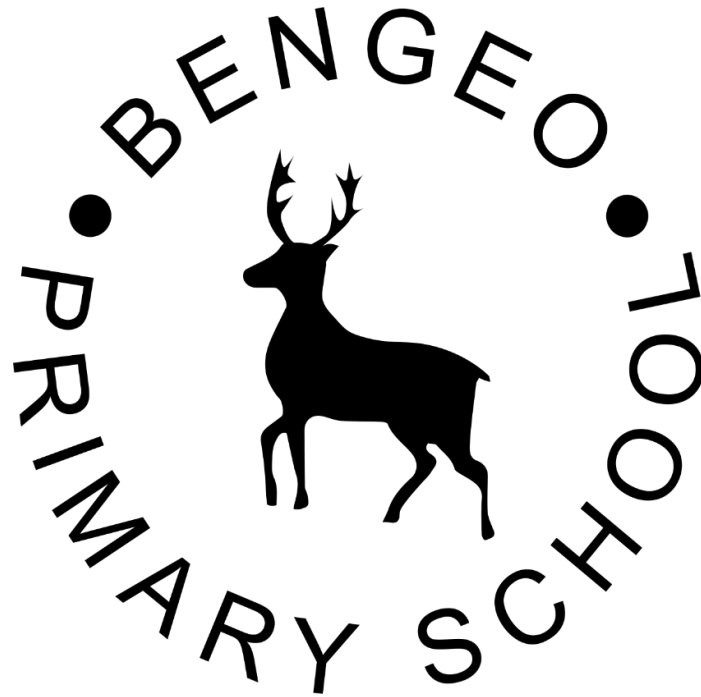


BENGEO PRIMARY SCHOOL



Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

Reviewed: SPRING 2026

Author: The Key model/Headteacher

Authorised by: The 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

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](#)
- [Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)

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

3. Responsibilities of the school

All referrals to the ESMA Teaching Service for pupils with medical absence should be completed on a Hertfordshire Service Request Form accompanied by medical evidence, parental signature and the ISL Baseline Form (found here). Send referral to the relevant ISL geographical area (see Local Offer Website). Pupil non-attendance needs to be authorised by the school in line with the health evidence and school's Attendance Policy.

Schools' checklist for referrals

- Referrals are made via the Hertfordshire Service Request form and the ISL Baseline form to the relevant ISL geographical area.
- If a pupil is attending school on a reduced timetable, the school should submit the agreed reintegration plan (HCC guidance on reduced timetables is available in the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning).
- Schools need to provide details of the support plan currently in place for the young person (Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle).
- During the first 15 working days of a pupil's absence, the responsibility to provide and mark schoolwork remains with the school.

During the period of support from ESMA, the school will continue to provide access to the full curriculum (Art, History, etc.), according to the health needs of the pupil.

- For pupils who have long term or recurrent illness, the school must provide the current treatment plan and the named medical contact.
- Referral must have signed parental consent and supporting current medical evidence from a health professional working with the young person.
- For pupils receiving additional funding (through either an EHCP or Local High Needs Funding and/or Pupil Premium Grant) the school should state in the reintegration plan how this funding is being used.
- To enable ESMA support to continue, schools are required to send termly medical updates.

3.1 If our school makes the arrangements

Initially, our school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver the same high standard of education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

- Miss R Walker, SENCo would be responsible for making and monitoring these arrangements
- The school would work in collaboration with the ESMA Teaching Service to provide support in the core subjects (English, maths and science).

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, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) 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.

The statutory guidance states that 'where a child cannot attend school because of health problems, and would not otherwise receive a suitable full-time education, the LA is responsible for arranging provision.' These regulations can be found in the government document: Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school, published by the DfE (January 2013).

The Educational Support for Medical Absence (ESMA) is an educational teaching service for children with medical needs, which sits within Access and Inclusion, part of the Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) portfolio within Children's Services. ISL is a multidisciplinary service comprising of SEND Specialist Advice and Support services, Access & Inclusion Services, Educational Psychologists and SEND statutory services. The ESMA Teaching Service complements the teaching offer by Hertfordshire schools for pupils who are temporarily unable to attend their school, due to the impact of their medical condition.

Educational tuition is provided by the ESMA Teaching Service for:

- Pupils of statutory school age (5-16), who have medical evidence that justifies their school's absence.
- Pupils who are Hertfordshire residents.

HCC responsibilities:

- to have a named officer with responsibility for the provision of education for pupils unable to attend school due to medical needs. Mrs Sue Bramley, ESMA Teaching Service Lead Teacher, is the designated officer.
- to provide educational support for pupils with documented medical needs unable to attend school for more than 15 school days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. the ESMA Teaching Service complements the educational support provided by schools, in the core subjects (English, Maths and Science) and works together with the school to ensure access to the wider curriculum.

- to provide educational support, as far as possible, from day one to pupils with a long term or recurring illness, whether at home or in hospital.
- to coproduce the education programme and Holistic Reintegration Plan working together with school, parents, pupil, health and other professionals involved with the child.
- to regularly review the education programme and reintegration plan half-termly with school, parents, pupil, health and other professionals.
- to liaise with the school to obtain termly updates of medical evidence to ensure the identified education programme best meets the pupil's needs and to continue the additional support provided by the ESMA Teaching Service.
- to provide support for pupils who are not on a school roll for reasons other than elective home education, the ESMA Teaching Service can consider support, subject to appropriate medical advice. Parents / carers will continue the process of securing a suitable placement for future reintegration.

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 the Resources Committee. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

5. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions