

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SKILLS

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Please ask for: Bev Petch

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Date: 7th February 2019

Dear Colleagues

New medical pathway for pupils with significant health needs who temporarily cannot attend their home school

Solihull is committed to meeting the needs of children with significant health needs where their needs cannot be met for a period of time in their home school. It is important to note that there is a presumption that most health needs will be met by the home school with appropriate adjustments. Moving a child to another provision, albeit on a temporary basis, requires measured decision-making by the home school in partnership with the child's family and with health clinicians. School is often a protective factor for a child, providing continuity - including continuity of established relationships. The statutory DfE's guidance 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' states that:

'There will be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the LA – for example, where the child can still attend school with some support; where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child; or where arrangements have been made for the child to be educated in a hospital by an on-site hospital school'.

The aforementioned statutory guidance makes it clear that the majority of pupils who experience health needs are best provided for in their home school, with appropriate adjustments. Where the health needs are so significant that education off-site is required for a period of time, this should be for the shortest appropriate time to prevent pupils losing their links with friends and to reduce the impact on their attainment and progress.

Where the pupil's health needs are significant, they may require educational provision for a period that is provided by the Local Authority under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996. Solihull Local Authority needs to ensure that there is greater equality of access and consistency across this provision. As a result, some changes to the process have taken place. This is in accordance with Solihull's new medical pathway for supporting pupils with significant health needs which has been devised with our health partners including Solar CAMHs, community paediatricians and school nursing. The process for requesting support for pupils with significant health needs and resulting absence is outlined below:

- Where the pupil's health needs are significant and they meet the admissions criteria for the service (see Service Level Agreement), a referral should be made by the home school and sent to the 'education for children with health needs' mailbox: ech@solihull.gov.uk

Referrals should be completed in full using the new referral form.

- The signature of the Headteacher is a requirement.
- The inclusion of parental details and their accompanying signature should indicate that the home school has discussed the referral and implications with the parent who has then consented to the referral being made.
- Appropriate medical evidence is required, as detailed in the attached pathway. Please note that, as per statutory guidance, medical evidence from a GP will only be considered in exceptional circumstances e.g. where there would be a considerable delay caused by waiting times to obtain specific medical evidence from an appropriate clinician. The GP would need to include full details of specialist referrals to appropriate senior clinicians that have been made;
- It is important to note that the term 'unfit for school' is an outdated and unhelpful Solihull construct. Please discourage its use. We do not expect medical evidence to include this term and we have provided guidance to this effect to our health partners;
- Regular panels for medical alternative provision, usually held weekly, will continue to assess each referral and approve where appropriate. Referrals will be assessed on a case by case basis;
- If approved, temporary provision will be made swiftly. Depending on the needs and the age of the pupil, a placement will be offered at the Triple Crown Centre (secondary only, pupil is dual rolled with home school) or the pupil will receive tuition from the Education Service for Children out of School (ESCOS, pupil remains singly registered with their home school);
- A service level agreement will be signed by the home school and the medical alternative provision. This will set out the agreed roles and responsibilities for all parties;
- The outcome of all referrals will be sent to the home school. It is the home school's responsibility to share this information with the child's family and to support the transition and access to the provision;
- The home school retains responsibility for the pupil where they have commissioned medical alternative provision. Health and education reviews should happen at least every 6 weeks, involving the referring clinician, education, the pupil and the parent or carer;
- A clear, individualised plan will be developed to support the pupil back to their home school. Successful reintegration will always be a clear aim of the provision.

Accompanying this letter, you will find all of the documents that you need: the medical pathway, the new referral form, the Service Level Agreement and a presentation that may be helpful to share with key staff. We are in the process of developing an Alternative Provision website which will, in time, contain all of the most up-to-date medical alternative provision information. The website is in its early stage of development but please do keep an eye on it:

www.solgrid.org.uk/alternativeprovision.

We aim to provide a comprehensive website that provides the key information that stakeholders need about all aspects of alternative provision.

Thank you for your continued support as we work collectively to provide appropriate education for some of the most vulnerable children in Solihull.

Yours faithfully,



Bev Petch
Head of Alternative Provision