



BITTERLEY C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love" (1 Corinthians 16:13-14)

Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

Approved by:	Strategic Task Group (DHMAT)
Last reviewed on:	October 2026
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Policy owner:	Mrs Charlie West, Headteacher

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs
- Pupils, staff and parents/carers understand what our school is responsible for when education is being provided by the local authority (LA)

At Bitterley CofE Primary School, we recognise that some children may be unable to attend school due to short-term or long-term health needs. We are committed to ensuring that these children continue to receive a high-quality education and maintain their connection with our school community.

As a Church of England school, we are guided by our Christian values of compassion, respect, and inclusion. We will work with families, health professionals, and Shropshire Council to ensure every child receives the support they need to continue their learning journey.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the following legislation:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

It is also based on the following statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [Alternative provision](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#)

This policy also follows guidance provided by **Shropshire Council**. Information about Shropshire's approach to supporting children with health needs who cannot attend school can be found on the [Shropshire Council website](#) or by contacting Shropshire's Inclusion and SEND team.

As a Church of England academy within the Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust (DHMAT), this policy complies with our funding agreement, articles of association, and the trust's policies and procedures.

3. Responsibilities of the school

At Bitterley CofE Primary School, we work closely with Shropshire Council to ensure that children with health needs receive appropriate educational provision. We follow Shropshire's procedures for supporting children who cannot attend school due to health needs.

Our approach is always to:

- Keep the child connected to our school community wherever possible
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and health professionals
- Provide education that is as close as possible to what the child would receive in school
- Plan carefully for the child's return to school

Where possible, we will manage the child's health needs so that they can continue to be educated at Bitterley CofE Primary School with appropriate support, without the need for intervention from Shropshire Council.

3.1 If our school makes the arrangements

Initially, Bitterley CofE Primary School will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

Who is responsible:

- The Headteacher, Mrs Charlie West, has overall responsibility for ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place
- The SENDCo, Mrs Stephanie Reid, will coordinate provision and liaise with parents/carers, health professionals, and external agencies
- The child's class teacher will be responsible for preparing and delivering work, maintaining contact with the child, and planning for reintegration

What arrangements we might make:

For **short-term absences** (less than 15 days):

- Sending work home that matches the curriculum being taught in class
- Providing access to digital learning platforms (where appropriate and available)
- Regular contact from the class teacher via phone, email, or video calls
- Sharing class newsletters and updates to help the child stay connected
- Where appropriate, arranging for the child to attend school for part of the day or week

For **longer-term absences** or **complex health needs**:

- Working with parents/carers and health professionals to develop an individual education plan
- Arranging home tuition (if appropriate and resources allow)
- Liaising with hospital schools or medical education services
- Providing differentiated work that takes account of the child's health needs and energy levels
- Regular reviews of the provision to ensure it continues to meet the child's needs

Consulting with parents/carers and pupils:

- We will meet with parents/carers as soon as we become aware of a health need that may affect attendance
- We will discuss the child's needs, preferences, and what support would be most helpful

- We will involve the child (where age-appropriate) in decisions about their education
- We will agree how often we will review the arrangements and how we will communicate

Reintegration:

- We will plan carefully for the child's return to school, taking account of any ongoing health needs
- We will create an individual reintegration plan that may include:
 - A phased return (e.g. starting with mornings only, or specific days)
 - Additional support to help the child catch up on missed learning
 - Adjustments to the timetable or curriculum
 - A designated member of staff to check in with the child regularly
 - Support for emotional wellbeing and rebuilding friendships
- We will work with parents/carers and health professionals to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible
- We will monitor the child's progress and wellbeing closely during the reintegration period

3.2 If the local authority makes the arrangements

If our school cannot make suitable arrangements, or if it is clear that a child will be away from school for 15 days (consecutive or over the course of the year) or more because of their health needs, **Shropshire Council** will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.

When the local authority arranges alternative education, the education should begin as soon as possible, and at the latest by the 6th day of the child's absence from school.

Where full-time education is not in the child's best interest for reasons relating to their physical or mental health, the local authority must arrange part-time education on whatever basis it considers to be in the child's best interests.

When Shropshire Council takes over responsibility:

We will refer a child to Shropshire Council when:

- The child has been absent for 15 days or more (or is expected to be) due to health needs
- We cannot make suitable arrangements ourselves due to the complexity or duration of the health need
- Medical advice indicates that the child will not be able to attend school for an extended period
- Parents/carers request support from the local authority

The referral process:

1. The Headteacher or SENDCo will contact Shropshire Council's Inclusion and SEND team to discuss the child's needs
2. We will complete Shropshire's referral form (if required) and provide relevant information including:
 - Details of the child's health needs and medical evidence
 - Information about the child's educational needs and current attainment
 - Details of any SEND or additional needs
 - Information about what provision we have already put in place
3. We will work with Shropshire Council to agree what provision is appropriate
4. We will continue to work in partnership with Shropshire Council throughout the period of alternative provision

How we decide if arrangements are 'suitable': Arrangements are considered suitable if they:

- Provide education that is appropriate to the child's age, ability, aptitude, and any SEND
- Enable the child to continue making progress in their learning
- Take account of the child's health needs and medical advice
- Support the child's emotional wellbeing and maintain their connection to school
- Are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet the child's needs

In cases where the local authority makes the arrangements, our school will:

- Provide to the local authority, at agreed intervals, the full name and address of any pupils of compulsory school age who are not attending school regularly due to their health needs
- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents/carers to ensure the best outcomes for the child
- Collaborate with the local authority to ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum, including making information available about the curriculum
- Along with the local authority, regularly review the provision offered to ensure it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education
- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required
- When a child has complex or long-term health issues, work with the local authority, parents/carers and the relevant health services to decide how best to meet the child's needs (e.g. through individual support, arranging alternative provision or by them remaining at school, being supported at home and back into school after each absence)
- Where possible, allow the child to take examinations at the same time as their peers, and work with the local authority to support this
- Help make sure that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully
- When reintegration is anticipated, work with the local authority to:
 - Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the child to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible, including through digital resources
 - Enable the child to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, digital learning platforms, social media platforms, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school), and, where appropriate, through educational visits
 - Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school, which includes extra support to fill any gaps arising from the absence
 - Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made

4. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by **Mrs Charlie West, Headteacher**, in consultation with **Mrs Stephanie Reid, SENDCo**.

At every review, it will be approved by the **Strategic Task Group (DHMAT)**.

The policy will also be reviewed if:

- There are changes to relevant legislation or DfE guidance
- Shropshire Council updates its procedures
- There are significant changes to our school's circumstances or provision

5. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **SEND Policy and Information Report**
- **Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy** (to be updated in line with new DfE statutory guidance expected 2026/27)
- **Allergy Safety Policy** (September 2026, in line with Benedict's Law)
- **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**
- **Accessibility Plan**
- **Equality Policy**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Online Safety Policy** (relevant for remote learning provision)

All policies are available on our school website or from the school office.