

# School Attendance

## - Issues 3: quotes from national guidance

Please note: 'child' = 'child or young person'

What does guidance and law state about school attendance and those who are in a position to help parent carers and their children and young people (CYP) when they are finding it increasingly difficult to attend school (EBSA). Here are some of the most used quotes that can be used in any discussion or correspondence.

### Schools

#### **Recording absences and Medical Evidence**

Schools must record absences as authorised where pupils of compulsory school age cannot attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).

There is no need to routinely ask for medical evidence to support recording an absence as authorised for mental health reasons.



In instances of long-term or repeated absences for the same reason, however, seeking medical evidence *may* be appropriate to assist in assessing whether the child requires additional support to help them to attend more regularly, and whether the illness is likely to prevent the child from attending for extended periods. If a parent proactively seeks out a note from a GP, it does not imply a need for absence unless this is explicit in their letter. [Summary of responsibilities](#) page 10.

### Health



A child's mental and physical health should be properly supported in these settings so that: "the pupil can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential." *Children & Families Act 2014*

#### **Additional Targeted Support / Removal of barriers**

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. In doing so, schools should sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches. ***Working together to improve school attendance (paragraph 85)***

### Local Authorities

#### **Duty to arrange provision (including alternative)**

"The Local Authority has a duty to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them". *Section 19: Education Act 1996*

### ***Duty to arrange full time provision, Local Authorities should:***

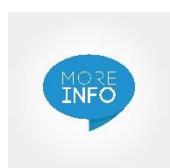
- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the child.
- Ensure that the education children receive is of good quality, as defined in the statutory guidance Alternative Provision (2013), allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from slipping behind their peers in school and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- Address the needs of individual children in arranging provision. 'Hard and fast' rules are inappropriate: they may limit the offer of education to children with a given condition and prevent their access to the right level of educational support which they are well enough to receive. Strict rules that limit the offer of education a child receives may also breach statutory requirements. [Health Needs Guidance - Jan 2013](#)

### ***Local Authorities should NOT:***

- Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child from getting the right type of provision and a good education.
- Withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a child because of how much it will cost (meeting the child's needs and providing a good education **must** be the determining factors).
- Have policies based upon the percentage of time a child is able to attend school rather than whether the child is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.
- Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not they will arrange education for children or inflexible policies which result in children going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in). [Additional Health needs Guidance Jan 2013](#)

### ***When should AP start?***

"while there is **no statutory requirement as to when suitable full-time education should begin** for pupils placed in alternative provision for reasons other than exclusion, LAs should ensure such pupils are placed as quickly as possible." [AP Guide – Jan 2013](#)



#### **Links to further information:**

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)  
[Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)  
[Children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)  
[Mental Health & behaviour in Schools](#)

### **Service Statement**

The role of the SENDIAS service is to ensure all parents, children and young people have access to impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions related to their situation. Any information that is shared with the service is in confidence unless permission has been obtained to share this with any individuals, services and agencies that may be able to help in the circumstances. For more detail, view our [policies and privacy notice](#) on our website.

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