

Alternative Provision & Off Site Direction Policy

Weaverham High School



Approved by:	Governing Body	8 th October 2025
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Last reviewed on:	September 2024
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Next review due by:	September 2026
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POLICY ALTERNATIVE PROVISION & OFF SITE DIRECTION

Information on off-site direction can be found in the DfE statutory guidance.

- Alternative Provision (Par 22-25) and
- School Suspension and Permanent Exclusion (Par 35-46)

Context of Policy

Section 29a Education Act 2002 states that: “The governing body of a maintained school in England may require any registered pupil to attend at any place outside the school premises for the purpose of receiving educational provision which is intended to improve the behaviour of the pupil.”

This legislation applies to LA maintained schools and not academies. However, Academies **can** direct pupils off-site for the improvement of behaviour if their funding agreement and/or articles of association make clear that they comply with the above legislation.

Off-site direction will often be used when that learner is at risk of a long suspension or permanent exclusion. It should not be used because the home school is unable to meet the learner’s academic needs, including any additional special educational needs or their medical needs.

Depending on the individual needs and circumstances of the learner, off-site direction can be either:

- Alternative provision or as a
- Short-term Education at a Partner School at another mainstream school (STEPS)

A proposed maximum period should be discussed and agreed upon as part of the planning phase for an off-site direction and outcomes set that relate to a successful return to the home school.

Alternative Provision

Alternative provision is educational provision for pupils who are unable to access mainstream education for a number of different reasons, or who are unsuited to the mainstream provision on offer.

Schools’ have the authority to direct a pupil off site for Alternative Provision for the purpose of improving behaviour. If a pupil is at risk of repeat suspensions then the school will consider placing the pupil at another secondary mainstream provider for a short period of time to support the young person in developing strong and positive routines.

The school recognises that there is a need to ensure that our curriculum is inclusive and accessible, providing opportunities for all pupils to succeed. We also recognise that quality first teaching is the key factor to ensure pupils achieve the academic profile they need to secure their next destination.

Objectives of this Policy

The objectives of this policy are:

- To outline the reasons why pupils might be offered alternative provision.
- To ensure that alternative provision is offered to suitable pupils in a consistent way.
- To provide guidance on the referral process and the suitability of alternative providers.

- To ensure there are suitable procedures in place relating to attendance and the safeguarding of pupils when under the care of alternative providers.
- To outline the arrangements in place for keeping in touch with pupils to monitor academic progress, behaviour and pastoral welfare.
- To guide and support staff with the monitoring and support of alternative provision.
- To outline how school will communicate to pupils and parents prior to and during their Alternative Provision experience.

Reasons why we might offer Alternative Provision

Pupils will be referred to Alternative Provision on the basis that an available provision is more appropriate for them than what Weaverham High School can provide for an agreed period of time. Some reasons might be:

- Alternative provision recognises that pupils have different strengths and weaknesses and that mainstream education is not suitable for some. On the rare occasion we offer this pathway, the young person is likely to have an EHCP or is currently on the SENDK register with the AP placement informing and evidencing pupil need as part of the Assess, Plan Do Review approach.
- The pupil has had repeat suspensions and is considered to be at risk of permanent exclusion from school. Alternative provision is seen as a desirable alternative to permanent exclusion for pupils and to encourage their continued inclusion in education.
- There have been a number of serious incidents where the safety and welfare of the pupil concerned, alongside that of other pupils and staff which result in swift and supportive action to safeguard all members of the community.
- In recognition of the unique demands placed on elite athletes, our school is committed to supporting students who are engaged in high-level competitive sport. In exceptional circumstances, we may grant short-term access to specialist training opportunities during the school day. This support is not intended as a long-term arrangement but as a temporary measure to accommodate specific training needs. To ensure a balanced approach, we have an Elite Sport Mentor in school who will act as a liaison between the student, their parent/carer, and the relevant sporting body. This role ensures that any arrangements made are in the best interests of the student's academic progress and personal wellbeing. All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and approval will be subject to clear communication, academic standing, and the nature of the sporting commitment. This will only be considered if the young person's progress in that field will be hindered.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Body will:

- Monitor the implementation of the Alternative Provision Policy and review it on a regular basis. This will be done via the Headteacher's Report to Governors and Full Governing Body meeting.

Headteacher will:

- Take overall responsibility for the school's use of alternative provision for certain pupils.

