



Essex County Council

Education

Education Access Team

**Advice for parents/carers of children
unable to attend school due to health
needs**

Statutory Duty

The Local Authority (LA) has a statutory duty to provide education other than at school for pupils unable to attend school due to health needs. Statutory guidance was issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in January 2013: 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'. The responsibilities and duties of LAs are set out in that document and are not, therefore, repeated here.

Julie Keating Education Access Manager is the named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs in Essex.

The referral process

Parents/carers should discuss any difficulties their child is having in attending school with appropriate staff at the School.

Schools should make appropriate referrals to the Education Access Team for pupils unable to attend school due to health reasons where it is clear that the pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. In these circumstances parents/carers must arrange for the school to receive appropriate medical evidence; wherever possible using the form supplied by the school, which confirms why the pupil is unable to attend school and states how long this is likely to be the case. If the pupil is under a Consultant then the medical evidence should be provided by the Consultant rather than the local GP. The medical evidence should also confirm how much 1:1 tuition or group tuition the pupil is well enough to receive. Failure to provide the appropriate evidence could delay the referral process and the consideration of support.

Pupils with ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

For pupils diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue/ME the Consultant's letter should specify the programme the pupil should be following. This may include, for example, periods of school attendance, periods of rest, and periods of 1:1 tuition at home.

Pupils with mental health issues

For pupils with mental health issues there is an expectation that evidence is provided by the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS). For pupils who are receiving support through other Counselling Services, evidence should be supplied from the relevant organisation.

Pupils who are pregnant

It is an expectation that pupils who are pregnant will continue to be educated at school whilst it is reasonably practical and it is in the interests of the pupil. Each case will be considered on an individual basis, but in accordance with current policy, support will generally be provided for six weeks prior to, and six weeks following, the birth of the baby. However, where there are extenuating circumstances, supported by appropriate evidence, it is possible to consider support outside the normal

timeframe. The pupil will remain on roll of the School. If the pupil has not reached statutory school leaving age, it is expected that she will reintegrate into school. Evidence needs to be provided to the School to confirm when the baby is expected so that an appropriate referral can be made to the Education Access Team.

Decisions

Once the Referral Form and evidence has been considered and a decision about the referral has been made, The Education Access team will notify the School accordingly. The School should liaise with the parents and pupil. In some circumstances it will be necessary to convene a school based meeting. Parents and pupils will normally be invited to attend these meetings.

Ensuring children have a good education

Where support is agreed, teachers from the identified provider will educate pupils in alternative suitable venues, or, where appropriate, in the pupil's home. Before it is agreed that teaching can take place in the home, it will be necessary to carry out appropriate risk assessments. Where a pupil is taught at home there must be a responsible adult in the house.

Close liaison with the pupil's school is essential and pupils should be kept informed about school activities and events. The pupil will remain on the School roll and the School will be expected to arrange review meetings (normally every 6 weeks). Up to date medical evidence will be required. It is important to link with other agencies in order to support the pupil's educational opportunities.

Where support is agreed, there is an expectation that all parties will engage with and contribute to the agreed plan.

The School's role is to:

- host and chair regular review meetings (normally every 6 weeks); produce action plans and distribute notes of these meetings;
- provide materials for an appropriate programme of work and work plans;
- maintain a plan, such as an Individual Education Plan, which records progress made towards a return to school;
- ensure all staff are kept informed;
- ensure appropriate arrangements, including entry and invigilation are made for all examinations;
- provide the pupil's academic attainment levels including any relevant examination requirements;
- make arrangements for SATs;
- assess coursework;
- facilitate career interviews;
- arrange work experience placements;
- provide a named teacher with whom each party can liaise (usually the SENCO);
- provide a suitable working area within the School, where necessary;

- be active in the monitoring of progress and the reintegration into school, using key staff to facilitate the reintegration into school;
- ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school, are kept informed about school social events, are able to participate, for example, in homework clubs, study support and other activities;
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers, for example, through visits and videos.

The pupil's role is to:

- engage with the provider;
- be prepared to communicate their views;
- engage with other agencies as appropriate;
- Prepare for reintegration as soon as possible.

The parents' role is to:

- commit to a plan of reintegration;
- be willing to work together with all concerned;
- provide early communication if a problem arises or help is needed;
- attend necessary meetings;
- Reinforce with their child, the value of a return to school.

The provider's role is to:

- liaise with the named person in school;
- liaise, where appropriate, with outside agencies;
- be sensitive to the needs of the child and family;
- provide a flexible teaching programme;
- provide regular reports on the pupil's progress and achievements;
- provide an opportunity for the pupil to comment on their report;
- ensure appropriate course work and any other relevant material is returned to school;
- attend review meetings;
- Help set up an appropriate reintegration programme at the earliest opportunity as soon as the pupil is ready to return to school.

Health Service's role is to:

- Offer medical treatment and advice where appropriate.

Other involved agencies, for example Social Services, Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service's (EWMHS) roles are to:

- work, with others, for the benefit of the pupil;
- attend review meetings if possible;
- provide written reports where necessary;
- Give appropriate advice and support.

Withdrawal of the programme

On occasions, the alternative education programme commissioned, may be withdrawn if the pupil fails to be available on a regular basis without appropriate medical evidence.

Pupils who are not of compulsory school age

The LA will not normally be able to provide support for pupils who are under or over compulsory school age. However, where pupils who would normally be in Year 12 are repeating Year 11, due to medical reasons, requests for support can be considered on an individual basis.

September 2018