Alternative Provision Guidance Checklist

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Shaw Education Trust

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Introduction

Shaw Education Trust, subsequently in this policy referred to as 'SET,' has a duty to ensure that appropriate policies and supporting procedures, protocols or guidelines are in place to comply with legislation, enabling all staff to fulfil their roles safely and competently to provide effective and appropriate education for all pupils.

The policy creates a framework for effective commissioning and review of alternative provision. Each School is expected to have a local procedure for the use of alternative provision which reflects this overarching policy.

"This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe in line with the Equality Act 2010. It does not have an adverse effect on race, gender, or disability equality."

Policy Statement

The SET executive provides this policy as a structure for the development of local School alternative provision procedures. The structure includes:

- Ensuring that relevant legislation is acknowledged and adhered to:
- Ensuring that the equality impact assessment process is completed on this policy:
- Establishing a common approach to the commissioning and review of alternative provision:
- Ensuring systems exist to ensure the monitoring of pupil safety, behaviour and progress whilst attending alternative provision.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide a structure for the development, approval, and management of local alternative provision policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all SET schools.



Objectives

- To enable SET wide consistency in the approach to the commissioning and review of alternative provision.
- To establish a framework for ensuring pupils are safe from harm.
- To establish a framework to ensure pupils' behaviour improves during their time in alternative provision.
- To establish the ethos that alternative provision is used for the purpose of securing an improved long-term outcome.
- To establish a framework to ensure pupils make progress during their time in alternative provision.

Roles and Responsibilities

National Education Director will:

- Coordinate education reviews and challenge of referrals, placements and provision quality.
- Ensure this policy is maintained, reviewed and updated as appropriate in line with legislation and good practice. And that all documents and training are cascaded appropriately across the organisation.

Senior Director of Safeguarding will:

- Ensure the school and Alternative Provision have submitted relevant safeguarding checklists which evidence compliance to expectations in line with KSCiE and statutory requirements.

Headteachers will:

- Complete due diligence, obtain approval, monitor safeguarding, attendance and outcomes, and retain placement evidence.
- Be responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to and locally regularly reviewed. They are responsible for ensuring that consideration is given to any training and resources implications that are defined through their local procedures.



Chairs of Academy Councils will:

- Review academy use, outcomes and assurance and challenge exceptions.

Guiding Principles

Reasons why a school might offer Alternative Provision

Pupils may be referred to Alternative Provision on the basis that the provision may be better placed to offer bespoke support for the pupil at that time. Some reasons might be:

- The pupil's strengths are not being developed through the standard curriculum. The emphasis on vocational education that some alternative provision offers may better meet the pupil's needs.
- The pupil has had one or more fixed-term exclusions 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.
- The pupil has not been attending school regularly and is therefore unlikely to achieve the progress expected of them. Alternative provision may provide a greater opportunity for a pupil to progress to a suitable placement during the next step of their education.

AP placement should be seen as temporary solutions and returning a pupil to full-time education in school should be the goal. To that extent placements should be set for a period of approximately 6 weeks maximum, and then a review should occur to determine if the placement should be extended another 6 weeks or ended.

However, there may be a small number of cases that a longer-term placement is appropriate due to either the needs of the pupil or the specialised provision that is offered. Nevertheless, **reviews should always occur every 6 weeks** for all AP placements and documented.

Reaching a decision to explore an Alternative Provision placement

- The decision must be taken through discussion with an appropriate range of professionals. The Headteacher must approve the decision.



- Each School must have a mechanism in place to consult with the pupil.
- Each School must have a mechanism in place to consult with those who have parental responsibility for the pupil.
- The school will use DfE publication **'Alternative Provision: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities'** (February 2025), and the **'Non-school Voluntary national standards'** (August 2025) as a basis for deciding the appropriateness of an alternative provision placement.
- Pupils who are referred to alternative provision will remain on roll of the school and the school funds their place in alternative provision. The school remains ultimately responsible for the pupil, and the offer of alternative provision shows a commitment by the school to an inclusive approach to the pupil's education.
- A representative from the school will clearly explain to pupil and his/her parents/carers the reasons why the alternative provision is being offered.
- The pupil's parents/carers will sign a relevant alternative provision contract.
- Responsibilities for supporting the pupil and timescales for reviewing the contract must be agreed during a meeting.

Establishing the suitability of alternative providers

Each School must ensure that all standards outlined in the Non-school alternative provision: voluntary national standards are met for parts One, Two and Three. Part Four covers 'quality of education,' and this will be dependent on the purpose of the AP placement as to whether all or only some aspects are relevant.

- Part 1: Safeguarding and the welfare of children
- Part 2: Health and safety
- Part 3: Admissions, support and guidance
- Part 4: Quality of education

The full list of standards is contained in Annex B in which the AP must complete the relevant declaration forms and return to school lead before placement can occur.

The alternative provision should have high-quality relevant policies and procedures in place, which may be dependent on the nature of the provision.



