

Derbyshire County Council

Policy on Access to Education for Pupils with Long-Term Medical Conditions

Introduction

The duties of local education authorities in relation to the education of sick children arise from Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 which provides that:

“Each local education authority shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise for children who by reason of illnessmay notreceive suitable education unless arrangements are specially made for them”.

Derbyshire County Council has set out its aims and principles in relation to the education of people in the County in its New Millennium Education Strategy and, in that document, asserts its commitment to improving the educational attainment of vulnerable and minority groups.

In addition, the County Council has recently adopted a statement that defines its approach to educational inclusion. This states that:

Inclusive educational communities are those which take account of the needs of individuals and where individuals are valued, feel secure and have a sense of belonging. These communities work actively to promote this process and reduce exclusive practices. They also reduce barriers to learning and participation to ensure that all learners experience learning environments in which they can strive for and attain their highest levels of achievement.

The County Council's principles in relation to educational inclusion are:

1. The foundation for the highest achievements for all students is within a secure, accepting, collaborating and stimulating community where everyone is valued.
2. Inclusive policies are those that increase the learning and participation of all students. All forms of support are brought together within a single framework and are viewed from the perspective of the student and their development as well as the school, institution or LEA administrative structures.
3. Working together cooperatively and openly with all those involved in providing educational experiences promotes the delivery of effective inclusive education.
4. People perform best when they feel valued, respected and know what is expected of them.
5. The views of children and young people are crucial in planning and delivering educational services.
6. Working in partnership with all parents and carers, hearing and valuing their views is essential.

These principles are at the core of the County Council's policy for the education of sick children.

The characteristics of educational inclusion are:

- All children and young people have their needs provided for through the use of amenities or services which promote inclusion within the local community.
- All children and young people have access to appropriate curriculum opportunities and quality of educational provision, which promote opportunities for developing relationships.
- Parents, carers, children and young people have an active voice and participate fully in planning and decision making.
- There are high expectations of all children and young people.
- Individual attainment and standards are valued as contributing to the whole community.
- Partners train, work and learn together

These characteristics are consistent with effective practice in relation to the education of pupils with significant medical needs.

Medical Needs

The phrase "young people with medical needs" is used to cover the following groups of pupils:

- pupils who suffer sudden illness from an accident or from a range of physical complaints
- pupils with continuing chronic illness, eg juvenile arthritis, osteogenesis imperfecta or chemotherapy treatment
- pupils with mental health related problems confirmed by an senior health practitioner recognised within Specialist Children's Services

Pupils in any one of these groups may experience periods of absence from school, which may be short, long or intermittent but the common feature is that they have been deemed unfit to attend school by an appropriate health practitioner. For those pupils with mental health related problems, the "appropriate health practitioner" is a clinician in the Child, Adolescent, Mental Health Service recognised by the management of that service as competent to give such advice.

It is important to note that a pupil with long-term medical needs will not necessarily have special educational needs [SEN] as defined by the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice [DfES 2001]. The Code states: "A

medical diagnosis or a disability does not necessarily imply SEN. It may not be necessary for a child or young person with any particular diagnosis or medical condition to have a Statement, or to need any form of additional educational provision at any phase of education. It is the child's educational needs rather than a medical diagnosis that must be considered" [Paragraph 7.64].

School age parents, in particular school age mothers, are not regarded as being unwell but as the arrangements for the education of school age parents are, in many ways similar to young people with long-term medical conditions, Derbyshire County Council's approach to the education of this group is described in Appendix 1.

Aims

Whatever the nature of the illness or its duration, the educational response in Derbyshire will seek to ensure that:

- pupils continue to have access to as much education as their condition will allow in order to enable them to keep up with their studies;
- no pupil will normally be at home without access to education for more than 15 school days following receipt of the medical certificate;
- education provided shall be of a high quality;
- no pupil educated at home is offered less than 10 hours appropriate educational activity per week;
- pupils will resume attendance at their school as soon as a medical practitioner determines that s/he is well enough to attend school;
- the pupil and his or her parents/carers are able to maintain positive links with their local communities.

To realise these aims a number of colleagues will have key roles and responsibilities.

