

DSAT Alternative Provision Policy

The Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust.



1. Purpose & Scope

1.1 This policy provides a framework for how DSAT and its member academies will use, monitor and review **Alternative Provision (AP)**, in line with statutory and best-practice guidance.

1.2 The policy applies to all pupils of DSAT primary academies who are placed in AP (internal or external, registered or unregistered) temporarily or longer term.

1.3 The aims are to:

- Ensure that pupils unable to participate fully in mainstream education receive high-quality, safe, appropriate provision.
- Prevent permanent exclusion where possible by providing timely interventions.
- Support reintegration into mainstream classes where feasible.
- Ensure accountability, oversight, safeguarding and consistency across the Trust.

2. Definitions & Context

2.1 **Alternative Provision (AP)** — Education arranged by a school, academy, or local authority for pupils who cannot attend mainstream education for whatever reason (behaviour, health, attendance, etc.) (Statutory guidance)

2.2 **Registered external AP** — Providers registered as schools (or similar regulated providers) that DSAT academies may contract with.

2.3 **Unregistered / Unregulated AP** — Providers not registered as schools but used (often part time) to meet specific needs; these require additional scrutiny, risk assessment, and oversight.

2.4 **Reintegration** — The process and plan by which a pupil returns (full or part time, phased) to mainstream classes / school.

3. Trust & Academy Responsibilities

3.1 DSAT Trust Board & Central Team

- Approve this policy and review it annually (or more often if statutory guidance changes).
- Receive termly/annual consolidated reports on AP across the Trust (numbers of pupils, types of provision, outcomes, safeguarding incidents etc.).
- Ensure that the Trust's central support (e.g. legal, commissioning, HR, safeguarding) is available to academies in arranging AP.
- Facilitate sharing of best practice across academies.

3.2 CEO / Executive Leadership

- Oversight of policy implementation across all academies.
- Ensure that central training, resources and quality assurance are in place.
- Liaise with Local Authorities, other agencies and AP providers as needed.
- Escalate to the Trust Board where necessary (e.g. placement risks, safeguarding concerns).

3.3 Academy Headteacher/ Head of School

- Identify pupils for whom AP may be appropriate (with context input: pastoral, SENCo, behaviour leads).
- Lead decision-making (in consultation with parents, relevant staff).
- Ensure arrangements, contracts and monitoring of AP providers.
- Arrange, review and adjust individual AP plans.
- Maintain records, including visits, progress, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding.
- Lead reintegration planning with support staff and parents.
- Report the use of AP to the trust.

3.4 SENCO / Pastoral Staff

- Advise on pupil needs, adaptations, risk factors, support strategies.
- Contribute to planning, review and monitoring.
- Liaise between AP provider and academy on curriculum, differentiation and welfare.

3.5 AP Providers

- Deliver safe, effective, curriculum-based education tailored to pupil need.
- Comply with DSAT safeguarding, behaviour, health & safety, welfare policies and provide safeguarding letters of assurances.
- Provide regular progress, attendance and behaviour reporting to the placing academy.
- Cooperate in reintegration planning and adjustment.

3.6 Parents / Carers & Pupils

- Be engaged as partners in decision-making and planning.
 - Attend review meetings, maintain communication.
 - Support the pupil's attendance, behaviour and reintegration efforts.
 - Pupil voice is gathered at all stages.
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4. Criteria for Placement & Decision Process

4.1 Early identification & escalation

Academies should use behaviour data, attendance records, pastoral concerns, teacher feedback, and SEN information to flag pupils at risk early, with interventions before AP becomes necessary.

4.2 Decision factors

Before placing a pupil into AP, the following must be considered:

- Whether further in-school support could suffice (behaviour contracts, mentoring, internal units).
- The pupil's needs (behavioural, SEMH, medical, social).
- Expected duration of AP and exit / reintegration planning.
- The cost, logistics and timing.
- The track record, capacity, quality, safeguarding record of the AP provider.
- Risks and mitigation (see risk assessment section).