- Report to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the implementation of the Alternative Provision Policy.
- Work in collaboration with DSL to ensure safeguarding processes are effective and pupil provision is monitored and evaluated

Senior Leadership Team will:

- Understand and comply with the guidelines detailed within the Alternative Provision & Off Site Direction Policy and other related documents.
- Arrange for the appointment of an appropriate member of staff to attend meetings relating to alternative placements and conduct regular progress visits to the alternative provider.
- Continually assess the quality and suitability of providers of alternative education for our pupils.

Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Managers will:

- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, Examinations, Attendance Officer, and other relevant staff to ensure that the appropriate measures are in place to support pupils who are being educated in an alternative setting.
- Undertake periodic visits to the alternative provision sites to review the progress of the relevant pupils, as requested by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Decide, in collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team, on the appropriate course of action if informed of any serious behavioural incidents by an alternative provider.
- Arrange for the appropriate intervention when a pupil's attendance falls below the Weaverham High School target.

Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Ensure that the alternative provider is registered and approved and that they have relevant policies in place to cover Safeguarding, Child Protection and Health & Safety.
- Ensure that all alternative providers hold a copy of, and adhere to, Weaverham High School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies.

Attendance Officer will:

- Monitor attendance of pupils referred to alternative providers and update records on a weekly basis.
- Provide attendance updates to the Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Managers

Examinations and Data Manager will:

- Provide relevant pupils data to help facilitate the transition from school to the alternative provider.
- Coordinate arrangements with the alternative provider for public examination entries and the completion of public examinations.
- Liaise with the Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Managers to ensure the system for tracking pupils progress is accurately recorded during the scheduled windows for data capture.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) will:

- If appropriate, provide details of provision mapping and other relevant information to the alternative provider to cater for the special educational needs of pupils.

Finance Team will:

- Handle the payment process in relation to alternative provision as authorised by the Headteacher or person with budget holder responsibility.

Suitability of Providers

Weaverham High School facilitates an off site Alternative Provision at the local community centre next to the main school building. The school continually assesses the quality and suitability of this provision and the impact of the educational offer for pupils via its usual quality assurance processes. It is the responsibility of Weaverham High School to ensure that the staff who deliver education and support at the alternative venue are appropriately trained and where necessary registered and approved. In addition, the school is responsible for ensuring they have relevant policies in place to cover Child Protection and Health & Safety.

All pupils who are referred to alternative provision will have access to an appropriate curriculum, covering a range of other subjects. All the qualifications they receive will be nationally recognised and enable progression to further education. Providers must also be able to offer pupils their statutory entitlement to education relating to faith and physical education and should also expect to offer personal, social and health education. This will allow pupils to develop key skills and attributes such as resilience, sexual health, risk-management and self-esteem.

Referral Process

Pupils who are referred to alternative provision will remain on roll with Weaverham High School and the school funds their place in alternative provision. The school remains ultimately responsible for the pupils, and the offer of alternative provision shows a commitment by the school to an inclusive approach to the pupil's education. Where possible provision will be personalised to individual pupils.

Communication with Parents:

SENDCo, Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Managers will communicate regularly with parents prior to any alternative provision being considered to ensure they are aware of the concerns that staff have in relation to the pupil's behaviour, presentation, welfare and safety.

Prior to AP placement commencing, parents and pupils will receive information from the school outlining the reasons for AP. This correspondence will include, where appropriate information to support the school's position and concerns. Additionally, this correspondence will include a date for a face to face meeting to take place.

Weaverham High 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 pupils and his /

her parents / carers the reasons why the alternative provision is being offered. This meeting will ensure there is an opportunity for questions parents and pupils may have, to be answered.

Parents / carers will be informed of the expected timeline relating to AP provision and will be made aware of the review periods that will be in place.

Parents will receive a written confirmation of the Alternative Provision plan, including the agreed Review dates.

Parents and pupils may have the opportunity to visit the AP location prior to the provision commencing.

Alternative provision for a pupil will be regularly reviewed. Timescales and responsibilities for reviewing the agreement will be agreed by the school, alternative provider and parents / carers. Parents will be informed that in the event a pupil fails to attend alternative provision, to do so will carry the same consequences as non-attendance at Weaverham High School.

Impact / success will be measured against targets agreed and these will be regularly reviewed.

