

Alternative Provision

Policy Statement and Procedure

Last Updated: May 2020

Summary

This document outlines Southwark Alternative Provision team's policy for ensuring a suitable education for children who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons would not receive suitable education.

Under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 Local Authorities shall 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, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.

The duty is outline further in Statutory Guidance:

'Alternative Provision, Statutory Guidance for local authorities' (2013)

'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' (2015) (DfE)

'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' (2013) (DfE)

The policy and procedures are intended to assist the Local Authority (LA) in working to statutory guidelines.

In Southwark our duty is discharged through the commissioning of external education providers. A team of Priority Learner Support Officers monitor the education delivered to ensure it is of a high quality and meets individual needs. The named officer in the local authority is: Laverne Noel, Laverne.noel@southwark.gov.uk

Policy Statement

Southwark Local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision. This applies to all children of compulsory school age resident in the local authority area, whether or not they are on the roll of a school, and whatever type of school they attend.

The Southwark Alternative Provision team arrange full-time education as quickly as possible once it is established that a child meets the criteria. While ‘full-time’ is not defined in law, pupils in alternative provision should receive the same amount of education as they would receive in a maintained school unless a pupil’s medical condition makes full-time provision inappropriate. We offer up to 25 hours of a provision dependant on the mode of study.

The local authority’s duty to provide a suitable education also applies where a pupil is registered at a school (maintained, Academy, Free School or independent) but cannot attend school because of illness. Further information can be found in the statutory guidance: ‘Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health’ and Southwark Medical Needs Policy.

Good alternative provision

Good alternative provision is that which appropriately meets the needs of pupils which require its use and enables them to achieve good educational attainment on par with their mainstream peers. All pupils must receive a good education, regardless of their circumstances or the settings in which they find themselves. Provision will differ from pupil to pupil, but there are some common elements that alternative provision should aim to achieve, including:

- good academic attainment on par with mainstream schools – particularly in English, maths and science (including IT) – with appropriate accreditation and qualifications;
- that the specific personal, social and academic needs of pupils are properly identified and met in order to help them to overcome any barriers to attainment;
- improved pupil motivation and self-confidence, attendance and engagement with education; and
- clearly defined objectives, including the next steps following the placement such as reintegration into mainstream education, further education, training or employment

All pupils accessing alternative provision through Southwark Alternative Provision team will be allocated a Priority Learner Support Officer whose role it is to ensure alternative providers assess pupils as swiftly as possible, have the right curriculum in place and have a tracked reintegration plan. They work closely with other professionals to ensure that all pupils personal, social and academic needs are properly identified.

Planning for alternative provision

Referrers to the Southwark Alternative Provision team should recognise any issues or barriers; carry out a thorough assessment of the pupil’s needs and consult with the parent and child prior to a referral. A thorough risk assessment should also be carried out.

A personalised plan is devised by the Priority Learner Support Officer which sets clear objectives for and attainment, timeframes, arrangements for assessment and monitoring progress, and a baseline of the current position against

which to measure progress. Plans are linked to other relevant information or activities such as assessments for 'Education, Health and Care Plans' for children with SEN.

Southwark Alternative Provision team maintain a full record of all placements including a pupil's progress, achievements and destination following the placement.

Commissioning good-quality alternative provision

Responsibility for the alternative provision used rests with the commissioner. Southwark Alternative Provision team agree and define objectives and the timeline, monitor and track pupil progress as well as co-ordinating 4 – 6 weekly reviews with pupil, parents, alternative provider and the child's home school if they are dual registered. All reviews aim to support transition to the next stage. Where reintegration to the school is an objective, the Alternative Provision team will work with all parties to agree how to assess when the pupil is ready to return and the school.

If a pupil is on the roll of their previous or current school, they should remain so and be encouraged to feel part of the school. Records should be kept on a pupil's progress in the provision, appropriate staff liaison arrangements should be in place, and appropriate mechanisms of challenge should be agreed. All schools referring pupils due to health needs must complete a Southwark Alternative Provision team / Home School agreement which outlines roles and responsibilities.

