



Off-Site Direction Guidance

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1. Definition of an Off-Site Direction (OSD)

This document provides guidance for schools who are considering an Off-Site Direction for a child of compulsory school age.

An Off-Site Direction is a short-term measure that can be used as part of a school's behaviour management strategy. It can be used to arrange time-limited placements at an alternative provision (AP) or another mainstream school as a preventative measure to exclusion.

Depending on the individual needs and circumstances of the pupil, Off-Site Direction into alternative provision can be full-time or a combination of part-time support in alternative provision and continued mainstream education.

2. Legislation

Current government guidance [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](#) advises school leaders that:

Any use of alternative provision should be based on an understanding of the support a child or young person needs in order to improve their behaviour, as well as any SEND or health needs. Off-Site Direction may only be used as a way to improve future behaviour and not as a sanction or punishment for past misconduct. Off-Site Direction should only be used where in school interventions and/or outreach have been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate and should only be used to arrange a temporary stay in AP.

3. Principles

The use of an Off-Site Direction from one Warwickshire school to another education setting is conducted with the following principles in mind.

An Off-Site Direction Should:

- **Be a Part of a Behavioural Improvement Strategy:** Off-Site Directions should be used as part of a wider strategy to improve a pupil's behaviour. This can include time spent in another school or alternative provision to address specific issues such as disengagement, behavioural challenges or specific learning needs.
- **Support Educational Continuity:** The Off-Site Direction should provide educational continuity and offer high-quality provision tailored to the pupil's needs. The pupil should continue to receive an education that is suitable to their age, ability, and any identified special educational needs (SEN).
- **Be Agreed and Communicated with Parents/Carers:** Parents or carers must be informed and agree to the off-site placement. The purpose, duration, and goals of the Off-Site Direction should be clearly explained to them, ensuring transparency and understanding.
- **Be Reviewed Regularly:** The Off-Site Direction should be reviewed at agreed intervals, typically every 6 weeks. This ensures that the placement is still

appropriate for the pupil's needs and that it is having the intended positive impact on their behaviour and engagement.

- **Be Tailored to the Individual Needs of the Pupil:** The chosen off-site provision must meet the specific needs of the pupil. This could include addressing behavioural issues, emotional well-being, or academic catch-up. The provision should be suitable to help the pupil re-integrate into mainstream education if appropriate.
- **Have Clear Objectives and Success Criteria:** The Off-Site Direction should have clearly defined objectives and success criteria. The school, off-site provider, and the pupil should all be aware of what progress is expected during the off-site placement.
- **Ensure Safeguarding Arrangements Are in Place:** The safeguarding of pupils should be a priority. The off-site provider must have robust safeguarding procedures, and the school should ensure that there is effective communication between the off-site provider and the school regarding any concerns.

An Off-Site Direction Should Not:

- **Be Used as a Punishment or Exclusion Substitute:** Off-Site Directions should not be used as a form of punishment or a substitute for exclusion. The purpose of an Off-Site Direction is to support the pupil, not to remove them from the school environment as a disciplinary measure.
- **Be Imposed Without Parental Involvement:** Parents/carers must be involved in the decision-making process, and an Off-Site Direction should not be imposed unilaterally by the school. The pupil and their family should understand the rationale behind the decision.
- **Be an Indefinite Arrangement:** Off-Site Directions should not be open-ended. The direction should have a clear duration, with regular reviews to assess progress and determine when the pupil is ready to return to mainstream education or if further interventions are needed.
- **Lead to Social Isolation:** The off-site placement should not result in social isolation or disengagement from peers. The pupil's social and emotional development should be considered, and efforts should be made to maintain connections with their school community, where appropriate.
- **Lack a Focus on Reintegration:** The primary goal of an Off-Site Direction should be to help the pupil reintegrate into mainstream schooling, where appropriate. Off-site placements that do not include a clear plan for eventual reintegration may hinder long-term progress.
- **Be Implemented Without Monitoring:** Schools must not send pupils off-site without clear plans to monitor the placement. Regular communication with the off-site provider is essential to track progress and address any concerns.
- **Ignore the Pupil's Educational and Welfare Needs:** Off-Site Directions should not overlook the pupil's broader education and welfare needs. The placement must address both behavioural issues and any underlying academic, social, or emotional challenges the pupil faces.

4. Criteria

An Off-Site Direction may be used:

- Where a pupil with an otherwise good record has carried out a serious incident that might lead to permanent exclusion, but the school feels the pupil would benefit from a temporary placement off-site that will help them reflect on their actions.
- Where significantly challenging behaviours have led to a breakdown of relationships between a pupil and staff
- Where significantly challenging behaviours have led to a breakdown of relationships between a pupil and their peers
- Where a pupil with a record of inappropriate and disruptive behaviour that has impacted on poor attendance, and parent/carer is considering applying for an in-year transfer elsewhere to improve behaviour.
- As an intervention to improve behaviour impacting low attendance in an education setting. Instances include where there has been a breakdown in relationships between the pupil and staff or peers resulting in a pupil's low attendance or as a consequence of inappropriate and disruptive behaviour which has impacted attendance.
- When schools have demonstrated that they have considered DfE advice and guidance around working to improve school attendance and supporting children where mental health is an issue and referred the pupil to appropriate agencies.
- An Off-Site Direction should only be considered when it is seen to be in the best interest of the pupil and where other in-school interventions and/or targeted support has been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate.

5. Off-Site Direction Process

- An Off-Site Direction should be instigated with the headteacher of the pupil's home school.
- The home school should inform the Local Authority of the Off-Site Direction via [this form](#)
- Parent/carers must be notified in writing and provided with information about the placement as soon as practicable after the direction has been made and no later than two school days before the relevant day.
- If the pupil has an EHCP, the child's PlanCo must be notified if an Off-Site Direction is being considered.
- If the pupil is a child in care, the Virtual School must be notified if an Off-Site Direction is being considered.
- The length of time and the reintegration plan must be kept under review by the governing body.

6. Registration of an Off-Site Direction pupil

During the Off-Site Direction to another school, a pupil must be recorded in the attendance register using **code D**. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered

7. Review Arrangements

The Off-Site Direction should be reviewed at agreed intervals, typically every 6 weeks. This ensures that the placement is still appropriate for the pupil's needs and that it is having the intended positive impact on their behaviour and engagement.

8. Funding

School to School OSD

During the period of the Off-Site Direction, funding associated with the pupil will remain with home school. However, if there are significant additional costs required to support the pupil, the schools should engage in discussions to agree on any reimbursements that may be necessary.

School to Alternative Provision OSD

During the period of the Off-Site Direction, funding related to the pupil will remain with home school. The home school is responsible for covering the costs of the Alternative Provision, as well as for monitoring the pupil's attendance, progress, and safeguarding.

9. LA Responsibilities

While the Local Authority is not required to be directly involved in Off-Site Directions or Managed Move arrangements, it must be kept informed to ensure appropriate oversight. It is considered best practice to first consult with an Education Entitlement Team Coordinator and to notify us using [this form](#).

Pupils with an EHCP can only be permanently moved through the statutory school consultations process, in-line with the DfE SEND Code of Practice.

10. Schools' Responsibilities and Oversight during an OSD

When a pupil is directed off-site to an Alternative Provider (AP), the **home school retains full responsibility** for the pupil. This includes oversight of their **attendance, progress, safeguarding**, and the **financial costs** associated with the placement.

Schools must refer to the Department for Education (DfE) guidance '[Arranging Alternative Provision](#)' when planning placements. Before confirming any placement, schools are expected to carry out **due diligence** to ensure the provision is:

- Safe and compliant with safeguarding standards,
- Capable of delivering high-quality education,
- Suitable for meeting the pupil's individual needs.

An **Individual Placement Agreement** (IPA) must be completed for each placement. It is considered good practice to share with the LA (WCC) via educationentitlement@warwickshire.gov.uk to ensure the local authority maintains oversight of all pupils in Alternative Provision.

WCC provides an **attendance monitoring platform** for AP, which schools are encouraged to use to support their responsibilities

Warwickshire County Council's [AP Directory](#) includes providers commissioned under a framework agreement. Schools may place pupils with these providers under the Council's negotiated terms and conditions, provided an IPA is completed. While these providers are subject to WCC's **Quality Assurance standards**, schools are still advised to conduct their own due diligence prior to placement.

11. Local Authority Contact

educationentitlement@warwickshire.gov.uk