The Role of the Child's School

The aim of any educational support provided for a young person is to reintegrate the young person back into school as soon as their condition will allow, with minimal disruption to their studies. Schools, therefore, have a major role to play in the provision offered to those of their pupils who are unable to attend. Derbyshire County Council has issued separate guidance to schools to support them in fulfilling that role but, in summary, the requirements upon all schools are:

- to have a policy and named person for pupils unable to attend through medical needs;

- to notify the LEA if a pupil is likely to be away for more than 15 days;
- to provide full information about a pupil's abilities and courses of study to any additional or alternative educational provider;
- to ensure that the pupil is provided with an appropriate range of work before the alternative provision is put in place;
- to provide suitable curriculum resources to support the pupil's studies;
- to monitor the pupil's progress and plan for return to school;
- to keep pupils informed about school life and events;
- to encourage continued contact with peers;
- to maintain an active dialogue with the pupil's parents/carers;

Where pupils experience regular, intermittent absences due to a medical condition, the school should endeavour to establish and maintain good links with the pupils' parents/carers to ensure continuous learning for the pupil. The school may contact the Out of School Tuition Service for advice in complex cases.

A copy of the full guidance issued to schools is attached as an appendix to this document.

Role of the Education Department

The role of staff in the Education Department in promoting educational inclusion is clearly articulated in the County Council's statement. It is:

To challenge and support schools and other educational settings to provide effective education for all children and young people in the local community.

This includes pupils whose illness means that they are unable to attend school.

The specific roles of staff in the Education Department in relation to individual pupils are:

- to identify appropriate provision, within 15 school days of receipt of the medical certificate confirming that the pupil is unfit to attend school;
- to monitor the pupil's progress and the appropriateness, effectiveness, quality and suitability of the provision;

- to provide appropriate advice and support for the pupil's tutors;
- to ensure that the pupil's parents/carers are kept fully informed of the procedures and the pupil's progress;
- to seek, actively listen to and to take into account the views of parents/carers and the pupil when any provision is being made;
- to make parents/carers aware of the curriculum provided so that they can offer their best support to the child;
- to inform parents/carers of any changes to the provision or arrangements at least one school week before the change is made so that they can ensure that the child knows about it, is involved in and has a opportunity to express a view on those arrangements;
- to ensure that pupils have access to accredited qualification, by making special arrangements for examinations, when necessary [provision will be made available to Post 16 students who have been unable to complete Key Stage 4 accredited courses due to illness];
- to support all those involved in ensuring that the pupil makes a successful return to his or her school.

The Education Department also has important roles that will inform the County Council's strategic response to the education of pupils with serious medical conditions. These are:

- to contribute to joint training;
- to provide high quality professional development opportunities and support for all staff working with pupils with medical needs;
- to provide clear, accessible information for parents and carers;
- to identify and disseminate best practice;
- to monitor the educational outcomes for pupils and students with serious medical conditions;
- to determine whether the range of provision meets the needs of pupils effectively;
- to evaluate the effectiveness of the County Council's Policy on Access to Education for Children and Young People with Medical Needs.

Derbyshire Named Officer

The monitoring and delivery of provision for children unable to attend school because of medical needs will be the responsibility of the Authority's Pupil Inclusion Officer. That officer will be responsible to the Chief Education Officer for ensuring that the approaches set out in this document are pursued and will be the main point of contact for parents, schools and involved professionals on all matters relating to the delivery of provision for sick children. The Pupil Inclusion Officer can be contacted at Chesterfield Area Education Office [telephone: 01246 204851]. The operational management of provision for children and young people with medical needs may when appropriate, on a day to day basis, be delegated to the Area Assistant Education Officers.

The Role of Parents/Carers

Section 7 of the Education Act (1996) requires parents to secure education of their children of compulsory school age either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at school (in other words making suitable provision themselves). Unless they make their own suitable arrangements, parents are obliged, therefore, to ensure that their child attends the provision arranged by the Education Department and the pupil's school.

The parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure that, if the tuition takes place at the child's home, that there is always another adult on the premises whilst the tuition is taking place. There is also an expectation that there will be a quiet area in which the tuition can take place. If parents or carers have any difficulty in ensuring that another adult is on the premises, they should discuss this with staff in the Area Education Office.

The Role of Connexions

Connexions is the Government's new integrated advice and guidance service for all 13 - 19 year olds. The central aim of Connexions is to guide and support all young people on any issues that concern them throughout their teenage years to ensure a smooth transition to adulthood and working life. Its objectives include raising aspirations and achievements, encouraging more young people to stay in learning and tackling the barriers which prevent some young people from achieving their full potential. It has as one of its key principles extending opportunity and equality of opportunity.

It is a universal service and is therefore available for all young people, but it will ensure extra support is provided to those who need it for whatever reason.

Personal Advisers will give information, advice and support on all the issues that are important to young people, including careers, education, training, leisure, sport, volunteering etc. They will also be able to help them with more personal matters, including sexual health, drugs, alcohol, money, bullying, discrimination etc.

The Connexions Service will ensure that all young people unable to attend school because of medical needs are assessed to ensure they receive appropriate levels of information, advice, guidance and support. Connexions will work with schools, LEAs and other support services to ensure that young people with medical needs receive appropriate intervention. When appropriate, and with adequate support, Personal Advisers will offer to make home visits to young people unable to access Connexions Centres due to medical reasons.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the County Council's Policy

The County Council will keep the effectiveness of its policy for the education of sick children under close review. The day-to-day responsibility for this rests with the Pupil Inclusion Officer who will report on a half-yearly basis to the Senior Education Officer (Social Inclusion). This report will focus upon certain key quantitative measures:

- performance against quality standards (for example, the percentage of pupils receiving tuition within 15 school days of receipt of the medical certificate and the percentage being offered at least 10 hours appropriate educational activity);
- the length of time that pupils receive tuition before they return to school;
- the educational outcomes for pupils – end of Key Stage assessments, GCSEs;
- “Destinations” of pupils – Post 16

This information will inform the County Council's strategic evaluation of the policy. This evaluation will ask three questions:

- Is the policy still relevant and in line with national and local requirements?
- Is the service meeting the needs of pupils and their parents/carers?
- Is the County Council meeting its policy goals?

To achieve this, the Assistant Chief Education Officer (SEN and Inclusion) will, through the Head of Social Inclusion:

- monitor the policy against national developments, corporate requirements and service developments;
- review the evidence provided by the quantitative information concerning the progress of pupils;
- assess the performance of the service and the views of stakeholders, drawn from a survey of views.

The outcome of this strategic review will be reported to the County Council's Improvement and Scrutiny Committee once a year.

PROCEDURES

Absence is anticipated to be less than 15 days

For absences through a medical condition of less than 15 school days, the Authority will look to the child's school to take the lead role in making provision, maintaining links and planning for the child's return.

Full guidance on the expectations of schools in undertaking this role is contained in the guidance to schools attached as an appendix.

Absence is anticipated to be greater than 15 days

Where a school has received information from parents or a health professional, either at the start of a period of absence, or later in that period of absence, that a pupil has a significant illness, a member of the school's staff will discuss the anticipated absence with an Education Social Worker. If, after this discussion, it is felt that the pupil is likely to miss more than 15 school days, the school staff will notify the Student Services Section in the Area office by completing a referral form.

Notification to the LEA must:

- wherever possible, be early enough to allow the relevant officer to contact a medical practitioner to confirm that the pupil is unfit to attend school, if this certification is not already available;
- give details of the educational support provided [or to be provided] by the school;
- confirm that the school has discussed this referral with the pupil's parents/carers;

The guidance to schools contains a referral form for schools to use for this purpose. This form is available electronically.

Schools will be expected to be proactive in securing the information needed for this notification. The Education Social Work Service will support schools where difficulties are encountered in getting appropriate information from the pupil's parents/carers.

All notifications of an absence greater than 15 days, other than one resulting from hospitalisation, should be directed to the Student Services Section in the Area Education Office.

The Authority's Role

Once a notification of an absence greater than 15 days has been received, one of three possible outcomes will be determined.