Alternative provision should be good quality, registered where appropriate, and delivered by high quality staff with suitable training, experience and safeguarding checks. It should have clearly defined objectives relating to personal and academic attainment. Where an intervention is part-time or temporary, to help minimise disruption to a pupil's education, it should complement and keep up with the pupil's current curriculum, timetable and qualification route. **An AP provider should be registered as an independent school if it meets the criteria for registration (that it provides full-time education to five or more full-time pupils of compulsory school age, or one such pupil who is looked-after or has a statement of SEN).** All AP Academies and AP Free Schools must be registered as independent schools whether or not they are full-time or part-time.

Southwark Alternative Provision team commission alternative provision that (1) has a clear purpose with a focus on education and achievement (2) is suited to the pupil's capabilities (3) has good arrangements for working with other relevant services such as social care, educational psychology, child and adolescent mental health services, youth offending teams and drug support services etc.

Protocol

Criteria for referral:

The Alternative Provision team takes referrals for alternative provision for young people who are Southwark Residents who are not able to attend mainstream provision due to:

- Medical needs when it becomes clear that the child's attendance will be impacted on by health needs and that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more across the school year (See medical policy)
- Exclusion where a child cannot attend the local Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
- Other reasons such as new arrivals to the country without a school place in the spring term of Year 11.

Consultation prior to referral is always advised

For medical referrals please refer to the policy 'The education of children who cannot attend school because of health needs' May 2020

Referral to the local authority for alternative provision

1. Prior to referral the referrer will:

- 1.1. Consult with relevant professional networks to gather all relevant information about the child. This may include CME teams, Youth Offending Services, Social Care or Family Early Help to produce a risk assessment
- 1.2. Discuss with the parent the reason for referral to alternative provision

2. Making a referral the referrer must:

- 2.1. Fully complete the alternative provision referral form
- 2.2. Submit a copy of the child's attendance certificate and prior academic school records
- 2.3. Submit any behavioural logs, SEN assessments and Team Around the Child minutes.
- 2.4. Fully complete the comprehensive risk assessment; factual and intelligence led evidence will be required in cases where the PRU is not suitable.

3. On receipt of the documents the Alternative Provision team will:

- 3.1. Review the referral to check it meets the criteria outlined above
- 3.2. Identify any additional information that may be required
- 3.3. Check internal databases for any key safeguarding information

There will be some cases where children arrive new to the country without historic information, in such cases the Alternative Provision team will seek to establish academic assessments as swiftly as possible.

4. If approved the Alternative Provision team will:

- 4.1. Contact the identified provider.
- 4.2. Contact the parent and referrer to confirm the named officer leading the case and next steps
- 4.3. Once confirmed the Alternative Provider will arrange a start date for the pupil.
- 4.4. Support and co-ordinate education reviews at the pupils referring school at least every 6 weeks

If not approved the referrer will be provided with a reason why and suggest next steps

5. How decisions are made in securing suitable provision

The Alternative Provision Manager and Service Development Lead assess all referrals. We assess according to prior attainment, personal, social and emotional needs, risk management and reintegration plans including length of time required in alternative provision. We always aim to support pupils in accessing group provision initially however if this is not suitable 1-1 or online learning will be considered.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or Statements missing education are managed by the Special Educational Needs Department.

The end of a placement and reintegration

The Local Authority should have a plan and processes in place to reintegrate the pupil at the end of the placement when he or she returns to the school. This is done through obtaining a final report on the pupil's achievements during the placement including academic attainment and progress, attendance records and evidence of change in behaviour. We always seek the pupil's views on the success of the placement.

In light of this placement information, the Priority Learner Support Officers plan for the pupil's reintegration back into mainstream school via fair access or transition to alternative provision as a step towards that aim from their starting point e.g. from 1-1 tuition to group based alternative provision.

If the placement does not end with reintegration into the school for example, when a pupil reaches the end of Y11 while still in alternative provision – the Priority Learning Support Officers work with the provider, parent and pupil to ensure that the young person can move on into suitable education, or employment alongside part-time study or training. This involves a referral to post 16 services if the young person has not secured a post 16 destination.

Further sources

Related documents:

Legislation

Equality Act 2010

Education Act 1996 Section 19.

Children and families Act 2014 section (3) and (100)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, regulation 8, (1),(g).

Department for education statutory guidance and departmental advice (insert links)

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, May 2013

Alternative Provision statutory guidance for local authorities January 2013

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England. December 2015

Mental health and behaviour in schools, Departmental advice for school staff, March 2016

Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years. Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities, January 2015

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