



# **USE OF SUPPORT OR ALTERNATIVE PROVISION POLICY**

**Summer 2025**

## **Policy for Pupils Undertaking Alternative Provision**

[Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance \(DfE 2013\)](#)

[Education Act \(DfE 1996\)](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2022\)](#)

[Creating opportunity for all: our vision for alternative provision \(DfE 2018\)](#)

[School Attendance Guidance \(DfE 2020\)](#)

[Unregistered Independent Schools and Out of School Settings \(DfE 2018\)](#)

[Guidance of Exclusions and Suspensions \(DfE 2022\)](#)

[Opportunities for All \(DfE 2022\)](#)

[Behaviour in Schools \(DfE 2022\)](#)

[PCC Alternative Provision Guidance 2023](#)

## **Planning and Commissioning Alternative Provision**

This guidance is based upon Section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996, which defines the exceptional provision of education in pupil referral units or elsewhere, such as Alternative Provision providers. It follows the [Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance](#), which provides a set of guiding principles that Plymouth schools and local authorities should follow to ensure that children and young people benefit from high quality provision, which is safe, secure and appropriate to their individual needs.

## **A - Principles and Context**

Alternative Provision is educational provision for pupils who are not accessing mainstream education for a variety of reasons.

These are the main reasons for choosing Alternative Provision:

- The pupil's key talents are not being developed through the National Curriculum. Alternative Provision recognises that we are all individuals with different strengths and weaknesses and that mainstream education is not for everyone.
- The pupil has had one or more suspensions and is considered to be at risk of permanent exclusion from school. Alternative Provision is a strategy to avoid permanent exclusion for pupils and to encourage inclusion in education.

Alternative Provision would only be considered in partnership and discussion with the parents and any professionals involved with the particular child.

### **What is 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 attend. 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 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. (DfE 2013)

### **B – List of alternative providers**

Alternative provision could take the form of part time/full time.

There are two types of alternative provision – registered and unregistered. Alternative Education Provision (AEP) is a registered school and subject to a formal school inspection framework.

Unregistered Alternative Provision (UAP) is not a registered school and is not subject to a school inspection framework. Any provider of education should be registered as an independent school if it meets the criteria – that it provides full-time education to five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one such pupil who is looked-after or has an Education Health and Care Plan.

Alternative Provision in Plymouth is provided by ACE (Primary). Admission to ACE is accessed through discussion with Plymouth Inclusion and Attendance and allocated through Primary Placement Panel.

Nurture provision (intervention), available in the City.

Education Provider	Contacts
<b>ACE</b>	Isabelle Morgan, Kate Duthie Inclusion and Welfare Service Plymouth City Council

### **DfE Registration Requirements**

Schools should be aware of any organisations operating outside of the registration processes for schools, and should inform Ofsted and the LA if they consider a provider to be operating as an unregistered school:

Any provider of education should be registered as an independent school if it meets the criteria – that it provides full-time education to five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one such pupil who is looked-after or has an Education Health and Care Plan. All AP Academies and AP Free Schools must be registered as schools whether or not they are full-time or part-time.

If an establishment falls outside the definition of an independent school given above, it cannot be registered with the department as an independent school. However, Plymouth City Council will need to be satisfied that children of compulsory school age who are attending the establishment are receiving full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, including any provision being made in parallel to that in the establishment.

### **Unregistered schools**

Ofsted may receive information regarding possible unregistered schools. If there is a possibility of any education provider operating illegally, Ofsted will conduct inspections at reasonable notice.

**If you suspect that a provider is potentially operating as an unregistered independent school, please contact [educationwelfare@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:educationwelfare@plymouth.gov.uk) to discuss further.**

### **Definition of full-time provision**

“Full-time education” is not defined in law but the DfE consider an institution to be providing full-time education if it is intended to provide, or does provide, all, or substantially all, of a child’s education. Relevant factors in determining whether education is full-time include:

- a) the number of hours per week that is provided - including breaks and independent study time;
- b) the number of weeks in the academic term/year the education is provided;
- c) the time of day it is provided;
- d) whether the education provision in practice precludes the possibility that full-time education could be provided elsewhere.