1. Notification by school with a medical certificate

When the notification from a school or a parent includes a certificate from a medical practitioner, confirming that a pupil is so unwell that s/he will be unable to attend school for a period of time exceeding 15 school days, staff from the Student Services Section will notify the Out of School Tuition Service of the need to make provision from 15 days. The certificate should include a date for the pupil's anticipated date of return to school. The Out of School Tuition Service will identify an appropriate tutor to work with the pupil.

2. Notification without a medical certificate

If a school notification does not contain a certificate from a medical practitioner, staff from the Student Services Section will contact the pupil's parents/carers to inform them that a referral has been received and that, in order to provide alternative provision, a medical certificate is required. The pupil will also be referred to the Education Social Work Service to enable them to monitor the pupil's attendance and to contact the parents/carers if a medical certificate is not forthcoming. The Education Social Work Service may refer to the School Health Doctor to provide the medical certificate in consultation with appropriate specialists. As soon as the medical certificate is received the Out of School Tuition Service will be contacted.

3. Notification Sound – Return to School Planned

Where a school notification indicates an absence longer than 15 days but there is already a plan for an imminent return to school at a date beyond 15 days, the Pupil Inclusion Officer, Student Services will determine whether there is any need or it would be practical to set up home teaching.

Where it is, s/he will refer the case to the Out of School Tuition Service as in 2 above.

Where s/he feels that to be unnecessary, the case will be referred to the Education Social Work Service who will follow up to check that the return to school takes place successfully.

Provision of Home Tuition

Once the Out of School Tuition Service has identified a home tutor, the tutor will contact the pupil's parents/carers. The appointment will also be confirmed in writing to the parents/carers by the Student Services Section and the School Health Service informed.

Parents/Carers of children with medical needs will be kept fully informed of the educational arrangements that are made for them. This will include the number of hours and place of any home tuition and the amount and type of

support offered to a child to enable them to be fully included in the life of the school.

Out of school tuition may take place in the home if:

- The parent/carer or other responsible adult is present throughout;
- The conditions are appropriate for learning (for example, a quiet area with suitable space for study); and
- The working environment is safe for the pupil and the tutor.

If these conditions cannot be met, arrangements will need to be made for the tuition to take place elsewhere. It is important to emphasise that for reasons associated with child protection **no** tuition should be allowed to take place, either in the home or elsewhere, where a tutor and pupil are alone on the premises. In addition, no tutor should be involved in transporting pupils alone to alternative venues. It is the parent's or carer's responsibility to ensure that their child attends the designated venue, though this will be subject to the County Council's Policy for Home to School Transport.

It is the responsibility of the tutor to contact the designated teacher – or her/his representative – and, in liaison with the parents/carers, identify a convenient time to meet to draw up the pupil's Individual Learning Plan.

The meeting to develop the Individual Learning Plan will be chaired by the school representative. The Plan will include:

- the work the school will still be setting;
- the balance of tutor time to be spent on supporting the child with work set by school and in direct teaching;
- clear targets;
- the curriculum for the direct teaching or virtual classroom input;
- resources which will be needed;
- how the pupil will access externally accredited examinations, when appropriate;
- ways in which the pupil can maintain contact with his/her peers;
- how the pupil will be reintegrated back into school;

- how the parents can assist and support their child's learning during the absence;
- a review date.

(If the pupil is in public care, the school should ensure that the pupil's social worker is invited to the meeting to ensure that the new arrangements are reflected in the young person's care plan.)

Systems will be put in place by the Out of School Tuition Service to ensure that the Individual Learning Plan is reviewed after three months, if the pupil has not returned to school, and/or if the medical information is out of date.

If the pupil fails to attend or fails to make themselves available for tuition, without an appropriate medical certificate or a valid reason, tuition will be suspended. The Out of School Tuition Coordinator will determine whether the reason is valid. In such cases, the Education Social Work Service will be informed. If the parents/carers are able to ensure that the pupil will be available at pre-arranged times, tuition will be reinstated. A review meeting will be called if the reasons for the non-attendance are deemed to warrant this.

