

EDSTART SCHOOLS

Alternative Provision Policy

PEOPLE, GOVERNANCE & EMPLOYMENT

Policy owner	EdStart Specialist Education Ltd
Applies to	EdStart Schools – All Sites
Category	People, governance & employment
Approval and validity	September 2026 to September 2027
Review trigger	Annual review, or earlier following statutory, regulatory or operational change

Status: This 2026 version supersedes all previous versions.

September 2026 Ofsted inclusion note

From September 2026, Ofsted's updated inspection toolkit makes inclusion a dedicated judgement area. As part of gathering evidence on inclusive approaches to attendance and behaviour, inspectors will check whether leaders have worked with parents and the local authority to ensure that pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan have suitable support to attend and behave well while placed in alternative provision, including where provision is commissioned from a third party. To evidence this, EdStart sites maintain and can demonstrate:

- a current record of each EHC plan's outcomes and specified provision, cross-referenced against that pupil's individual support arrangements;
- evidence of engagement with parents/carers and the local authority where an EHC-plan pupil's attendance or behaviour gives cause for concern, including the actions taken and their impact;
- regular review of whether reasonable adjustments and EHCP-specified provision are being delivered in practice, not only recorded on paper.

1. Rationale

At EdStart alternative provision is an educational/vocational provision for pupils who are not accessing fully their education package within the service we provide.

Good alternative provision is that which appropriately meets the needs of the pupil who require its use, and enables them to achieve good educational/vocational attainment.

By exploring alternative provisions, it is acknowledged that individuals have different strengths and weaknesses and that conventional learning is not for everyone.

Alternative provision presents different situations with different subjects for pupils, which may encourage attendance and motivation for learning.

2. Criteria for referral to Alternative Provision

- Pupil has on-going SEMH issues which necessitate further intervention
- Pupil has a recent deterioration in SEMH issues
- We have been advised to use AP following advice from the LA or the SEN team.
- The pupil needs to re-engage with learning and motivation at school.
- Benefits can be seen for the pupil with regards to their academic progress
- Is a vocational or educational element of their EHCP or emerging need

3. Benefits

- A greater range of vocational experiences and qualifications can be offered
- Pupils are given a degree of flexibility in how they learn
- Pupils are given more independence and are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves
- Pupils who are following a pathway they like are motivated to attend and achieve good results which can promote higher self-esteem
- Offer of alternative provision shows a commitment by the school to an inclusive approach to the pupil's education
- Improved outcomes for pupils
- Individualised learning programs
- Enhanced life chances
- Security and stability
- Improved pupil motivation, self-confidence, attendance and engagement with education.
- Specific personal, social and academic needs of pupils are properly identified and met in order to help them to overcome any barriers to attainment.

4. Principles

- Responsibility for the alternative provision used rests with EdStart. We have to consider which providers will meet the needs of the pupils, including the quality and safety of the provision, costs and value for money
- EdStart will have clearly defined objectives, including the next steps following the placement
- EdStart will maintain on-going contact with the provider and pupil, with clear procedures in place to exchange information, monitor progress and provide pastoral support
- EdStart will maintain a full record of all placements they make, including a pupil's progress and achievements
- EdStart will fund the place in alternative provision
- EdStart remains ultimately responsible for the pupil
- EdStart will always aim to ensure that pupils continue to receive English and Maths tuition
- Pupils who are referred to off-site alternative provision will be referred on the basis that this provision is appropriate for them and adds value to what the school is providing
- Any breakdown in alternative placements will be discussed and meetings convened accordingly. Inability to resolve breakdowns will result in the pupil returning to the school
- Pupils will be monitored by Safeguarding and Pastoral Staff weekly either by telephone / email or visits
- EdStart will ensure arrangements are in place for working with other relevant services. When a learner has an EHC plan, liaise with the Local Authority
- Where a pupil is eligible for free school meals, EdStart will communicate this to the provider and suitable arrangements will be made

- EdStart will ensure that primary contact is continued with the parents/carers, unless it has been agreed with the provider that this is delegated
- EdStart will ensure that the pupil remains a member of the school community

5. Commissioning check list

EdStart will:

- Check the registration status of the provider
- Check the provider's policies and procedures, including behavior policy (sanctions), curriculum plans/schemes of work/assessment procedures, anti-bullying, health and safety (keeping children safe in education and working together), 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.
- Provide all Alternative Provision Providers being commissioned by EdStart with a copy of the School's Safeguarding Policy including the school's expectations for child protection and procedures they should follow if they have a concern about a pupil
- Provide all Alternative Provision Providers being commissioned by EdStart, information 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 provider is value for money and appropriate to the needs of the pupil
- Ensure the provider is meeting the identified needs of the pupil, particularly if they have an

