

Title	Education of Children and Young People with Medical Needs Policy
Cross References	External: • Education Act 1996 Section 19 • DFE: Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs • DFE Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School • Equality Act 2010 • Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Internal: •  SEND Policy •  Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy •  Equality Policy •  Behaviour and Attendance Policy •  Teaching and Learning Policy
Date	October 2026

1. Policy Statement

Apricot Online Ltd aims to improve the educational and life chances of children and young people whose health needs affect their ability to attend or access education in the usual way. Our online model can provide continuity of education from home or another agreed setting when attendance at a physical school is difficult or not currently possible.

Students may be referred to Apricot with physical illness, injury, mental health needs, treatment-related needs, fluctuating conditions or a combination of health and SEND needs. Apricot will provide the education commissioned for the individual student and will work flexibly within that arrangement to support engagement, wellbeing and progress.

2. Purpose and Principles

The purpose of this policy is to explain how Apricot supports students with medical needs within its remote alternative provision model.

Our provision is guided by the following principles:

- the wellbeing, safety and dignity of the child or young person;
- continuity of education while recognising the impact of health on capacity to learn;
- high-quality teaching adapted to age, ability, prior learning, SEND and current health needs;
- flexibility in pace, timetable, workload and participation where appropriate;
- partnership with students, parents/carers, commissioners and relevant professionals;
- equality of opportunity and reasonable adjustments;
- clear communication and accurate reporting;
- support for reintegration or transition where this forms part of the agreed placement plan; and
- recognition that progress may include engagement, confidence and educational stability as well as academic attainment.

3. Apricot's Role and Commissioner Responsibilities

Apricot Online is an education provider and does not determine a child's statutory entitlement to alternative provision because of health needs. The relevant local authority, school or other commissioning body is responsible for deciding what provision is required and commissioning Apricot where appropriate.

Where a local authority is arranging education under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, the statutory responsibility remains with the local authority. Where a student remains on roll at a school, that school may also retain important responsibilities for curriculum, SEND, safeguarding, attendance, examinations, reintegration and liaison with the local authority.

Apricot will deliver the agreed programme, monitor participation and progress, make reasonable adjustments within its provision, and share relevant information with the commissioner.

4. Referral and Information Sharing

Before or at the start of a placement, Apricot will seek sufficient information to plan safe and appropriate education. This may include:

- the reason for referral and agreed placement objectives;
- current timetable and proposed number of hours;
- relevant medical or health information needed to support education safely;
- known impact of treatment, fatigue, pain, anxiety or medication on learning;
- SEND information, EHCP or relevant professional reports where applicable;
- current attainment, curriculum and examination requirements;
- reasonable adjustments and strategies already known to help;
- safeguarding and risk information relevant to the provision;
- key contacts for the commissioner, parent/carer and relevant professionals; and
- any agreed reintegration, transition or review plan.

Apricot does not require teachers to diagnose or clinically assess a student's condition. Medical information will be handled in accordance with data-protection and safeguarding requirements and shared internally only where staff need it to support the student safely and effectively.

5. Planning the Educational Programme

The student's programme will be based on the commission received and available information about their education and health. Where possible, Apricot will support continuity with the student's existing curriculum and qualification pathway while recognising that health needs may require adaptation.

A programme may include one-to-one tuition, small-group teaching or a combination of provision, depending on the commission and the student's needs. Subjects, hours and pace may be reviewed as the student's circumstances change.

6. Timetables, Fatigue and Fluctuating Health

A student with medical needs may not be able to sustain the same timetable or workload as their peers. Some students may begin with a reduced or phased programme, while others may experience periods of increased or reduced capacity because of treatment, symptoms, fatigue, pain or mental health.

Apricot will:

- work within the timetable agreed with the commissioner;
- consider appropriate pacing, breaks and workload;
- avoid interpreting health-related difficulty automatically as unwillingness to engage;
- record attendance and engagement accurately;
- share emerging patterns or concerns with the commissioner;
- support gradual increases in provision where agreed and appropriate; and
- recognise when a student's health means that participation needs to be reduced or reviewed.

7. Adaptive Teaching and Reasonable Adjustments

Teachers will adapt teaching to enable students to participate as fully as reasonably possible.