A Senior Tutor from the Out of School Tuition Service will be responsible for monitoring the pupil's progress towards a return to school through monthly reports from the pupil's allocated tutor. Management of the quality and content of the home teaching input will be the responsibility of the Head of the Out of School Tuition Service.

The Student Services Section will contact the pupil's parents/carers and the Education Social Worker if the pupil is still not attending school after the anticipated date, stated on the original medical certificate.

A case review of all personnel involved, including the School Health Service, together with parents/carers and the child, will automatically be convened by the Pupil Inclusion Officer if any absence extends beyond a year.

If it is anticipated that the pupil will, due to the seriousness of his or her illness, be unable to attend school for a *significant amount of time*, consideration will be given to providing the pupil with access to the County Council's virtual classroom as well as direct tuition. The virtual classroom provides opportunities for pupils to learn on-line.

Intermittent Absences

Where a pupil's medical needs lead to regular recurrent short absences, the LEA will look to the school to respond to the pupil's educational needs.

Where those recurring absences are longer in duration or more frequent, the case should be referred to the Pupil Inclusion Officer using the normal notification process and information. The Pupil Inclusion Officer will, in

consultation with the Education Social Work Service, then determine whether the absences are of such length and frequency as to justify some home teaching input from day one of the absences to supplement the work provided by the school. S/he will also determine whether a Individual Learning Plan is needed. A case review meeting involving school, parents, pupil and relevant health professionals may well be called to assist the officer in making that decision.

Hospitalisation

For hospitalisation for long periods, most Derbyshire children attend the Children's Hospital in Derby City, or major hospitals in neighbouring areas, such as Nottingham or Sheffield.

There is an expectation that the Primary Care Trusts responsible for hospitals, in collaboration with the relevant local authority, respond to the educational needs of Derbyshire children, and do so through their hospital teaching services. The cost of the provision they make is then recouped from Derbyshire.

Derbyshire children are also admitted to the Royal Hospital, in Chesterfield, but for relatively short periods of time in the main.

Derbyshire will maintain a full time equivalent teacher who will have a specific responsibility in relation to the education of children who are admitted to the Royal Hospital, Chesterfield. The teacher will:

- liaise with the child's school;
- support the child in completing work set by the school;
- provide direct teaching as appropriate;
- continue liaison and support where children convalesce at home for a short period before returning to school;

Where the total period of absence from school, including hospitalisation and convalescence exceeds 15 school days, appropriate educational activity of at least 10 hours per week will be provided either by the hospital teacher, a visiting teacher from the tuition service or via a combination of visiting teacher and virtual classroom IT delivery.

The quality of support offered for children admitted to the Royal Hospital and the management of the teacher based there will be the responsibility of the teacher in charge of the Chesterfield Key Stage 3 Support Centre based at School Road, Chesterfield. The provision will, therefore, in effect be a part of the Support Centre.

Children in Other Hospitals

For Derbyshire children returning to school from hospitalisation outside the County, the Pupil Inclusion Officer will liaise with the different hospital teaching services to ensure notification of discharge is given direct to the school as early as possible so that the school can devise and implement an appropriate return to school plan.

Where discharge is to be followed by a period of convalescence at home, rather than a return to school, the relevant hospital tuition service will be asked to notify the Head of the Out of School Tuition Service who will arrange a home teaching package where the hospitalisation and convalescence exceed 15 school days.

Referral Procedures

School identifies a pupil who is absent from school for a significant number of days, due to illness.

Pupil's absence discussed with Education Social Worker.

If, it is considered that the pupil is likely to miss more than 15 school days, school completes referral form and sends it to the relevant Student Services Section in the Area Office.

The Student Services Section checks if there is a medical certificate confirming that the pupil is unfit to attend school and the date of the pupil's anticipated date of return to school.

If yes

The Student Services Section notify the Out of School Tuition Service who will seek a tutor to start work with the pupil within 15 school days

If no

The Student Services Section contacts the Education Social Worker who will make contact with the pupil's parents or carers, and will advise them to go to their general practitioner or relevant senior medical officer to determine whether the pupil is unfit to attend school.

If the appropriate health practitioner certifies that the pupil is unfit to attend school, home tuition will be arranged within 15 school days of receipt of the certificate.

