

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 6 April 2023

Report of the Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;

Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Special Schools

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Brief Summary

The Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy seeks to provide consistent guidance to Special Schools about how to best meet the medical needs of pupils. The policy is based on updated Department for Education guidance about how to best support pupils, ensuring that they can thrive in their educational settings.

As the policy has been developed in partnership with key health stakeholders, including Special Schools, Health Commissioners and Lancashire County Council's Education Improvement Service, it identifies how schools can be better supported through improved joint commissioning arrangements.

The policy has been drafted in line with the Department for Education guidance, 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School' and the Royal College of Nursing guidance, 'Meeting Health Needs in Educational and other Community Settings'.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Special Schools Policy, set out at Appendix 'A', to ensure pupils with medical conditions can access and enjoy educational provision, supported by Special School Nurses and trained Educational Professionals.



Detail

The Lancashire Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Special Schools Policy has been revised to complement the Department for Education guidance document 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School' 2017. This guidance forms part of the Children and Families Act 2014, which places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools to make arrangements for supporting pupils at their school with medical conditions.

The Lancashire Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Special Schools Policy, set out at Appendix 'A', will ensure compliance with legislation and will enable all Lancashire Special Schools to confidently deliver provision to pupils with medical conditions, supported by a strengthened Special School Nursing Service offer through joint commissioning arrangements.

As part of the response to the Department for Education guidance, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions 2017, it was considered timely to revise the Lancashire Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Special Schools Policy for several reasons, including:

- More detailed information was required by schools, in addition to the government guidance, to further clarify the roles and responsibilities of school staff and other health professionals to best meet pupils' needs.
- The need to reduce inequalities in special school nursing provision.
- Special schools are supporting pupils with more complex medical needs, and do not always receive consistent access to the most appropriate staff. School staff are often supporting medical needs, which impacts on their ability to support pupils' learning.

The policy seeks to provide clarity and support to special schools, to ensure a consistent and fair approach to special school nursing, based on the individual needs of a pupil, always considering that they receive the right support, at the right time, in the right place.

A Working Group comprising special school representatives, Integrated Care Board commissioners, Special School Nursing Services and county council officers has developed the Policy, ensuring that it is practical to apply in settings and that it gives confidence to schools and practitioners in how they support pupils to access and enjoy school, with their medical needs safely met.

Parents, carers, and young people were engaged and consulted through various forums and have had the opportunity to influence the development of the final policy. The Integrated Care Board endorsed the policy in January 2023.

Context

Included within the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Special Schools Policy is new information and guidance on the following:



- Roles and responsibilities of professionals within a school setting - including health professionals - and their interactions with pupils to improve their school experience.
- Individual Health Care Plans and transition information.
- Information on training of school staff by qualified medical professionals.
- Guidance on how schools should record the administration and storage of medication, including controlled substances.
- Information on how pupils can be medically supported on school transport, trips, and residential visits.
- Emergency planning.
- Nursing task levels based on Department for Education guidance.

As outlined in Section 6: Levels of Intervention of the policy, there are several clinical tasks that must be undertaken by a medical practitioner (through the commissioned Special School Nursing Service) and other tasks that require specialist intervention that school staff can undertake following appropriate training.

It should be noted that The Royal College of Nursing have recently withdrawn the Task Levels recommended in the policy. However, there is a working assumption that the Task Levels will be replaced by a Framework of recommendations, that will assign more responsibility to local authorities and Health Commissioners, in relation to how pupils can be supported by those who know them best. The withdrawal of the Task Levels will not negatively impact on this policy but will inform new commissioning arrangements of the Special School Nursing Service in the near future. The Royal College of Nursing has not stated when the new Framework will be in place. However, there is a consensus that the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Special Schools Policy cannot be further delayed.

The Working Group have agreed that the policy be reviewed when the Royal College of Nursing sets out their new framework. Learning will also be gathered from schools and nursing services.

Consultations

Engagement workshops have taken place with schools and commissioners from Lancashire, South Cumbria, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool to ensure a wide range of views have been considered, and to explore whether other local authorities would adopt the policy, in order that there was a consistent approach across the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board footprint.

All parents/carers of children attending Lancashire Special Schools were invited to contribute to the draft policy and provide feedback. This engagement sat alongside consultation activity with the Parent/Carer Forum and the Participate, Opportunity, Win, Achieve and Respect participation group.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:



Risk management

Failure to adopt and implement this policy could negatively impact on pupils with medical conditions attending Lancashire Special Schools.

Financial

As described above, the Lancashire Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Special Schools is a partnership commitment with Health stakeholders (Integrated Care Board and Providers) and Lancashire Special Schools. There are no additional financial implications arising from the policy for Lancashire County Council or any of Lancashire's Special Schools.

However, to ensure that Special School Nursing Provision can be consistently and appropriately provided to Special Schools and pupils, the Integrated Care Board and Health Providers have agreed a revised funding model, to increase access to Special School Nurses. Special School Nursing Providers have been tasked with undertaking a cost analysis, based on risk assessments in each special school, to determine the level of need, number of children to be supported and clarity of support required.

Equality and Cohesion

The Lancashire Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Special Schools Policy will impact on children and young people and those with a disability, two protected characteristics stated in the Equality Act 2010.

The policy should be positive and should contribute to the Public Sector Equality Duty's general aims of eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity. This is particularly demonstrated by the importance placed on children and young people with medical needs being able to participate as fully as possible in school life including visits, trips and overnight activities.

The opportunity for fostering good relations between communities is also possible if pupils can be involved in a range of activities together.

Legal

The Lancashire Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Special Schools Policy seeks to ensure that provision to pupils is safe, appropriate, and compliant. It also demonstrates a commitment to teaching and non-teaching staff in Special Schools around training, compliance, and safety so that practitioners and pupils feel capable and confident to carry out their roles. The policy is based on Department for Education guidance and has been reviewed and endorsed by all relevant education and health partners, including the Integrated Care Board.



List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