Depending on individual need, this may include:

- shorter or more manageable tasks;
- additional processing time;
- clear written and verbal instructions;
- regular breaks or changes of activity;
- flexibility around verbal participation or camera use;
- accessible resources and assistive technology;
- repetition, retrieval and recap following absence or treatment;
- adjusted deadlines or task volume where agreed;
- support with organisation and executive-function demands; and
- careful planning around periods when symptoms or treatment affect concentration and stamina.

Reasonable adjustments should support access without unnecessarily limiting curriculum ambition.

8. Mental Health Needs

Medical-needs provision may include students whose mental health significantly affects school attendance or access to education. Apricot recognises that anxiety, trauma, depression, emotionally based school avoidance and other mental health difficulties can affect concentration, communication, attendance and confidence.

Teachers are not expected to provide clinical treatment. Their role is to provide a safe, predictable educational environment, make appropriate adjustments, notice changes or concerns and follow safeguarding procedures where necessary.

Where engagement is deteriorating, Apricot will communicate with the commissioner so that the educational plan and any wider support can be reviewed.

9. SEND and Medical Needs

Medical needs and SEND may overlap but should not be treated as interchangeable. Apricot will use relevant SEND information and EHCP provision to inform teaching where applicable and will follow the SEND Policy.

Staff should avoid assuming that a change in behaviour, attendance or learning is solely explained by an existing diagnosis. New or significant concerns should be considered in context and shared appropriately.

10. Attendance, Engagement and Progress

Apricot will record attendance and monitor engagement in accordance with its procedures and commissioner arrangements. Health-related absence or reduced engagement should be recorded accurately and communicated appropriately rather than treated automatically as a behaviour issue.

Progress will be considered from the student's individual starting point and may include:

- academic attainment and subject-specific learning;
- completion of agreed work or assessments;
- increased tolerance of learning;
- improved attendance or lesson participation;
- greater confidence and independence;
- re-engagement following a prolonged period out of education; and
- progress towards agreed placement, transition or reintegration outcomes.

Relevant progress information will be shared with commissioners and parents/carers through agreed reporting and review arrangements.

11. Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers often hold important information about the impact of a student's health on daily functioning and learning. Apricot will work collaboratively with families while recognising the role and responsibilities of the commissioning body.

Parents/carers are encouraged to inform Apricot or the commissioner of significant changes that may affect the student's ability to access provision, including treatment schedules or new professional advice

12. Collaboration with Schools, Local Authorities and Health Professionals

Effective provision may require communication between Apricot, the commissioning school or local authority, parents/carers, health professionals, SEND professionals and other agencies.

Apricot will contribute educational information and observations within the scope of its role. Clinical decisions and medical advice remain the responsibility of appropriately qualified health professionals.

13. Safeguarding

Students who are unwell, isolated from peers or spending extended periods at home may have additional vulnerabilities. Staff must remain alert to safeguarding concerns and follow Apricot's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In online provision, visual indicators may be limited. Staff should therefore pay attention to changes in attendance, communication, behaviour, presentation within the lesson, background information and disclosures. A medical diagnosis must never be used to explain away a possible safeguarding concern.

14. Reintegration and Transition

Where return to a school setting is an agreed objective, Apricot will support reintegration in partnership with the commissioner. This may include maintaining curriculum continuity, sharing progress information and adjusting Apricot provision as attendance elsewhere increases.

Reintegration is not the appropriate outcome for every student. Some students may transition to another placement, continue with alternative provision or move to post-16/post-18 education. Planning should reflect the individual's needs and the commission.

15. Equality and Accessibility

Apricot will not unlawfully discriminate against students because of disability or another protected characteristic. Reasonable adjustments will be considered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the nature of the online service.

Where a student's needs cannot be met safely or effectively within the commissioned online provision, Apricot will raise this promptly with the commissioner so that additional or alternative arrangements can be considered.

16. Monitoring and Review

Apricot will review provision through attendance and engagement information, teacher feedback, progress data, placement reviews, quality assurance and communication with commissioners and families.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance or Apricot's operating model make this necessary.

Authorised by: Jodie Phillips, Operation Director

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