

AP GUIDANCE Feb 25 Summary of main points

- All schools (including independent schools) are required to make a 'sickness return' to their local authority when a pupil of compulsory school age is recorded in the attendance register using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and they have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for each continuous period of absence in a school year. This is to help the school and local authority agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health need. (p 13)
- Regular review dates (at least half-termly) between the commissioner and the AP provider should be built in to monitor the child's progress against objectives and to consider any changes that may be necessary to ensure the placement is successful. (p 15)
- Where reintegration back into a mainstream school is the main objective, there should be agreement between the home school and the provider on how to assess when the child is ready to return. A joint plan between the provider and home school should be put in place outlining the support package and resources needed from both the placement and the home or new school to help the child to reintegrate back into mainstream schooling successfully. (p 15)
- Schools should always inform the local authority when they commission a placement in alternative provision for a child to ensure the local authority maintains oversight of sufficiency and safeguarding. (p 15)
- Commissioners should maintain regular contact with the provider and child, with clear procedures in place to exchange information, monitor progress and provide pastoral support. A child should not be removed from the home school's admission register, with the school making every effort to ensure that the child continues to feel that they belong and are part of the school. (p 16)
- When a child is attending an alternative provision school, the commissioner should ensure that they have arrangements in place whereby all absence is followed up promptly, particularly unexpected and unexplained absence. When a child is placed in a college or unregistered alternative provision setting, the commissioner should also ensure that they have arrangements in place whereby the provider of the educational activity notifies them of any absences by the child. (p 16)
- The commissioner should always know where the child is during school hours. This includes having records of the actual address of the commissioned alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend. Commissioners should regularly review placements they make in alternative provision. Reviews should be frequent enough (at least half-termly) to assure that the provision is achieving its objectives, that the child is regularly attending and that the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. (p 16)

- Provision should address a child's physical or mental health needs as well as personal, social and emotional needs, alongside their educational needs. For example, ensuring that the child feels like they belong to their home school community, and are able to stay in contact with classmates, and where reasonably practicable have access to the same opportunities enjoyed by their peers (p 17)
- If the home school refers a child to off-site provision on a part-time basis, as part of a planned intervention or placement, they should attend school as usual on the times on which they are not in the alternative provision.
- As a child can enter alternative provision at any point in their school career and at any point in the academic year, it is essential that robust induction and baselining take place. (p19)
- As part of a broader curriculum there should be strong focus on English and mathematics skills and qualifications. (p 20)
- Providers should use a range of appropriate assessment tools and approaches that enable them accurately to measure progress of all children regardless of their entry and exit points, and regardless of the length of time they are in the provision.
- Remote education should not be viewed as an equal alternative to attending school. For this reason, we expect schools to consider it only as a last resort when the alternative would be no education, and only after it has been established that the child is, or will be, absent from school (p 21)
- Education providers offering full-time education for five or more children of compulsory school age or at least one child with an EHC plan or who is looked-after by the local authority are required to be registered as independent schools and meet the Independent School Standards (p 24)