



Patrons: Rakie Ayola

Lorraine Stanley

Dear Sir or Madam

Re 100% Attendance Certificates

We are a charity that supports children with the lifelong medical condition Neurofibromatosis Type 1 (NF1)

Whilst we are aware that attendance at school is important, there are those that through no fault of their own are unable to attend school every day.

Most children with NF1 or any other medical condition spend much of their lives in and out of hospitals, with appointments, scans and surgery, and in-between are sometimes just too ill to go to school. In some schools this counts as an absence. These children, at every certificate assembly, know that they will never get the 100% attendance certificate. Many of our parents explain how this makes their children feel isolated and reinforces that they have an illness and this particularly discriminates against them. Also encouraging classmates to attend when they are ill puts these vulnerable children at risk of infections especially those undergoing active treatment. Attendance is not an achievement it is merely a statement of fact.

Childhood Tumour Trust requested a written letter from Carolyn Harris MP to the Department of Education and this is their response dated 7 July 2017.

The Department does not have a national policy on how schools in England use reward systems to incentivise good attendance. It is for schools to decide whether they choose to use schemes such as school attendance awards. Schools in Wales are a devolved matter for the Welsh government.

Schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010, to have due regard to the need to eliminate conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. Those duties on schools apply to any schemes relating to incentivising attendance.

Answered by

Mr Robert Goodwill
(Conservative- Scarborough and Whitby)

It is clear that schools should not discriminate due to ill health or long term medical conditions and in these cases any absences relating to this should be excluded.

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