If the practitioner is **unable** to certify that the pupil is unfit to attend school, the Education Social Worker will work with the parents/carers to return the child to school within the framework of the LEA's statutory obligations.

Developing a Pupil's Individual Learning Plan

The Out of School Tuition Service identifies a tutor to work with the pupil.

The tutor contacts the pupil's parents/carers and the designated teacher at the school or his or her representative.

The Student Services Section will send a letter to the pupil's parents/carers confirming the appointment.

Tutor identifies with the parents/carers and the school representative a convenient date and time for a meeting to draw up the Plan.

A representative from the school chairs the meeting.

The plan is developed and written at the meeting. The plan includes clear targets and identifies the resources that will be needed and from where these will be secured.

If it is anticipated that the pupil will be absent for more than three months, a date for a review meeting is set.

The tutor will provide monthly reports of the pupil's progress against the targets set. S/he will send these reports to staff in the Student Services Section who will forward copies of the reports to the Out of School Tuition Service and the pupil's school.

A Senior Tutor from the Out of School Tuition Service will be responsible for monitoring the pupil's progress towards a return to school through monthly reports from the pupil's allocated tutor.

The Student Services Section will contact the relevant medical practitioner if the pupil is still not attending school after the anticipated date, stated on the original medical certificate.

If the pupil has not attended school for a year, a special review meeting will be called. There will be an expectation that this review is attended by the pupil's parents/carers, the Senior Tutor from the Out of School Tuition Service and all the relevant colleagues from different agencies; for example, a medical professional, Connexions Personal Adviser.

Appendix 1

School Aged Mothers

This client group comprises those pupils in school or in other LEA provision who become mothers.

The duty upon local education authorities is to provide for this group of young people as for all pupils out of school. Derbyshire County Council recognises that young parents are vulnerable to educational disadvantage and social exclusion. Its commitment to such groups of young people are outlined in the inclusion statement (see Page1).

The Government's expectations are clearly set out in Circulars 10/99 and 11/99. These provide clear guidance on the support to be given to teenage parents and to young mothers in particular:

- the aim of the support should be to keep the pupil in school, wherever possible, and to ensure her return to full time education as soon as possible after the birth, with access to appropriate child care support;
- schools, the Education and Social Services departments and NHS colleagues should, therefore, work together to provide support for mothers of compulsory school age, both during the pregnancy and after the birth;
- girls who receive education out of school during pregnancy should remain on the school roll during this time to enable them to return to school after the birth if they choose to do so, and the Education Department, its Education Social Work Service, schools and the Social Services Department should work together to achieve this;
- girls should stay in education during pregnancy unless personal or medical circumstances make other arrangements necessary;
- if, after the birth, the girl is past compulsory school age, the Education Department should arrange a suitable education programme in collaboration with the Connexions Service and, where appropriate, an FE College;
- pregnancy per se is **never** a reason for exclusion.

Derbyshire County Council recognises the importance of reducing the scale of school age pregnancy and the contribution that effective education can make. The Education Department will work together with other key agencies to ensure effective prevention and support for young people, particularly those in vulnerable groups; for example, young people in the care of the County Council. Its preventative strategies will be based upon co-operation between agencies and co-ordinated to ensure a cohesive and coherent approach. Derbyshire has developed a ten year "Teenage Pregnancy Strategy". The

implementation and on-going development of this Strategy is overseen by the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Board, whose membership comprises of senior representatives from partner agencies and the Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator.

The County Council recognises, nevertheless, that school age parenthood will continue to be a reality for some pupils. Providing support for these young parents, in particular helping school age mothers to stay in education and to progress to further education, training and employment, is the key to reducing the risk of their long-term social exclusion.

The Education Department will, therefore:

- work together with the pupil's school, Social Services (when the young woman is deemed "in need") and other agencies to keep the pupil in school, whenever possible;
- make interim provision when the pupil is out of school, for a period up to 18 school weeks (in total) before and after the birth;
- work together with the school, the Education Social Work Service and Social Services to ensure that the pupil returns to school after the birth;
- where the school aged mother cannot be reasonably expected to return to school, College or other educational establishment provide out of school tuition either through the Out of School Tuition Service and/or the Virtual Classroom; and
- where the pupil is over statutory school age after the birth, arrange a suitable education programme in consultation with the school, the Connexions Service and, where appropriate, an FE College.