Schools do not have to check through all policies and procedures individually but may choose to ask for certain information, e.g. school staff should be conscious of looking at the main safeguarding policy in place and procedures which most impact on the pupil's placement there, e.g. curriculum programme, tracking system, reporting procedures, attendance/absence reporting etc.

In addition:

- The alternative provider should sign a written agreement with the school regarding the provision to be offered. This will clearly set out the expectations of all parties.
- The alternative provider should provide clear lines of communication between them and school leaders.
- There is an expectation that any safeguarding concerns are raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school and that all alternative providers adhere to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies of the School.
- Schools must ensure that regular, on-site 'eyes-on' checks are carried out, at least for any pupil attending alternative provision (AP) full-time, and therefore not routinely seen by school staff, i.e. at least once every half-term/six weeks. It may also be valid to visit provisions regularly too of those pupils who do attend the school part time. The frequency of these visits should be determined by a range of factors including the pupil's vulnerability to the school's familiarity with the AP provider all on site visits must be documented by the school.
- Schools should maintain regular communications too with the pupil to ensure their voice is heard and they have a system of raising concerns with school.

Reviewing the alternative provider's impact

Any agreement around alternative provision for a pupil should be regularly reviewed. Timescales and responsibilities for reviewing the agreement will be agreed by the school, alternative provider, and parents/carers.

The impact and success of the placement will be measured against targets agreed in the initial meeting and these will be regularly reviewed.

The school will use the written contract with the alternative provider to manage the arrangement. Failure to deliver on the agreement must be addressed immediately.



Ceasing the alternative provision

School leaders must immediately cease any placement which is likely to put the pupil in danger. Leaders must hold the alternative providers to account for the progress pupils are making. If this is unsatisfactory, then school leaders must seriously consider ceasing the placement.

The placement must be ceased at a point when the pupil is likely to be successful during the next stage of their education, employment, or training.

Authorisation of Placement

Ideally, before the placement starts, schools should have declaration forms in Annex B & C completed and returned to relevant SET colleagues for authorisation as follows:

- Your relevant National Education Director for your setting will verify the educational integrity of the placement.
- Senior Director of Safeguarding at SET will verify appropriate checks have been completed.

(The following checklists are available as a Word document on intranet next to this policy)

Annex A: Letter template to AP

Dear Sir/Madam *date*

Alternative Provision Verification Letter

This letter is to outline our expectations of external organisations and individuals who offer Alternative Provision to the pupil of Schools within our Trust. In accordance with DfE statutory guidance contained within the most recent version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' Part Three: Safer Recruitment, regarding AP, our Trust will ensure all our Schools follow this guidance. It states:

"Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil.

Schools should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its 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 assure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff."

Therefore, in accordance with these requirements, this letter sets out some of the expectations we have of AP providers in considering using them for the benefit of our pupils. **We would be grateful if you could read these details contained in this letter and complete and return the two checklist declaration forms to the relevant School.** Thank you.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant School.
Yours sincerely

Signed on behalf of School

Annex B: AP Declaration Forms

Part A: To be completed by AP provider and returned to relevant School	
Provision Name	
Type of provision offered	
Is the provision an Independent Registered School, i.e. provides full-time education to: • five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or • one such pupil who is looked-after, or • one such pupil with an EHCP. "Full-time education" is not defined in law, but DfE state they will consider any institution that is operating during the day for more than 18 hours per week to be providing full-time education. If so, provide URN number	
Is the alternative provision a 'legal entity', i.e. it is listed officially on, for example, Companies House, or listed in Charity Organisation, and has appropriate legal identification? Please insert link to relevant info to ensure verification.	
Has the provision received any recent quality assurance by external bodies? If so, please give details	
Does the provision use any other agencies that pupils may engage with? (If so, please provide full details and assurances of checks to School)	
School Name	
Name of AP adult completing this verification	
Name of AP nominated 'child-safeguarding lead'	
Name of adult at School in liaison with Provision	
Is the alternative provider is acting in a way that would undermine the equalities act	
Signed	
Date	

The Department for Education (DfE) published voluntary national standards for non-school alternative provision (AP) in August 2025. These set expectations across four key themes to ensure provision is safe and of high quality. Until these standards are made mandatory, the DfE encourages providers to adopt the standards voluntarily to improve and support current practice.



Providers are asked to confirm whether they comply with the standards and, where they do not, explain the reasons. Non-compliance does not automatically prevent a placement from proceeding, but all Part One, Two and Three requirements **must** be met.

Part B: To be completed by AP provider and returned to relevant School	
Part 1: Safeguarding and the welfare of children	Y/N
1.1 All staff, including proprietors, should undergo recruitment checks including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with barred list check where appropriate. Checks should be recorded on a single central record and persons who fail to meet those checks should not be employed	
1.2 Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children attending the provision	
1.3 Robust procedures are in place outlining how to respond when a safeguarding or welfare concern arises	
1.4 All staff should be familiar with the provider's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children	
1.5 Providers should have a named child safeguarding lead who has received appropriate, documented training	
1.6 Site access should be restricted to children receiving provision, the provider's own staff, and supervised visitors	
Part 2: Health and safety	Y/N
2.1 An appropriate health and safety policy is in place and implemented effectively	
2.2 First aid equipment and/or facilities are readily available and there are arrangements for access to a qualified first aider	
2.3 A system should be in place and in use for recording and reporting health and safety and first aid incidents	
2.4 All specialist equipment used by the provider should have undergone relevant inspection and safety checks consistent with industry standards	
2.5 Staff should hold appropriate qualifications and be suitably trained in the use of specialised equipment	
2.6 An appropriate fire safety policy should be in place	
Part 3: Admissions, support and guidance	Y/N
3.1 Admissions policies and referral processes should be clearly documented and well supported	
3.2 Providers should maintain records, including information supplied by commissioners, for all children placed in their settings	

3.3 Providers should have an induction process to help children to understand the intended outcomes of their placements and their setting's safeguarding and health and safety policies	
3.4 Providers should record children's attendance for each session and share information promptly with commissioners. Processes should be in place for checking on the health and welfare of absent children, and to agree strategies to improve attendance	
3.5 All providers should have a strategy to support good behaviour for learning, to record children's behaviour and progress, and to share information about behaviour routinely with commissioners and parents	
Part 4: Quality of education	Y/N
4.1 Teaching staff and instructors should have the appropriate skills, knowledge and qualifications to deliver programmes	
4.2 Planning for learning shows lesson/session plans identify the knowledge, skills and understanding that all children attending their settings will aim to achieve	
4.3 There is a clear process for setting targets and monitoring learning progress, supporting re-integration and transition where appropriate, and for taking actions if progress is not on track	
4.4 Providers should have processes in place to self-evaluate whether they are effective in delivering the commissioned services	

Annex C: School Declaration Forms

This is a checklist for School to complete and return to Senior Director of Safeguarding Brian.duffy@shaw-education.org.uk, along with the AP declaration forms from Annex B.

This document is intended to be used by individual schools when they are considering commissioning alternative provision. The checklist is not intended to be exhaustive. School leaders must pursue lines of enquiry with tenacity.

This checklist should be used in conjunction with the 'verification letter' to AP providers.

IMPORTANT: If there has been a gap of one full term or equivalent approx. 15 weeks, where a provision has not been used by a School, the checklist and AP signed letter must be resubmitted.

School name	
Senior leader completing the checklist	
Alternative provision name	
Date	
Date the checklist was shared with the school leaders	



Criteria	Comment	RAG
There is always a clear rationale in place to establish that the alternative provision will allow the pupil to make **good academic progress**		
The alternative provision is a **'legal entity'** This means that it is listed officially on for example, Companies House, or listed in Charity Organisation, and has legal identification of some appropriate form. **Please insert relevant info used to ensure this.**		
Is the provision an Independent Registered School, i.e. provides full-time education to: five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one such pupil who is looked-after, or one such pupil with an EHCP. "Full-time education" is not defined in law, but DfE state they will consider any institution that is operating during the day for more than 18 hours per week to be providing full-time education. If so, provide URN number.		
The AP has returned to School signed **Declaration Forms** with confirmation of all necessary standards have been met, i.e. Safeguarding, H&S and Admissions? (see letter)		
School is satisfied with the AP's mechanism for **reporting daily attendance** to the school. Systems to address non-attendance are clear to both the alternative provider and the school.		
The school regularly checks on placed pupils at the AP via on-site visits (**at least once every 6 weeks**), and maintains regular contact with the pupil.		
The alternative provider is able to provide **clear lines of communication** between them and School leaders.		
Any **qualifications** the pupils can access will be **nationally recognised** and enable progression to the next steps of their education, employment or training.		
AP is able to offer pupils an **appropriately broad and balanced curriculum, including personal development, where available.** School leaders will be required to make a professional judgment about this aspect in relation to the needs of the pupil. If appropriate, pupils should also		

expect to access personal, social, health and economic education (PSCHE). This will allow pupils to develop key skills and attributes such as resilience, sexual health, risk-management and self-esteem.		
The alternative provider has a good **quality target setting and tracking** system in place to allow pupils to make good progress, where appropriate.		
The alternative provider has good quality systems in place to use **assessment information** to inform their teaching practice, where appropriate.		
The alternative provider has a clear mechanism for **reporting progress** to pupils, the school and parents. This mechanism must be at least in-with School expectations.		
The alternative provider is **resourced adequately** to deliver on its stated offer.		
The alternative provider has a good **quality induction** process in place.		
The alternative provider has an effective mechanism for pupils to be able to **share their views.**		
The alternative provider is able to **counter-sign a written agreement** with the school regarding the provision to be offered. This will clearly set out the expectations of all parties.		
The alternative provider has effective systems in place for **providing careers education and guidance.**		



Working together to inspire communities where every school is valued, every voice matters and every learner thrives.

Shaw Education Trust

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