance on attendance and absence coding see: Department for Education - Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities (2022) [Working together to improve school attendance](#)
- Ofsted: Guidance – School Inspection Framework www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook#evaluating-leadership-and-management
- Education Employment and Training Service: [Young Work Wiltshire - Work Wiltshire](#)
- Educational Psychology Team and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) information: [Emotionally Based School Avoidance \(EBSA\) | Right Choice](#)
- Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service: [Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service Information | Right Choice](#)
- Family Nurse Partnership: [Family Nurse Partnership \(FNP\) - Wiltshire Children's Services](#)
- Care to Learn (help with childcare costs whilst studying at schools and colleges): [Care to Learn](#)
- Wiltshire Schools Nursing Service: [School Nursing - Wiltshire Children's Services](#)

The following MNERS guidance documents and template for schools are available on the MNERS Right Choice Service page:

- MNERS Pre-referral checklist for schools
- MNERS Referral Pathway
- Medical Education Plan (MEP) meeting template for schools
- MNERS Referral Form for Out of Area schools
- MNERS Offer 2022-23
- MNERS Service Information document for referring schools.

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