The Education Department also has important roles that will inform the County Council's strategic response to the education of pupils of school aged parents. These reflect the roles in relation to the education of pupils with medical needs. They are:

- to contribute to joint training;
- to provide clear, accessible information for parents, carers and the young people;
- to identify and disseminate best practice;
- to monitor the educational outcomes for school aged parents;
- to determine whether the range of provision meets the needs of pupils effectively;

- to evaluate the effectiveness of the County Council's Policy.

The Role of the Pupil's School

The pupil's school has a central role in ensuring that there is minimum disruption to the young person's education. The key aim should be to keep the pregnant pupil or school age mother in learning. This means, in all cases, keeping the pupil on the school roll, even if she may not be able to attend school for a period of time. There is an expectation that schools will carry out an appropriate risk assessment, however, health and safety should not be used as a reason for exclusion from school.

The requirements upon schools are to:

- oversee the education of school age mothers;
- set and mark work while she is unable to attend school;
- provide suitable curriculum resources to support the pupil's studies;
- work in close partnership with the Education Department, the providers of any alternative educational arrangements and any other relevant agencies, including Connexions;
- monitor the progress and achievement of pregnant pupils and school-aged mothers;
- make arrangements, when necessary, for the pupil to have access to public examinations;
- plan for the pupil's return to school;
- keep pupils informed about school life and events;
- encourage continued contact with peers, if wished by the young person;
- address any incidents of bullying, as part of the school's discipline policy;
- maintain an active dialogue with the pupil's parents/carers.

In addition, schools should:

- have a clear and explicit confidentiality policy (as described in the guidance on Sex and Relationship Education);
- in all instances of pregnancy in young women under 16, consider whether the Area Child Protection Committee's agreed procedures should be invoked;

- involve the designated teacher for young people in public care, if the pupil is “looked after”, in any review of the care plan.

The Role and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Section 7 of the Education Act (1996) requires parents to secure education of their children of compulsory school age either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at school (in other words making suitable provision themselves). Unless they make their own suitable arrangements, parents are obliged, therefore, to ensure that their child attends the provision arranged by the Education Department and the pupil’s school.

The parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure that, if the tuition takes place at the young woman’s home, that there is always another adult on the premises whilst the tuition is taking place.

Role of Connexions

The Connexions Service has been introduced to provide integrated information, advice, guidance and personal development opportunities for all 13 - 19 year olds in England. It aims to help young people engage in learning, achieve their full potential and make a smooth transition to adult life. The support young people will receive will vary according to their needs.

The Connexions Service has, as one of its cross cutting targets, to reduce the rate of conceptions amongst under-18 year olds. In addition, the Connexions Service will also work with teenage parents to meet the needs of this potentially vulnerable group of young people, in particular by helping them to return to education or work and thereby reducing the risk of social exclusion.

Connexions Derbyshire will develop strategic links between agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach in relation to this strategy and provide comprehensive support and guidance to teenage parents which enables them to remain in or return to learning or employment.

It will contribute to the improvement of the co-ordination of support to teenage parents and to develop referral and information sharing systems.

Role of Early Years and ChildCare Partnership

The Early Years and Childcare department hold the post of the Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator and a Family Support Officer is employed in each of the three Education areas. Their role is to ensure that prospective and new teenage parents receive information about appropriate services, benefits and entitlements and to work with organisations involved with and for teenage parents, contribute to the strategic planning for vulnerable young people. This is done through visiting teenage mothers under 18, supporting the development of primary services that are accessible and teenage friendly and arranging local meetings for practitioners to identify area shortfalls in provision and promote good practice.

Where young women do become pregnant, support is available from a variety of agencies, based on the primary need of that young person. Funding up to 20 hours free childcare is available from Early Years and Childcare to enable a school age mother to return to compulsory education. From 2003/4, funding from the LSC will be available for childcare for teenage mothers to continue in education, although some colleges provide free childcare for students.

