

Commissioning non-school alternative provision

Nurture Education Trust

Responsibility for the oversight of the alternative provision used always rests with the local authority or school that commissioned the placement.

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Reviewed by	Mark Anderson
Role	Head of Centre
SLT responsible for oversight of the commissioning of non-school AP	Samuel Burden
Operational lead with oversight (does not have to be SLT)	Glenn Floyd
Nominated trustee with oversight of the commissioning of non-school AP	Emma Culley
Policy due for review (date)	15/09/2027
This policy must be read in conjunction with these school policies	<i>Safeguarding Behaviour Attendance Medical Needs</i>

¹ [Alternative provision - GOV.UK](#) p15

References

- [Alternative provision - GOV.UK](#)
- [Independent school inspection: toolkit, operating guides and information - GOV.UK](#)
- [Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition: non-statutory guidance for providers running out-of-school settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Registration of independent schools, Departmental advice for proprietors and prospective proprietors of independent schools in England; August 2019](#)
- [School inspection: toolkit, operating guides and information - GOV.UK](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The **model templates** referenced in this guidance can be accessed as downloads, at [Non-school alternative provision templates - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#)

Definition and purpose

This policy aims to provide clear guidance to Nurture Education Trust colleagues and partners in the commissioning of non-school alternative provision [NSAP]. The term non-school alternative provision defines an AP setting which is not a registered school or college (for pre-16 pupils). There are, however, non-school AP settings which are registered for post-16 and also offer education/training to school-age pupils.

Non-school AP settings may deliver an educational, (academic and/or vocational), social, emotional, physical and/or sensory offer, during the school day, where that provision cannot be met in school.

Typically, non-school AP settings are used to provide alternative education or training to pupils to complement their timetable and core offer in school. Current government guidance does not always differentiate between **regulated or registered AP** (e.g., an alternative school setting for a pupil who has been permanently excluded from school, such as a pupil referral unit or short-stay school, or a hospital school) and **non-school AP** (e.g., where a young person may access a vocational course for 1-2 days per week). Pupils accessing non-school AP remain on the roll of their home school.

As per [Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools](#)

All children, regardless of circumstance or setting, should expect to receive a good education. When arranging alternative provision, Nurture Education Trust will ensure that it is good quality, registered where appropriate, and delivered by high-quality staff with suitable training, experience and safeguarding checks.

Alternative provision must be suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude, and any SEN they have.

Placements into alternative provision should always be made with the child's reintegration back into mainstream or specialist education or move onto a sustained post-16 destination in mind.

Adapting education to a child's needs

All children, regardless of circumstance or setting, should expect to receive the same high standard of education as their peers in Nurture Education Trust.

Alternative provision and the framework surrounding it should offer good quality education equivalent to that provided in school. The provision must be suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude, and any SEN they have.

Provision should also support the child to overcome their individual barriers to attainment and achievement, giving equal consideration to their pastoral needs, and enabling them to thrive and prosper in the education system.

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 Nurture Education Trust's community, and can stay in contact with classmates, and where reasonably practicable have access to the same opportunities enjoyed by their peers.

The education offered by alternative provision settings should be of a good quality, delivered by high-quality qualified staff who have undertaken suitable training, and have relevant experience and safeguarding checks.

Children should also be involved in decisions about their education from the outset to the extent that their age, additional needs and health allow. This will help ensure that the child understands the reasons and intended outcome for the placement and will encourage their commitment and engagement.

Children should be given the opportunity to take appropriate and relevant qualifications. This would help prevent them from falling behind their peers and ensure that they are able to access their chosen post-16 destination.

Nurture Education Trust may commission off-site alternative provision (registered or unregistered) to improve behaviour, help prevent a suspension or permanent exclusion, or arrange suitable education for a suspended pupil (from the sixth school day of a suspension or permanent exclusion) under section 100 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Trustees and the Head of Centre must adhere to the regulations set out in [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions).

