

East Lothian Council

FOI Ref: 2018/549930

In the first instance, it may help to explain that Freedom of Information legislation only applies to information which is held or recorded by a public authority. It does not apply to views, opinions, intentions, general questions or questions which simply require a yes/no answer. In view of this, some of the questions asked are not technically valid for the purposes of this legislation as they are not requests for specific recorded information that ELC may or may not hold.

For future reference, a link to the "Tips for Requesters" page of the Scottish Information Commissioner's website has been provided which you may find useful:

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Tipsforrequesters.aspx>

In order to assist you, colleagues have addressed the questions posed to the best of their knowledge. Each point has been addressed in the same order raised for convenience:

1. East Lothian Council does not have a discrete provision to accommodate home tuition specifically for school age children and young people recovering at home from long-term illness or serious injury.

East Lothian Council guidance (November 2017) outlines our expectations and process.

Children and young people may be absent from school for a single, extended block of time or for several or many periods of time of varying length. They may also be attending school part time, as part of a planned, gradual re-integration at school or ELCC, following a period of absence due to ill health. Each case must be treated individually.

A child or young person absent from school through ill health may receive treatment in a variety of settings, such as a paediatric hospital, an adult hospital, a mental health facility, their own home or in a different school. In some cases, this may mean that the child or young person travels to a hospital which is located beyond the local authority area in which they live or in which they are educated. Education may be provided in any and all of these settings and the responsibility for doing so remains with the child or young person's home authority, even if the services are delivered by specialist outreach services of the local authority in which the hospital is located (host authority). East Lothian Council have in the past used the service of school based hospital teaching for children and young people but not at the present time.

The Head Teacher or other promoted member of staff (guidance teacher in secondary) has a key role for maintaining communication with parents and carers and the child or young person. East Lothian's Child's Planning Framework guidance should be consulted.

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The key member of staff will work with appropriate professionals to help facilitate the child or young person's return to school, which may take place on a phased basis over a period of time. The named person should ensure that the child's or young person's links to peers, teachers and the wider school community are maintained, which will also help facilitate the return to school.

Most provision is likely to be made within the child's own school. In practice, it is likely that responsibility for referral for, and management of, arrangements for education outwith school will lie with the child or young person's own school. Key staff should identify children and young people with health needs and ensure appropriate support arrangements are in place, timeously, if required. However the local authority Education Support Officer link should be informed of cases where there may be funding implications in regard to outwith authority services.

Absence should be recorded using SEEMiS code SEP.

Staff within the child's or young person's own school will best understand a child's educational and support requirements. In most instances the school retains the lead role and where appropriate, works with the education provider in the hospital or outreach service to ensure education provision is appropriate and supports and maintains the child or young person's prior learning. Classroom or subject teachers should record missed work to help ensure effective education outwith school maintain the learner's links with their school and to help reintegration on return as part of broader transition planning.

Good practice would include the school routinely providing information for parents about the statutory duties relating to and arrangements for the provision of education of children and young people who are too ill to attend school within their school handbook.

The process followed in each case is likely to differ depending on individual circumstances, but common throughout all stages is the need for clear lines of communication between staff across education and health boards and the child or young person and their parent or carer.

- Awareness – as part of a school's attendance and absence policy, parents are expected to inform schools whenever their child is ill, even if it is just for one day. As soon as it is clear that the period of absence is going to exceed the timescales indicated, arrangements should be made for the provision of education outwith school. In the case of intermittent or longer term absences, which cause a barrier to learning, the school should identify, assess and make provision for additional support within school to ensure that any resulting gaps in learning are covered.

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- Assessment - the medical assessment made by the health service will influence the scale and scope of educational provision that may be planned and provided. Once it is considered that educational provision is appropriate, the home authority is responsible for ensuring that an education plan is discussed and agreed between the child or young person, the parent, the school, the host authority and hospital staff. Any plan should take into account the views and expectations of the child or young person and the parents/carers. The child's or young person's health and medical needs and appropriate educational provision should be subject to regular review by all parties. The plan should also take account of identification and planning of additional support for learning already in place.
- Where a particular case in practice is more complex or longer term, an assessment of wellbeing will determine that the child or young person requires multi-agency intervention to support or safeguard their wellbeing. Within East Lothian's Child Planning Framework this would action a Child's Plan being drawn together at targeted level. It would be for the named person, or the lead professional, to coordinate the assessment and planning process within this framework. Where the child or young person is already receiving support coordinated through a Child's Plan, the absence due to illness is likely to be a trigger to review that plan.

2. *What subjects are taught to children and young people recovering at home from long-term illness or serious injury and how many hours of teaching for each subject do they get?*

The key member of staff will develop a programme of learning activities and support in conjunction with other professionals, including NHS, parents and host school and/or authority where appropriate. The nature of the education provision will vary depending on the setting (for example at home or in hospital), the type and severity of illness etc, but should, as far as is practicable, support and maintain the child or young person's learning. Generally, the aim should be to support the broad, flexible curriculum and entitlements outlined through Curriculum for Excellence, within the constraints of the setting and the individual's health.

3. *Is time allocated within teachers contracted class time to provide this service?*

Responsibility for this is devolved to school management.

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4. Are there any IT provisions available to teachers to assist with tuition in the home environment of children and young people recovering from long-term illness or serious injury?

Teachers and pupils can use Google Classroom to keep pupils who are not able to attend school due to ill health to access the curriculum. This provides a "virtual classroom" and can either be set up as a class group option or on an individual basis for a young person.

East Lothian has successfully trialled the use of the AV1 "No isolation" robot with young people who have been unable to attend school due to risk of infection.

5. Are there any school age children and young people recovering from long-term illness or serious injury in your authority who are receiving no educational inputs from the authority and if so how many?

Schools are responsible for accurately recording attendance and the reason for non-attendance. Centrally East Lothian has no pupils recorded with the SEP SEEMiS code.

Three pupils have been recorded as having a medically certified reason for non-attendance.