PROCEDURES

Where a school has received information from the pupil, her parents/carers or a medical professional that due to her pregnancy the pupil will have to have a period of absence from school a member of the school staff will inform the young woman that they will have to share this information with a number of key support staff; specifically the Education Social Work Service, the Student Services Section and the Out of School Tuition Service. This information should be shared within the strict guidelines of the school's confidentiality policy. The school will then notify the Student Services Section at the Area Education Office that it is likely that the young woman will require interim provision whilst she is out of school before and after the birth. The guidance to schools contains a referral form for schools to use for this purpose. This form is available electronically.

Staff from the Student Services Section will notify the Out of School Tuition Service of the need to make provision and the period of time that this will be needed for. The Out of School Tuition Service will identify an appropriate tutor to work with the pupil.

Once the Out of School Tuition Service has identified a home tutor, the tutor will contact the pupil's parents/carers. The appointment will also be confirmed in writing to the parents/carers.

The provision of out of school provision may take place in the home if:

- The parent/carer or other responsible adult is present throughout;
- The conditions are appropriate for learning (for example, a quiet area with suitable space for study); and
- The working environment is safe for the pupil and the tutor

If these conditions cannot be met, arrangements will need to be made for the tuition to take place elsewhere. It is important to emphasise that for reasons associated with child protection that **no** tuition should be allowed to take place, either in the home or elsewhere, where a tutor and pupil are alone on the premises. In addition, no tutor should be involved in transporting pupils alone to alternative venues. It is the parent's or carer's responsibility to

ensure that their child attends the designated venue, subject to the County Council's Policy for Home to School Transport.

It is the responsibility of the tutor to contact the designated teacher – or her/his representative – and, in liaison with the parents/carers, identify a convenient time to meet to draw up the pupil's Individual Learning Plan.

The meeting to develop the Individual Learning Plan will be chaired by the school representative. The Plan will include:

- the work the school will still be setting;
- the balance of tutor time to be spent on supporting the child with work set by school and in direct teaching;
- clear targets;
- the curriculum for the direct teaching or virtual classroom input;
- resources which will be needed;
- how the pupil will access externally accredited examinations, when appropriate;
- how contact can be maintained with her peers;
- how the pupil will be reintegrated back into school;
- how the parents can assist and support their child's learning during the absence;
- a review date.

(If the pupil is in public care, the school should ensure that the pupil's social worker and/or foster carer are invited to the meeting to ensure that the new arrangements are reflected in the young person's care plan.)

The tutor will provide monthly reports of the pupil's progress against the targets. S/he will send these reports to the Student Services Section who forward copies of the report to the Out of School Tuition Service and the pupil's school

A Senior Tutor from the Out of School Tuition Service will oversee the reports and collate information about the pupil's progress. Management of the quality and content of the home teaching input will be the responsibility of the Head of the Out of School Tuition Service.

If the pupil is unable to or fails to attend more than two consecutive tuition sessions, the home tutor will contact the Pupil Inclusion Officer. S/he will liaise with relevant colleagues – including the allocated Education Social Worker – to determine the reason for the pupil's non-attendance. A review meeting will be called if the reasons for the non-attendance are deemed to warrant this.

Planning the Pupil's Return to Full-time Education

When the alternative arrangements for the pupil's education are originally set up, a date of the anticipated return to full-time education will be determined. A review meeting will be held four weeks before this date to identify what will need to be in place to enable the young woman to make a successful return to full-time education.

A representative from the pupil's school will chair the meeting. The following people should be invited to attend the meeting:

- the pupil
- her parents/carers
- the tutor

Consideration should be given to inviting any other relevant colleague who may play an important role in supporting the pupil's successful reintegration; for example, a Connexions Personal Adviser, a social worker or a medical professional.

The meeting should consider the following areas:

- curriculum requirements
- examination arrangements
- pastoral support
- childcare arrangements
- arrangements for self-study and homework
- timetabling and any flexibilities that will be required

The meeting will identify any outstanding issues in relation to these areas and any actions that are required to address them. The actions will be formulated into a plan which will be circulated to all those attending the meeting.