Pupils who may benefit from non-school AP are often within the most vulnerable cohort. They may have special needs (with or without an EHCP), medical needs, attendance difficulties, challenging behaviour, a social worker, be suspended (after day 6), at risk of permanent exclusion, in care and/or known to supporting agencies such as the Youth Justice Service for example.

Non-school AP settings are not inspected by Ofsted or any other national body, though Ofsted inspectors may visit a non-school AP setting as part of a school's inspection (see [Ofsted](#)).

Identifying a suitable placement

Schools may view providers and filter by category via the [Directory of non-school alternative provision: Provider details - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#). Note that this is not an approved list.

When it is decided that a child would benefit from alternative provision the placement should focus on enabling them to overcome any barriers to learning they may have and to assist them back into mainstream/specialist education or into a sustained post-16 destination. As such, *Nurture Education Trust* will always ensure that a placement will address the individual needs of the child as well as providing education in line with that of Nurture Education Trust to better enable re-integration.

When identifying any placement, *Nurture Education Trust* will always consider the individual circumstances of the child and whether the setting is appropriate. This includes discussions between us and local authority to ensure there are no safeguarding concerns about the location of the placement and that the route between home and provider is manageable and safe.

Nurture Education Trust understands that the commissioning school or local authority is ultimately responsible for the provision they put in place. As such, as the commissioner, prior to placement, we will conduct our own due diligence to assess whether the provision is safe, offers high-quality education and is suitable for meeting the child's individual needs.

Norfolk County Council conducts quality assurance [QA] reviews on known non-school APs. These reports are shared with the provider but no other external colleagues

(unless requested by the DfE or Ofsted). The school should request a copy of the most recent QA report from the provider. If the provider has not been through the QA process, they are advised to contact nonschoolapqa@norfolk.gov.uk to arrange one. For each provider, [Directory of non-school alternative provision: Provider details - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#) will show when the most recent QA has taken place (bottom of the provider's page).

Arranging a placement

As soon as a suitable placement is identified, Nurture Education Trust and the non-school AP setting will agree the nature of the intervention, its objectives, reintegration and the timeline to achieve these objectives. The provider should set this out in a personalised plan for the child.

Regular review dates (at least half-termly) between us and the provider will 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. The provider will be responsible for advising us on any necessary changes and next steps to support transitions.

Where reintegration back into our school is the main objective, there will be agreement between us and the provider on how to assess when the child is ready to return. A joint plan will be put in place outlining the support package and resources needed from both the placement and Nurture Education Trust or new school to help the child to reintegrate back into education successfully.

All objectives and plans will be agreed with all relevant stakeholders, including the parent carers and child, where appropriate. Objectives, plans, roles and responsibilities will be set out in writing by the provider and regularly reviewed with all stakeholders.

When a decision is made to commission an alternative provider to offer outreach support, we will agree on the nature of the intervention, the intended outcomes, and how progress will be monitored and evaluated. Any intervention will be led by the evolving needs of the child and will be kept under review.

Pre-placement

Pre-placement, Nurture Education Trust will ensure that the following checklist has been met:

- a) Liaison with all relevant stakeholders (including the pupil, parent carer, EHCP Coordinator, social worker, Virtual School Advisor for Children in Care, health professional etc.) to ensure that the planned provision is in the best interest of the child

- b) Following initial contact with the AP setting, a site visit and record using the [01 Pre-placement visit record](#)
- c) Completion of the [02 Initial Referral and Admissions](#) form to include the following:
- a. Key pupil details
 - b. Emergency contacts
 - c. Agreed course offer, start date, length of course including a taster day if appropriate
 - d. Agreement that the pupil will attend **no more** than 4 sessions (2 days) per week, to avoid any risk of the setting being deemed an illegal school (see above and the Norfolk County Council Directory for more information)
 - e. Key professional contacts
 - f. Core aims and objectives of the placement
 - g. How progress will be monitored and communicated back to *Nurture Education Trust* (when, how, how often)
 - h. If and how the placement contributes to the pupil's post-16 plans
 - i. SEND/EAL needs of the pupil, including relevant EHCP targets as appropriate
 - j. If appropriate, links to the pupil's Individual Healthcare plan; GP contact details
 - k. Youth Justice Service contacts if appropriate
 - l. How **daily** attendance will be reported back to *Nurture Education Trust*, procedures for non-attendance
 - m. School DSL contact details and agreement for the recording and communicating of safeguarding concerns
 - n. Photo consent
 - o. Behaviour expectations which are in line with the school's own policy (i.e., no smoking etc.); [04 Learner Code of Conduct](#) may be used. How will behaviour incidents (including praise and positive feedback) be communicated? How will such feedback contribute to *Nurture Education Trusts* tracking system for behaviour (and impact on rewards if, for example, reward trips depend on positive points earned)
 - p. Risk assessment
 - q. Agreement of what will happen if the pupil is suspended from school and the suspension impacts on the days during which they would normally be at the AP
 - r. Equipment, clothing required
 - s. Contact with animals and any relevant risk assessments
 - t. Transport
 - u. How lunches and/or snacks will be provided; especially if the pupil is in receipt of Free School Meals, and/or if they have a food allergy/intolerance/are pregnant etc.
 - v. How the setting/school will communicate with parent/carers
 - w. If a TA or other school colleague will accompany the pupil, their contact details and what will happen if that colleague is absent for any reason

- d) If relevant, a pre-placement baseline assessment (helpful if the placement is for social, emotional and/or to improve behaviour) see [03 Pre-placement baseline](#)
- e) Funding: additional funding may be available to the school for a NSAP placement. Please refer to [SEND funding - Schools \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](#) for further guidance
- f) The operational lead for the oversight of pupils attending NSAP will ensure that all relevant documentation (including emails) is stored centrally on The Nurture Education Teams drive to ensure access as required. Access to key information should depend on the system, not a person.
- g) *Nurture Education* understands that when NSAP is commissioned to meet the specific needs of a pupil, they have the responsibility to ensure that the pupil is not disadvantaged in respect of being kept safe, attendance or educational outcomes, including personal development (access to visits and trips, for example).

Oversight of placements

Responsibility for the oversight of the alternative provision used always rests with the local authority or school that commissioned the placement.

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.²

We will maintain regular contact with the provider and child, with clear procedures in place to exchange information, monitor progress and provide pastoral support. The child will not be removed from our admission register, and we will make every effort to ensure that the child continues to feel that they belong and are part of our school.

Pre-placement, *Nurture Education Trust* and the AP provider will have agreed the frequency and method of progress reporting. This should take place at least once every half-term.

During the placement, a school colleague will visit the pupil on site and observe them undertaking the activity. A record of this visit should be logged on the form [05 Alternative Provision Progress visit record](#).

Where possible, the pupil's perspective and views should be recorded on the form [06 Mid or End of placement evaluation](#). If special needs are a barrier to communication, other methods may be appropriate (such as photographs showing that a non-verbal pupil is happy and engaged, for example).

Parent carers and the centre lead at the provision (or relevant tutor or key worker) should also complete form [06 Mid or End of placement evaluation](#). If relevant, other

² Note this guidance states that schools 'should' provide this information to the LA. At the time of publication of this policy, there are not yet systems in place to facilitate this.

professionals (such as an EHCP Coordinator or Virtual School for Children in Care Adviser) may also contribute their views.

Evaluations and placement evidence may be shared during PEPs or EHCP reviews as appropriate.

If the mid-placement visit record and/or evaluation show that changes are required to the offer, such as the type of activity, days or times attended etc., then this should be reviewed, and the initial admissions form amended to reflect the changes.

Any pre-placement baseline assessments may be repeated mid-placement to demonstrate progress.

Nurture Education Trust and the alternative provider will agree on appropriate reporting mechanisms, including how the provider can report any issues or concerns and how the provider keeps records on and reports back information about a child's attendance and progress in the provision.

We will maintain a full record of all placements, including a child's progress, achievements and destination following the placement. This will also include the child's own assessment of their placement.

End of placement

At the end of the placement, the form [06 Mid or End of placement evaluation](#) should be completed by the school, pupil, AP setting and parent/carer. If relevant, other professionals (such as an EHCP Coordinator or Virtual School for Children in Care Adviser) may also contribute their views.

Any pre-placement baseline assessments may be repeated at the end of the placement to demonstrate progress.

Safeguarding

[Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition: non-statutory guidance for providers running out-of-school settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) provides guidance for AP settings on safeguarding.

Where a child is placed in alternative provision, Nurture Education Trust continues to retain safeguarding duties towards the child and should therefore be satisfied that the provision is in a safe environment as well as meeting the child's pastoral and educational needs.

Nurture Education Trust 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.

We will regularly review placements. 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.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, the placement should be immediately reviewed and terminated, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

We will always have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

There are currently no formal safeguarding requirements for safeguarding training in non-school AP settings. Note that Norfolk non-school alternative provisions are expected to subscribe to the [Safer Programme](#) and access the Introduction to child protection training and then the Designated Safeguarding Person training. Commissioning schools are required to check safeguarding arrangements at each non-school AP setting used. *Nurture Education Trust* will use the document [01 Pre-placement visit record](#) to ensure that all safeguarding checks have been carried out pre-placement.

Pupils attending non-school AP may feel more at ease and therefore make disclosures more readily. It is therefore **essential** that the school and NSAP setting agree procedures before any placement starts. As noted in [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#). *Rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews have highlighted that **missed opportunities to record, understand the significance of, and share information in a timely manner** can have severe consequences for children.*

It may be good practice for *Pupils attending off-site AP* to be a standing agenda item for DSL meetings, to ensure that colleagues responsible for safeguarding are able to address issues and identify any patterns or trends.

Pupils attending non-school AP should know how to report worries or concerns and to whom. This should be the same for their parents or carers. There should be a relationship where children can talk freely to all members of staff if they are concerned or worried. Children will be reassured that they are safe and everything they say is taken seriously.

Nurture Education Trust will ensure that relevant staff have regular communication with the child to give them the opportunity to share what is going well and ask if they have any concerns.

Nurture Education Trust will ensure a risk assessment is undertaken before the child starts which assures the school that there are appropriate safeguarding arrangements

in place. A schedule of visits should be implemented to provide ongoing assurances that the non-school AP is appropriate for the child and safeguarding arrangements in place are robust.

Nurture Education Trust will ensure that all non-school settings commissioned are provided with the following key information. This may be recorded using the document [02 Initial Referral and Admissions](#) or Service Level Agreement.

- a) Name and contact details (telephone and email) for the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead
- b) Clear Service Level Agreement on how safeguarding concerns will be communicated, followed up and by whom; and how regular communication between the school and non-school AP will be assured.

Nurture Education Trust will gain assurances from the non-school AP in relation to their safeguarding policy, and procedures, the training attended by staff and that appropriate safer recruitment checks have been undertaken as required in Part 3 of [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Safer recruitment at the non-school AP

Nurture Education Trust will obtain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that we would otherwise perform in respect of our own staff. This includes written confirmation that the alternative provision provider will inform the commissioner of any changes to arrangements that may put the child at risk, e.g. staff changes, so that the commissioner can assure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) requires the following:

208. Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider meets the pupil's needs.

209. The cohort of pupils in Alternative Provision often have complex needs, it is important that governing bodies and proprietors of these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to. Schools should obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at their establishment (i.e. those checks that schools would otherwise perform on their own staff). This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

Nurture Education Trust will ensure that safer recruitment practices are confirmed with each provider using [07 Safer recruitment written confirmation](#). Note that providers **must** inform the school of any changes to staffing which may put the child at risk.

Attendance

It is essential that the non-school AP setting communicates attendance daily within 30 minutes of the planned arrival time, (unless accompanied by a member of school staff). Agreement on how and to whom this will be communicated must be reached and recorded pre-placement (see [02 Initial Referral and Admissions](#) or use the Service Level Agreement). It is not sufficient for a non-school AP setting only to communicate absence.

Pupils attending an off-site **registered** AP school (such as a PRU or hospital school) should be coded as D as they will be temporarily dual-registered.

Pupils attending off-site non-school AP where there is **face-to-face, supervised provision**, should be coded as B in the register, but only once the AP setting has confirmed daily attendance. The register **must not** be flood-coded ahead of time.

If the AP placement has been arranged by the local authority, the absence should be recorded as K.

Some pupils may be accessing online provision which is not face-to-face (even on screen); this should be coded as C.

Senior Leaders will ensure that all colleagues working in attendance understand these codes.

Further detail and guidance is available at [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

ISI

During an ISI inspection, the following will apply. See [1.02 ISI Inspection Handbook September 2026.pdf](#) and [Independent schools inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Note that this is a summary only; further detail can be located via the inspection handbooks:

1. **Information request:** The lead inspector will request information about any off-site AP during the initial telephone conversation. In order that this information is readily available, *Nurture Education Trust* will maintain an accurate and up to date register/log of all pupils attending off-site AP. Responsibility for ensuring that this record is up to date is overseen by *Hannah Baldwin (Attendance Officer)*. The

register will include (as a minimum) names of pupils, year groups, key information (e.g., EHCP, LAC, EAL etc.), AP attended, key contact, address, days and times, the core purpose(s) of the provision.

1. **Parent carer views:** ISI provide a letter to pass on to parent carers to notify them of an inspection. *Karen Utting (Office Manager)* will ensure that the parent carers of all pupils attending off-site AP receive this notification.
2. **AP contact/visits:** *Karen Utting (Office Manager)* will ensure that all non-school AP settings commissioned by the school are informed of an inspection. In some cases, inspectors will telephone or visit a non-school AP setting to verify that *Nurture Education Trust's* leaders have ensured that the placement is safe and appropriate.
3. **Registration status³:** Inspectors will ask the school about the registration status of any APs that they use. Any provider of AP must be registered as an independent school if it caters *full time* for 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one pupil who is in care and/or has an education, health and care plan [EHCP]. *Nurture Education Trust* will ensure that the registration status of any non-school AP has been checked to ensure that it is not using a provider operating as an illegal school. If the school uses AP that should be registered but is not, inspectors will carefully consider whether this affects the likelihood that pupils are safeguarded effectively.
4. **Rationale:** Inspectors will consider the appropriateness of the commissioned placement(s), whether leaders at *Nurture Education Trust* have ensured that appropriate checks have been carried out, the extent to which the pupil(s) benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum if they attend off-site AP, and the attendance, behaviour and personal development of those pupils.
5. **ISI judgements:** Most importantly, inappropriate or insufficient checks on the commissioning of non-school AP may have serious consequences for the safety of a child. In addition, this may also negatively impact on an ISI inspection judgement.

Governance

Nurture Education Trust will ensure that there is effective governance and oversight of the school's commissioning of non-school AP. The nominated trustee is named on the front of this policy. The nominated governor will monitor *Nurture Education Trust's* use of non-school AP via the Head of Centre's termly report to governors (if a section for this does not pre-exist, it is recommended that it be added) and via the operational lead for this area of work. The nominated trustee will ensure that this policy is updated annually, in line with national and local guidance.

³ [Registration of independent schools, Departmental advice for proprietors and prospective proprietors of independent schools in England; August 2019](#)