Ehcp

- Support providers to access appropriate safeguarding training and information if required
- Establish a key point of contact for discussing concerns, reporting any serious accidents or incidents
- Relevant information will be shared with alternative providers. Information will be provided in accordance with GDPR/data protection principles

The provider will:

- Ensure they are compliant with the most recent DfE guidance around legislation and DfE national code recording in respect of Attendance
- Maintain regular contact with the school with regular updates on pupil progress
- Notify the school of attendance and absence
- Attend relevant multi-agency meetings around the pupil if required.
- Provide relevant policies and procedures that relate to the pupil's welfare, education and safety
- Have clear monitoring systems
- Inform school of any significant health and safety risks to the child on placement and how they are being controlled
- Provide risk assessments
- Provide a named contact for all matters pertaining to the pupil
- Approved alternative providers will deliver good quality learning by high quality staff with suitable training, experience and safeguarding checks. The latter will be verified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in consultation with the Centre Manager and passed to the School HR Manager for inclusion onto the Single Central Record

6. Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils is everyone's responsibility. All providers should make sure their approach is child-centered, which means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child/young person. However, EdStart has a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils and tracking and reporting attendance at alternative provision is an essential component in achieving this. EdStart must satisfy themselves that providers are compliant with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

We will carry out the following checks with providers prior to the start of the provision to confirm that:

- Relevant internal policies are in place
- Staff have the required level of DBS clearance as per Section 201 of KCSIE (2022)
- Staff have other relevant safeguarding and Prevent training
- Relevant Risk Assessments are in place
- Relevant Health & Safety checks have been carried out

There is an expectation that any safeguarding concerns are raised with the School Designated Safeguarding Lead and all alternative providers adhere to the Child Protection Policy held by the school, which will be provided to them.

7. Health and Safety

The provider has the responsibility to ensure that young people at work are not exposed to risk. The provider has primary responsibility for health and safety of the pupil and should be managing any

significant risks. EdStart will take reasonable steps to satisfy ourselves that providers are doing this. When commissioning the alternative provision, relevant health and safety information will be obtained to assess the suitability of the provider. EdStart will check that the provider understands about any specific factors relevant to our pupils. Any accidents or incidents should be report them to the school. EdStart will carry out appropriate monitoring throughout the placement.

8. Attendance

Once alternative provision has been set up pupils must attend and failure to do so will carry the same consequences as non-attendance at school. Attendance will be monitored by the Attendance Officer. This will be verified carefully to ensure that accurate attendance data is transferred to the management information system(s) operated by the school.

Pupils who attend alternative provision on a part-time basis will attend school as usual on the days on which they are not in the alternative provision.

9. Pupil Progress

- Providers will use appropriate baseline assessments to ascertain pupil starting point (to demonstrate progress over the course)
- Providers will set challenging but realistic targets for pupils
- Regular verbal reports will be provided to the Centre Manager

10. Behaviour

Pupils attending an alternative provision will be expected to adhere to a code of conduct as outlined by the individual provider. Pupils are expected to represent the school positively through their behaviour and attitude and any infringement of the Behaviour Policy could result in termination of the placement.

Only EdStart can sanction fixed or permanent exclusions, the provider may use their internal procedures to suspend the pupil from attendance at their provision if the provider's code of conduct has been breached or if the pupil poses a health and safety risk to others. Providers should always discuss the use of sanctions with EdStart and the provider should notify the school if the placement cannot continue, detailing the reasons.

11. Procedure

- EdStart will set up a meeting involving all relevant parties, including parents/carers and others as appropriate
- EdStart will set up a visit to appropriate provider for pupils and parents / carers
- A representative from EdStart will clearly explain to families the reasons why the alternative provision is being offered
- Pupils must attend the off-site alternative provision as required and parents/carers must support this

- Alternative learning providers will contact the school whenever the learner is absent. EdStart will then make contact with parents and try and resolve the issue to ensure regular attendance is achieved
- EdStart will formally monitor attendance and update records and maintain contact with the alternative learning provider on a weekly basis
- If the placement does not appear to be working or if the pupil is not attending - a formal meeting will be held involving the school, parent/carer, pupil and any other appropriate person. The meeting will reinforce the expectations of the original agreement while seeking feasible alternatives

12. Staff responsibilities

EdStart employs Designated Safeguarding Leads who together with the Headteacher has responsibilities for:

- Sourcing appropriate alternative providers in line with pupil interests and skills
- Meet regularly with alternative providers and pupils to review progress
- Monitor attendance of pupils in alternative provision

The use of alternative provision is overseen by the Headteacher and Centre Manager who will ensure that any agreement around alternative provision for pupils is regularly reviewed. Termly verification and evaluation visits will also be conducted by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Centre Manager.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will ensure Service Level Agreements are in place and regularly review the use of alternative provision to ensure that individual programmes are demonstrating value for money against pupil progress and outcomes.