Generally, the DfE consider any institution that is operating during the day, for more than 18 hours per week, to be providing full-time education. This is because the education being provided is taking up the substantial part of the week in which it can be reasonably expected a child can be educated, and therefore indicates that the education provided is the main source of education for that child. Inspectors from Ofsted may inspect any premises if they have reasonable cause to believe that an unregistered independent school is being conducted there. At such inspections, inspectors will assess whether the setting meets the definition of an independent school, which will include assessing whether or not the setting is intending to provide, or is providing, all or substantially all of a child’s education.

More information can be found [here](#). All pupils must receive full-time provision in total, whether in one setting or more, unless a pupil’s medical condition makes full-time provision inappropriate, pupils with medical needs must be supported to access as much education as their health needs allow.

## **C - Safeguarding – an overview**

All educational providers understand the health and safety of all pupils and staff underpins all that they do. Tight safeguarding procedures, adhering to national and local requirements, are embedded in all practice and include:

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on all staff
- Essential safeguarding training
- Safe teaching and learning environments
- Sharing of Information protocols
- Health care planning to meet individual pupil need
- Good quality risk assessments are undertaken jointly with the provider, covering both the activity itself and the pupil in the context of the activity.
- Check that health and safety measures are securely in place.

## **Commissioner and school responsibilities**

Once a placement has been agreed, the commissioning organisation maintains overarching responsibility for the pupil. This is discharged through the day-to-day monitoring and assurance work carried out by the school to which the pupil is on roll.

## **D - Process of considering alternative provision**

- Pupils referred to off-site alternative provision should be referred on the basis that this provision is more appropriate for them than a school within the Trust at that time.
- The pupil's school will set up a meeting involving all relevant parties, including parents/carers and others as appropriate.
- A representative from the school will clearly explain to families the reasons why the alternative provision is being offered.
- Prior to placement the school must consider what outcomes they hope to achieve – particularly in the areas of attendance, attitude, attainment, behaviour and positive destination?
- If the placement does not appear to be working, or if the pupil is not attending, a formal meeting should be held involving the school, parent/carer, pupils and any other professionals involved.
- If a pupil is permanently excluded from an alternative provision placement, a meeting will be convened between the pupil's school, alternative provider, and the family to discuss either a return to school or to identify a further alternative provider.

## **E – Attendance**

Each pupil attending alternative provision must remain on a school roll and the school retains the ultimate duty of care for pre-16 pupils, wherever they are being educated. The school have the ongoing duty of care to the pupil, and the provider has an obligation and duty of care to the pupil and the school. To ensure robust safeguarding of pupils in placement, there is an expectation that schools and providers record and monitor attendance. The responsibilities for monitoring attendance daily are as follows:

- The provider is responsible for enrolling pre-16 pupils onto their course(s) and for recording, monitoring and reporting attendance and absences. This MUST be completed twice a day, am and pm. This is a legal requirement for any pre-16 group in the same way as it is for post-16 groups ([The Education Pupil Registration \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)).
- It is the schools' responsibility to authorise and unauthorise any unexplained absences marked by the providers.
- Pupils must attend the offsite provision as required and parents/carers must support this. Failure to attend should follow the same procedure as non-attendance at a Discovery school.
- The Discovery school will monitor attendance during the pupil's provision days and take appropriate action if they are absent.
- The school should maintain on-going contact with the provider, pupil, and their parents/carers; with clear procedures in place to exchange information, monitor progress and provide support.
- If the pupil is persistently absent, the Discovery school will then contact parents and try to resolve the issue to restore attendance.
- The Discovery school will plan and provide support with the logistical arrangements to reasonable ensure that pupils can physically access any Alternative provision. This may involve coordinating with parents/carers, booking a taxi, planning a journey on public transport or a 'walk through' of the journey prior to attending the providers.

Schools and providers must adhere to the [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. Schools are legally responsible for using the correct codes and the importance of using the correct code is also a safeguarding issue. All sessions when a pupil is not expected to physically present in school should be marked appropriately using the DfE registration code as follows:

#### Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements, whereby the provider of the alternative provision, notifies the school immediately of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

