

CCAS Process & Multi-Agency Panel (Children who Cannot Attend School)

Policy Statement

December 2023

1. Context

The CCAS process and panel (Children who Cannot Attend School) is a fresh approach to working with partners to support children who cannot attend school. The panel combines and replaces the previous Medical Education Team panel and Section 19 panel, as both supported children who cannot attend school. The CCAS process and panel started in September 2023.

The process responds to cases which might meet the criteria for Section 19 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which states:

'Each local authority in England shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.'

Related content:

- DfE guidance [Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)
- DfE guidance [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- DfE guidance on ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#)
- WCC's [Inclusion in Educational Settings](#) webpages

2. Purpose

The purpose of the CCAS process and panel is to provide a clear, consistent and transparent system to understand circumstances and allocate support, advice and guidance for children who cannot attend school by reason of illness, exclusion or other reason.

The Panel will seek to understand the child's needs and what has taken place to support each child, to ensure all reasonable adjustments and interventions have been made (in the form of the Graduated Response).

The Panel's core purpose is to conduct the Local Authority's duty and work collaboratively to ensure that all Worcestershire children have access to a suitable education. Solutions may involve advice and guidance, school to school support, signposting to resources or other services or providing intervention / provision.

In the case of a child who has an EHCP (or when the decision to issue a draft EHCP has been made) and cannot attend school, notifications should still be sent in via the

Children's Services Portal but will be automatically sent onto SEND services and any action will then be coordinated by SEND services. The SEND team take on the oversight, review and financial management of the arrangements that have been put in place or are needed to support a CYP who cannot attend school.

3. Principles

- A child centred, collaborative approach.
- Peer-led system of support and challenge for schools.
- Support based on an understanding of individual pupil needs.
- Consistency, equity, transparency and timeliness of decision making.
- Clear processes in place for schools to access support for children who cannot access school.
- Evidence of impact demonstrates positive outcomes for pupils.

4. Functions of panel:

- To work with partners and stakeholders to avoid children reaching the point of being unable to attend school.
- When children are unable to attend school, to identify and implement the support the child requires and, where appropriate and timely, to support them in being able to attend school.
- The panel will work collaboratively with partners to consider each case brought to panel and to generate a plan of action to best support the individual child.
- Through the panel, improved local knowledge of good and best practice will be developed and will inform future decision making and advice provided.
- Identification of gaps in knowledge will inform WCC's training and professional development offer and inform school and wider system gaps or areas of development.

5. Routes into the panel:

Requests for support should be accompanied by an [Individual Health care Plan](#) / [Early Help Assessment](#), as appropriate.

The panel will be notified of potential cases by:

- a) **Schools** should submit absence and irregular attendance notifications via the Childrens' Services Portal. Schools have a [duty](#) to notify the Local Authority of cases of irregular attendance and continuous absence.

Please note, this is a notification only and not a referral. All notifications are reviewed. Any notifications which require CCAS Panel consideration will be raised on the agenda at CCAS Panel.

Schools are expected to continue to provide education, support and safeguarding responsibilities whilst a child is on roll.

The Local Authority also expects schools to have met their duty to make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a child. See [Statutory Guidance Children Missing Education 2016](#) for further information.

Schools can direct any queries to the dedicated CCAS inbox.

b) **Professionals not working in schools** can request support by emailing the dedicated CCAS inbox.

Please note:

In the case of a child who has an EHCP (or when the decision to issue a draft EHCP has been made) and cannot attend school, notifications should still be sent in via the Children's Services Portal but will be automatically sent onto SEND services and any action will then be coordinated by SEND services. If an update is required, please contact SEND directly rather than the CCAS email.

6. Decision Making

The group shall endeavour to make decisions by consensus and escalate where issues are identified via the leadership or governance arrangements of organisations.

Where the panel agrees that a child meets the criteria (see above for the criteria for Section 19 of the Education Act 1996) for the LA to support in providing suitable education, schools will be notified. The panel will always aim to make a decision at the same meeting the case is raised and will ensure that all professionals in attendance understand what has been agreed and any outcomes/actions. If the lead professional cannot attend, they will be updated following the meeting.

Partners from Education, Health and Social Care will be invited to specific CCAS Panel case discussions in order to ensure the panel are fully informed and to be an active participant in decision-making.

The views of the child and their parents/carers are extremely important in decision-making and will be carefully considered in each CCAS Panel discussion. Parents/carers will be communicated with by the relevant professionals in each case.

7. Frequency and Administration

- The panel meets weekly (hybrid of in-person and online).
- Actions and notes from the meeting are recorded.
- Actions resulting from the meeting are the responsibility of the agreed individual/s to complete and the group will be updated via email or at subsequent meetings, whichever is more practicable and timely.

8. Review process

Cases should be continually reviewed by schools to ensure maximum engagement with the provision on offer, in line with schools' own internal policies for reviewing alternative provision arrangements.

Cases will be reviewed by the CCAS Panel on a maximum 12 week cycle, in order to assess the suitability of the provision in place and whether circumstances have changed, meaning appropriate provision needs to be revised. Where appropriate, partners and stakeholders will be invited to CCAS Panel to review specific cases.

Where circumstances change significantly within this review period (including improvements in engagement), schools should notify the CCAS panel by emailing the dedicated CCAS inbox.

9. Safeguarding & Monitoring

Schools retain safeguarding responsibilities for each child concerned, in line with Keeping Children Safe In Education and their own safeguarding policies and procedures.

10. Agenda Items

Standing agenda items shall include:

- Welcomes and Introductions.
- Review of actions from previous meeting.
- Review new referrals.
- Review existing placements / seek advice for ongoing placements.
- AOB.

11. Document review

- This document will be reviewed in line with refinements of the CCAS process, in collaboration with partners.