Version: September 2026

Appendix 1

AP Monitoring Form

EdStart Specialist Education Pupil Referral Service

Alternative Provision Specification

Establishment:

Address:

Telephone number:

Email

Contact:

1 Insurance

1.1 What is the expiry date of your Public Liability Insurance?

1.2 What is the indemnity limit?

1.3 What is the expiry date of your Employer Liability Insurance?

1.4 What is the indemnity limit?

2 Health & Safety and emergency policies

2.1 Do you comply with relevant health and safety regulations, including the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations, and have a written health and safety policy and recorded risk assessments which are available for inspection?

2.2 Do you have accident and emergency procedures in place, with records available for inspection?

3 Safeguarding

3.1 Have you undertaken certificated Prevent Duty Training?

3.2 If the answer to the above questions is "NO" then please refer direct to the Home Office Website – see link below

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

3.3 Please provide a copy of your Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy?

4 Vehicles

4.1 Are all vehicles to be used roadworthy and do they meet the requirements of regulations on passenger seats and seat restraints?

4.2 Do you maintain and confirm driving qualifications for all staff who transport students?

4.3 Are all vehicles used insured for Business Use in accordance with the Alternative Provision being provided ?

Staffing

5.1 Are staff who have access to young people checked for relevant criminal history and suitability to work with young people? See

Appendix 1: (Staff list to include DBS details)

5.2 Have regular meetings been arranged for liaison between your staff and our staff?

5.3 Is there sufficient flexibility to make changes to staffing and programmes if any issues arise deeming the current arrangement to be not fit for purpose ?

5 Sub-contracting

6.1 Will you sub-contract any services?

6.2 Where any element of provision is sub-contracted, can you confirm that each sub-contractor meets the relevant specification outlined in other sections of this specification. Please provide evidence of this.

6 Activity Management (complete for all taught or instructed activities)

7.1 Do you have a policy for staff recruitment and training and assessment which ensures that all staff with a responsibility for participants are competent to undertake their duties?

7.2 Do you maintain a written code of practice for all activities which is consistent with National Governing Body guidelines?

7.3 Do you confirm staff competence by appropriate National Governing Body qualifications for the activities undertaken or have staff had their competence confirmed by an appropriate qualified and experienced Technical Adviser?

7.4 Where there is no National Governing Body qualification for an activity are operating procedures, staff training and assessment requirements explained in a code of practice?

7.5 Will participants have access at all times to a person with a current appropriate first aid qualification and staff practiced and competent in accident and emergency procedures?

7.6 Is there a clear definition of responsibilities between establishment staff and visitors regarding supervision and welfare of participants?

7.7 Is all equipment used in activities suited to the task, adequately maintained in accordance with statutory requirements and current practice, with records kept of health and safety and maintenance check as necessary?

8 Accreditation

8.1 Please provide details of any relevant accreditation with reference numbers and expiry dates

9 E-Safety

9.1 Please confirm that your technical infrastructure is secure and is not open to misuse or malicious attack

9.2 Does the provision meet all required e-safety technical requirements and any Local Authority / other relevant body E-Safety Policy / Guidance that may apply?

9.3 Please confirm that the participants may only access the networks and devices through a properly enforced password protection policy, in which passwords are regularly changed?

9.4 Please confirm that your filtering policy, is applied and updated on a regular basis

9.5 Please confirm that you keep up to date with e-safety technical information in order to effectively carry out your e-safety role and to inform and update others as relevant

9.6 That the use of the network / internet / Virtual Learning Environment / remote access / email is regularly monitored in order that any misuse / attempted misuse can be reported to the Headteacher / Senior Leader; E-Safety Coordinator for investigation / action / sanction

9.7 All staff have an up to date awareness of e-safety matters and of the current school e-safety policy and practices

10. Concerns/Actions

Declaration – to be completed by all providers

Our organisation is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All the required, relevant and up to date policies and procedures are in place in compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Signed:

Date:

Name:

Role:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Website: