Charter Academy

Supporting children where a mental health issue is affecting attendance

Local Level Policy

Date effective	October 2026
Review Cycle	Annual
Review Date	October 2027
Date of Approval by Governors	13 October 2026
Committee approved by	Charter Local Governing Body
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Date	**Notes**

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1. Aims

This policy aims to outline how Charter Academy will provide support where a pupil is experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues that are affecting attendance.

This policy covers the role that Charter Academy and the Local Authority (LA) play in ensuring a child with a mental health need receives appropriate support to allow them to access a suitable, full-time education. This policy also aims to highlight the responsibility of the parents/carers in working effectively with the school and the LA to ensure that their child is receiving a suitable full-time education.

This policy aims to:

- Make clear the expectations on the school when supporting children experiencing emotional or mental health issues with attending school regularly.
- Ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what the school is responsible for, the role parents/carers play, and the LA's responsibility to intervene (where appropriate) to ensure a child with a mental health need is receiving a suitable full-time education.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the following legislation:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

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

- Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026)
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (Feb 2023)
- Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance: Effective practice examples (Feb 2023)
- Arranging Alternative Provision (Feb 2025)
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (Dec 2023)
- Keeping children safe in education (Sept 2026)
- Children missing education (Sept 2025)

It is also based on guidance provided by our local authority, and the Children Absent from Education Team (Coventry).

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

3. The responsibilities of the school

At Charter Academy, we aim to ensure that all children, regardless of circumstance or setting receive a good education to enable them to shape their own futures. A mental health difficulty does not automatically mean a pupil is unable to attend school. Wherever possible, support will focus on helping the child access education, maintain attendance and remain connected to school.

Where children are unable to attend school because of their health, the school will follow the DfE guidance, and work with Coventry local authority who have the responsibility to arrange suitable full-time education (or part-time when appropriate for the child's needs) for children who are unable to attend a mainstream school because of their health. The person responsible at Charter Academy is **Louise Stewart (Headteacher).**

If the school can't make suitable arrangements, the local authority will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children. Coventry City Council has a statutory duty under

section 19 of the Education Act 1996; the s.19(1) duty states that local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable and (normally) full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not receive suitable education without such provision.

There will however 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 local authority, 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, we would not expect the local authority to become involved in such arrangements unless it had reason to think that the education being provided to the child was not suitable or, while otherwise suitable, was not full-time or for the number of hours the child could benefit from without adversely affecting their health. This might be the case where, for example, the child can attend school but only intermittently.

Where attendance concerns are linked to anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), or other mental health difficulties, the school will work with the pupil, family and relevant professionals to identify barriers to attendance and implement a graduated support plan aimed at increasing attendance and participation over time.

3.1 If the school makes arrangements

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

This will involve:

- Initial contact being made by the pastoral team to establish the child's individual medical need and potential barriers to attending school
- Arrangements being agreed and established e.g. sending work home (including the provision of virtual learning through school's identified learning programmes), education offsite (including through hospital schools) or additional adult support within school (in line with an individual health care plan as appropriate)
- On-going discussions between families, school and health providers to monitor agreed arrangements and identify when/how pupils can be reintegrated back into school (where appropriate).
- Liaising with the SENDCo for pupils who also have Special Educational Needs (SEN).

3.2 If the local authority makes arrangements

Where a pupil has a medical condition that prevents them from attending Charter Academy for 15 days or more (consecutive or over the course of the year) because of their health needs, school can refer them to Hospital Education Service (Coventry) via the Children Absent from Education Team.

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.

In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, the 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.
- 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).

- Share relevant information with the local authority, appropriate health services and external agencies as required.
- Help make sure that the provision offered to the pupil is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully.

When reintegration is anticipated, school will work with the local authority to:

- Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the pupil to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible.
- Enable the child to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, digital learning platforms, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons) and, where appropriate, through educational visits.
- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school, which include additional support to fill any gaps arising from the absence.
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made.

4. The role of the parent/guardian

If a parent/guardian has concerns that their child's medical condition, or physical or mental health need is having an impact on their learning, they should contact school to discuss how the school and family can effectively support the child to enable them to have full access to education.

If a parent/guardian believes that their child can no longer attend school because of their health needs, the parent/guardian should inform school as quickly as possible to ensure minimum disruption to the child's education.

Parents/carers (and where appropriate, the child themselves) have an important role to play and can provide essential information about the child and their needs and should always be consulted before a new or adjusted provision begins. Likewise, parents/carers will be consulted at any change-points in the child's provision as well as when they are ready to re-integrate back into school. The views of the child will also be sought and considered when planning, implementing and reviewing support arrangements.

4.1 Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that, in relation to a child or young person, a 'parent' also includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility for or care of the child. The DfE defines a 'parent' as a person who typically has care of a child or young person if the child lives with them either full or part time and they look after them, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

4.2 School will request medical evidence from parents/carers regarding a child's health, mental health, and/or medical condition to allow us to better understand the needs of the child and identify the most suitable provision. Charter Academy, the local authority, medical practitioners (such as a GP or consultant) and the child's family, should work closely to make every effort to minimise the disruption to the child's education by identifying the most suitable provision.

Where a child has long-term health problems or an ongoing medical condition (including a mental health condition), parents/carers should regularly provide updated advice and medical evidence to the school when possible.

Where specific medical evidence, such as that provided by a medical practitioner, is not readily available or does not provide sufficient information for a suitable provision to be identified, the school or the local authority will liaise with relevant medical practitioners and consider other evidence to

ensure appropriate provision can be arranged as soon as possible. Parents/carers will be asked for their written consent for the school or the local authority to contact the child's GP, consultant or other medical practitioner.

The school will consider all available evidence and will not delay support or provision where appropriate medical evidence is not immediately available.

5. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school senior leadership team. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

6. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- SEND policy
- Attendance policy
- Children missing education policy
- Safeguarding policy