



Students with Health-care Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy 2025

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT:

Purpose:

Isebrook School is committed to creating a psychologically safe and Trauma Informed environment where all students on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs receive a suitable education that enables them to continue their educational progress, maintain their connection with the school community, and feel valued, understood and supported throughout their absence.

We recognise that health-related absence can be a traumatic experience for students and their families. This policy is underpinned by trauma-informed principles that acknowledge the impact of adverse experiences on learning, behaviour and wellbeing.

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Committee: Local Governing Body	Date agreed by Governors: Nov 2025
Review Cycle: Annually	Review Date: Nov 2026

Wellbeing in our Trust

Managing changing circumstances by its very nature, can be challenging and so this document aims to set out procedures to be followed to minimise what can be a difficult process.

We can all be affected by poor physical and mental health at times during our lives and it is important the appropriate support is available in a timely manner.

Health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility and we encourage an open and honest culture whereby anyone can discuss any issues they may have.

The Trustees of Creating Tomorrow take the health and wellbeing of all employees seriously and are committed to supporting our staff. The Trustees ensure that support for staff is available through:

- Effective line management
- Commitment to ensuring an appropriate and balanced workload
- Supportive and professional working environments
- Employee Assistance Programme telephone number 08000 056148 or website www.educationsupport.info
- and Wellbeing Policy easily accessible to families.
- Share ideas about how families can support positive mental health in their children, for example links through our website, outside speakers, access to our specialists
- Keep families informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in RSE and Preparation For Adulthood Lessons and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

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1. Our Trauma-Informed Approach

At Isebrook School, we understand that:

- Early Childhood Trauma (ECT), Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and Trauma-inducing Life Events have an impact on a student's presentation
- Health-related absence can trigger feelings of anxiety, fear, isolation and loss of control
- Students may be in a state of hypervigilance and not feel safe enough to learn
- Trauma doesn't manifest in all students equally
- The student's family may also be experiencing trauma
- Adults within the school may be impacted by their own experiences

We are committed to creating a safe environment for students and families, avoiding re-traumatisation, and building relationships based on trust, empathy and understanding.

Understanding Mental Health

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation and constitute a need whereby a student may be too unwell to come to school.

We understand that:

- Mental health and physical health are interconnected
- Health-related absence can impact mental health
- Mental health needs may be the reason for absence
- Students may experience anxiety, depression, trauma responses or other difficulties
- We understand these are not choices
- Recovery is not linear
- Students need compassion, not judgement and may require differing means of support.

Our Approach

Isebrook School will:

- Endeavor to identify possible mental health problems through observation and data, including routes to escalation and/or referral to Mental Health Professionals where appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with mental health services and professionals
- Provide appropriate pastoral support to support students to manage difficult situations
- Support students to recognise emotions, stresses and mental health through the Preparation for Adulthood Curriculum.
- Provide strategies and/or tools for emotional and sensory regulation
- Consider the impact of prolonged absence on a student's mental wellbeing
- Support gradual reintegration with mental health considerations
- Avoid negative language around mental health
- Celebrate resilience and coping strategies

2. Scope:

This policy applies to all students on the school roll who are unable to attend school due to:

- Physical health conditions
- Mental health needs
- Medical treatment or recovery periods
- Chronic or long-term illnesses

- This policy does not apply to students who are absent due to minor, short-term illnesses.

3. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for students on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs
- Students, staff and parents understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority

4. Legislation and guidance

This Policy reflects and meets the requirements of:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- The Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance
- Section 19 of the Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions (DfE statutory guidance)
- Guidance provided by Northamptonshire County Council, entitled Ensuring a Good Education for Children who Cannot Attend School Because of Health Care Needs ([March 2019](#))

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

5. The responsibilities of Isebrook School

All schools within Creating Tomorrow academies Trust take their responsibilities towards their students seriously and follow the good practice derived from 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot school because of health needs' ([DfE 2013](#))

The Headteacher will:

- Champion trauma-informed practice throughout the school
- Ensure this policy is implemented with compassion and consistency
- Be curious about the provision for students who cannot attend due to health needs
- Be informed of decisions made by the Local Authority regarding any education provision
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are in place
- Monitor the progress and wellbeing of affected students
- Ensure staff receive trauma-informed training
- Model empathetic, non-judgemental communication with students and families

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)/ Senior Welfare Manager will:

- Provide support to staff in their safeguarding duties and liaise closely with other services
- Maintain regular, supportive contact with students and families
- Recognise that health-related absence may be both a symptom and a cause
- Ensure child protection files are transferred appropriately if the student moves to another School or EOTAS, or full time Alternative Provision.
- Work with staff to understand the underlying needs behind concerning absences or behaviours

The SEND & Inclusion Lead/ (SENDCO) will:

- Be engaged in supporting students healthcare needs and is a DSL
- Consider whether extra pastoral support, intervention or Alternative Provision is required
- Liaise with healthcare professionals using a collaborative approach
- Source , Cost and Coordinate additional support with sensitivity to the student's needs
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are trauma-informed
- Liaise with the Local Authority regarding the suitability, longevity and costings of Off Site Provision.

Class Teachers will:

- Act as an emotionally available adult for students
- Use PACE principles (Playful, Accepting, Curious, Empathetic) in all interactions
- Provide work that is appropriate, achievable and not overwhelming
- Celebrate small successes and progress
- Support any student reintegration with patience and understanding
- Report concerns with compassion and without judgement
- Understand that behaviour is communication

All Staff will:

- Create safety cues through facial expressions, body language and tone of voice
- Avoid commands where possible, using collaborative language instead
- Ask "what happened?" rather than "why did you do that?"
- Recognise signs of distress (externalised and internalised)
- Understand that challenging behaviour may be a trauma response
- Practice mentalising - taking time to understand what might be happening for the student
- Record safeguarding concerns while being mindful of language used

Parents/Carers will:

- Be treated as partners and experts in their student's needs
- Be communicated with clearly, honestly and compassionately
- Inform the school promptly when their student is unable to attend due to a health need
- Provide medical evidence where appropriate
- Work in partnership with the school and healthcare professionals
- Keep the school informed of changes in condition or diagnosis.
- Support education at home where possible.
- Ensure students attend any agreed Off School Site or Alternative Provision where provided.

Students will:

- Be listened to and have their voice valued
- Where appropriate, be given choices about their education and support
- Be supported to understand their feelings and needs
- Engage with the Off Site/Alternative Provision education provided for them.
- Participate in reintegration planning when appropriate
- Not be blamed or shamed for their absence or any difficulties they experience

6. School Agreed arrangements

Initially, Isebrook school will attempt to plan a suitable education provision for students with health needs who cannot attend school.

The SEND & Inclusion Lead will liaise with Parents, The Special School Nursing Team, the Outcome Lead and the Local Authority to implement any Off School Site Provision if appropriate or required.

Families have a key role to play in the education of their child and can provide key information to ensure any provision is successful. As soon as there is a concern that education is / may be disrupted, a meeting will be convened so that support, arrangements and an appropriate way forward can be planned to ensure the student is supported.

In the case of Children In Care, the Social Worker and/or primary care givers will fulfil this role. Students will be involved in the decision-making process, appropriate to circumstance, age and maturity.

Where the need for Off Site education is short term, Isebrook School will liaise with families to plan the return to school which, for example, may include a phased return to build stamina for the school day. For more long term arrangements, Isebrook School will arrange an Interim Annual Review to inform the Local Authority and seek guidance on long term plans and funding for the provision.

7. Local Authority Arrangements

If Isebrook School are unable to make suitable arrangements, North Northamptonshire Council as Local Authority will become responsible for arranging suitable education via Education Other Than At School (EOTAS).

Responsibility for the education provision for children with additional health needs that cannot be met in school setting has been delegated to the Hospital and Outreach Education (HOE).

Decisions will be made on how best to support the student, this could be via HOE or NNC may request that provision is sourced by the school with additional funding. Alternatively, NNC may elect to wholly manage the EOTAS Provision.

Where Hospital Outreach is deemed appropriate, HOE may provide appropriate education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more or is too unwell to access education at school. The 15 days can be consecutive or cumulative within a 12 month period

HOE will retain good links with schools and ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities so that children can be reintegrated back into school as quickly and smoothly as possible. Schools will be expected to maintain contact with the student and the families through Safeguarding checks, continued access to Class DoJo and Arbor and where appropriate messages or Teams Calls with their class.

In cases where NNC makes arrangements, the school will:

- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the student
- Share information with NNC and relevant health services as required
- Ensure that the provision offered is as effective as possible

8. Reintegration

At Isebrook School, we understand reintegration is a Transition. We recognise that returning to school after health-related absence can be:

- Exciting but also anxiety-provoking
- A significant transition that requires support
- Different for each student
- A gradual process, not a single event

Where reintegration is appropriate and anticipated, Isebrook School will:

- Plan for consistent provision, allowing the pupil to access learning with links to their EHCP Outcomes.
- Enable the student to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school)
- Create an individually tailored reintegration transition timetable
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made upon the student's return and provide appropriate Risk Assessments.

9.Policy Review Arrangements

This policy will be update by Lynn Johnston (SEND & Inclusion Lead) annually and reviewed by Tracy Latham (Headteacher) At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

10.Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Wellbeing Policy
- Relationships Policy
- Alternative Provision Policy
- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions Policy
- Attendance