Attendance and Safeguarding

All professionals have a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and tracking and reporting attendance at alternative provision is an essential component in achieving this. Attendance at off-site alternative provision will be monitored closely and every step should be taken to ensure that accurate attendance data is kept by Weaverham High School. Alternative providers will contact Weaverham High School whenever the pupils is absent. Pupils who do not attend their Alternative Provision will be given an Unauthorised absence.

Weaverham High School will contact with parents and try and resolve the issue to ensure regular attendance is achieved. When Weaverham High School has arranged transport to and from an alternative provision appropriate DBS checks will be carried out.

Weaverham High School will formally monitor attendance and update records and maintain contact with the alternative provider on a daily basis. Pupils whose attendance falls below the Weaverham High School target will be subject to a number of interventions as set out in the school's Attendance Policy. There is an expectation that any safeguarding concerns are raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Weaverham High School and that all alternative providers adhere to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies held by the school.

Monitoring Academic Progress, Behaviour and Pastoral Welfare

The pupil's attainment data will be communicated to the alternative provider on commencement of placement. A termly report will be completed by the alternative provider as part of the monitoring process. The pupils will be visited on a regular basis by an appropriate staff member from Weaverham High School. The pupil's own views on the placement will be taken into account as part of the monitoring process.

The provider will be expected to contact Weaverham High School to inform them of any serious behavioural incidents. Pupils who are making less than satisfactory progress will be subject to a formal review meeting involving Weaverham High School, the pupils, parents/carers and the provider. In extreme circumstances, or following an agreed number of unsatisfactory review meetings, the placement may be ended

A proposed maximum period should be discussed and agreed upon as part of the planning phase for an off-site direction and outcomes set that relate to a successful return to the home school.

Direction Off Site

Short-term Education at a Partner School (STEPS arrangement)

A STEPS arrangement should be considered by a school if the usual academic and social expectations within a mainstream class are deemed to be appropriate and achievable for this learner at the time of planning. STEPS may be considered when a school has implemented a range of measures but where there is limited improvement or progress made. Parents will be informed of the school's decision when considering a Direction Off Site for the purpose of improving behaviour. Parents will be invited in to school to discuss this support plan. If parents do not engage in a meeting, the school will communicate the plan via other methods including telephone call, letter and email. Prior to medium to long term STEPS commencing, there will be a meeting at the host school to agree timescales, review curriculum and pastoral offer as well as supporting the pupil and family in understanding the objective of the STEPS arrangement and the expectations of the host school.

The purpose of STEPS at the outset is for the learner to make progress and RETURN to the home school.

As part of the planning, alternative options should be considered, once the time limit has been reached, which may include a managed move on a permanent basis (if a learner is in a mainstream school) upon review of the time-limited placement.

Off Site online learning

The school uses a high quality on line virtual learning classroom and management portal with resources to impact learning, assessment and catch up work for pupils whose EHCP states this is the most suitable provision for the young person at this time. The platform used is Nisai which has appropriate and robust safeguarding systems. Off site learning may be ceased in the event a pupil does not engage or if their safeguarding status cannot be verified each day. On these occasions, pupils will have education provision in school until direction off site via an Extended Step Out is arranged.

Managed Move

A Managed Move is a formal agreement between two schools, a learner, and their parents. It allows a learner at risk of long-term disengagement or permanent exclusion to transfer on roll to another mainstream school. The move requires the agreement of the parent/s, the headteacher at the learner's current school, the headteacher at the host school, and the admissions authority of the host school.

The purpose of a Managed Move at the outset is for the learner to progress and STAY at the host school.

NOTE: The School Admissions Code Sections 2:23 and 2:30.

A parent can apply for a place for their child at any school, at any time and must not be refused the opportunity to make an application.

Neither a STEPS arrangement nor a Managed Move can be used when a parent has made an application for a straightforward transfer to another school.

Parental consent is NOT required for a school to direct a learner off-site to Alternative	Transport
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Provision or within a STEPS arrangement. However, it should be a collaborative process as far as is reasonably practicable. Parental consent IS required for a school set up a Managed Move to another school.	Parents have responsibility to take their child to the education provider. Should this be a barrier, parents should discuss with school when AP is first considered so a support plan can be agreed. As a <i>Managed Move</i> can only be set up with parental consent, case by case decisions/agreements can be made around transport costs. The Council is not responsible for providing transport for any learner who transfers school roll following a successful Managed Move.
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