#### Code D: Dual Registered at another school

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not

expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

## **F – Health and Safety**

- It is the responsibility of the Discovery school to ensure that for a health and safety check of the premises has been undertaken.
- Any Safeguarding concerns will be passed to the Designated Senior Lead and appropriate action taken as per the Discovery school's Safeguarding Policy.
- The alternative provision (employer) has primary responsibility for health and safety of the pupil and should be managing any significant risks. Commissioning organisations and schools should take reasonable steps to satisfy themselves that providers are doing this.
- Those commissioning and organising alternative education provision must be competent and ensure it is appropriate for a pupil concerned. Provision must be age appropriate and take into consideration any pupil who might be at greater risk, for example due to health conditions or special educational needs, so this can be considered when planning the placement. This should include details of any medical or behavioural circumstances as well.
- Commissioning organisations should discuss with the provider what the pupil will be doing during the placement, noting any relevant precautions. The alternative provision can include specific factors for young people into their existing risk assessment as appropriate.
- Alternative providers must inform parents/carers of any significant health and safety risks to their child on placement and how they are being controlled. Providers must also inform the school.
- Commissioning organisations should satisfy themselves that adequate health and safety arrangements are in place and the work the pupil will be doing is being effectively managed to ensure their health and safety. This will need to consider induction, training, supervision, site familiarisation and any protective equipment that might be needed etc. In addition, pupils should know how and who to raise health and safety concerns.
- Commissioning organisations should carry out appropriate monitoring throughout the placement to satisfy them that providers are continuing to manage the health and safety of pupils on placement. This could be undertaken as part of a general quality assurance visit to assess the overall effectiveness of the provision. Health and safety checks should be undertaken by a competent person and be kept in proportion to the environment and risks involved. Checks should be recorded.

## **G – Quality Assurance**

- Annual Contract compliance check agreements with alternative provision establishments includes scrutiny of policy and procedures on safer recruitment, safeguarding, health and safety and public liability insurance.

- Any agreement around alternative provision for a pupil must be reviewed termly.
- Weekly contact/monitoring is established via the school's InCo involving details around:
  - Academic progress & attainment
  - Safeguarding and health and safety (including quality of accommodation)
  - Personal development and well-being
  - The role of governors
  - Pupils' views

Any concerns are raised with the Head of School/Chief Executive Officer.

- The InCo will on a regular basis quality assure the alternative provision that is in place through agreed observations. Any issues will be raised with the provision and communicated to the Chief Executive Officer.

### **Suggested Commissioning Checklist**

- Check the registration status of each provider and whether they should be registered if they are not. Never use provision which contravenes the registration regulations.
- Check provider's policies and procedures:
- The written behaviour policy setting out amongst other matters the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour
- Detailed curriculum plans and schemes of work, and student assessment procedures
- Particulars of arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and how those arrangements have regard to DfE guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together
- Anti-bullying policy
- Health and safety policy
- Complaints procedure
- Quality of accommodation
- Qualifications and experience of staff
- Arrangements for administering First Aid
- Fire risk assessment and procedures
- Recruitment and vetting checks for staff and management
- Give providers information in writing about social networking, the use of social media and e-safety, making the school's expectations clear.
- Give providers information in writing about the school's expectations for child protection and procedures they should follow if they have a concern about a pupil.
- Support providers to access appropriate safeguarding training and information.
- Give providers information in writing about how the school should be informed of attendance and agree the subsequent follow up of absence.
- Ensure that the provider is transparent with costs and that the service you are commissioning is value for money and appropriate to the needs of the child/young person.



## Appendix A

### **Discovery MAT Compliance Check Form** **Use of Support & Alternative Provision**

Member of Staff

Date:

Position within Organisation

Provider

**The Provider should complete the following sections and sign at end to confirm as an accurate record.**

**Key Policy Area Checklist for Providers – Are these documents in line with current statutory guidelines and cover all the areas below?**

<b>Policy and Procedures</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Single Central register in place		
Safer Recruitment policy and procedures adhered to *		
Safeguarding Policy and staff training*		
Relevant training of staff and policy of Positive Handling*		
First aid trained staff on site		
Health and safety Policy in place and updates provided to staff*		
Staff DBS Clearance up to date		
Employers Liability Insurance in place *		
Public Liability certification with a reputable insurance company in a minimum sum of two and a half million pounds, (£2,500,000)		
Latest Ofsted Report (where applicable)		
Attendance will be shared:		
Safeguarding concerns (including health and safety) will be shared:		

Information that will be shared throughout/at the end of the placement:
---

As part of the Service Level Agreement we require copies of the above (\*)

### Declaration

I confirm the above is a correct representation of our organisation.

All staff involved with our educational programmes, are checked and vetted in line with Ofsted/DfE guidance to cover any staff contact the pupils may have.

I agree to maintain a close relationship with Discovery MAT, informing immediately of any safeguarding concerns, health and safety incidents and absence.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Discovery MAT : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_