4.3 Due diligence & risk assessment

Especially for unregistered providers, the placing academy (with support from central DSAT) must:

- Visit the provider site in advance; inspect facilities, staff, welfare arrangements.
- Obtain evidence of DBS checks, staff qualifications, safeguarding policies, health & safety compliance (letter of assurance required).
- Conduct a risk assessment.

4.4 Agreement & contracting

A formal written agreement (contract) must be in place before placement begins, covering:

- Roles & responsibilities (who does what).
- Curriculum, hours of attendance, reporting frequency.
- Safeguarding, behaviour, welfare, medical policies.
- Communication lines and escalation protocols.
- Review and termination clauses.
- Reintegration expectations.

4.5 Individual AP Plan

For each pupil in AP, an **Individual AP Plan** should be drawn up, including:

- Rationale / reason for placement.
 - Objectives (academic, social, behavioural).
 - Indicators for success / measurable targets.
 - Timetable, duration, reporting schedule.
 - Reintegration plan (phased return etc.).
 - Adaptations and support needed (specialist staff, therapeutic input etc.).
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5. Monitoring, Review & Exit / Reintegration

5.1 Regular reviews

Review meetings must occur at agreed intervals (e.g. half termly), involving the placing academy, AP provider, pupil, parents and relevant staff. Agenda should include:

- Progress against objectives.
- Attendance / punctuality / behaviour data.
- Safeguarding / welfare issues.
- Adjustments needed or exit / extension decisions.
- Reintegration planning updates.

5.2 Ongoing monitoring

Academies should:

- Monitor daily / weekly attendance, behaviour logs, welfare concerns.
- Conduct unannounced visits / quality assurance of provision.
- Maintain records of visits, correspondence, reports.

5.3 Exit / reintegration planning

When a pupil is ready (or prematurely if placement is not working), a reintegration plan should be triggered:

- Phased return (e.g. mornings only, then increasing).
- Adjusted timetable / curriculum.
- Support on return: mentoring, check-ins, pastoral or SEMH wraparound.
- Review and contingency planning in case of regression.

5.4 If placement is unsuccessful

If AP is not working (no progress, safeguarding or behavioural deterioration), the academy should:

- Suspend or terminate the placement (as per contract).
- Reassess alternative options (another provider, in-school support, managed move, etc.).
- Ensure continuity of education while alternative is being arranged.

6. Safeguarding, Welfare & Risk Management

6.1 Overall responsibility

Even when a pupil is offsite in AP, the placing academy (and DSAT) retains responsibility for their safeguarding and welfare.

6.2 Provider compliance

All AP providers must:

- Comply with DSAT safeguarding policy, child protection measures and procedures.
- Have their own child protection policy, staff trained in safeguarding, and appropriate DBS checks.
- Ensure safe premises, supervision, health & safety protocols and emergency procedures.
- Document medical, SEND, pastoral needs and have relevant staff awareness.
- Provide clear escalation paths to the placing academy for concerns.
- Where a child attends only the AP and not school, leaders should ensure that the child has access to the RSE curriculum.

6.3 Risk assessments

For each placement, a risk assessment should cover:

- The site (access, environment, hazards).
- Pupil's particular risks (medical, behavioural, safeguarding).
- Contingencies for emergencies, absconding, pastoral escalation.

6.4 Incident reporting

Any safeguarding, behavioural, medical or safety incidents must be:

- Reported immediately to the placing academy's DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead).
- Logged in the placing academy's system.
- Reviewed in the next review meeting.
- Evaluated for lessons / adjustments to risk mitigation.

7. Attendance, Recording & Reporting

7.1 Pupils in AP must remain on the roll of a DSAT academy, unless otherwise agreed.

7.2 The placing academy remains responsible for attendance oversight; AP provider must submit attendance daily/weekly.

7.3 Absences must be coded appropriately, with reasons recorded.

7.4 Termly and annual reporting by academies to DSAT should include:

- Number of pupils in AP, by academy.
 - Types of provision used (in-school, external registered, unregistered).
 - Attendance, behaviour, outcomes (progress, reintegration success).
 - Safeguarding or welfare concerns.
 - Cost / value for money analysis.
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8. Use of Unregistered / Unregulated AP

8.1 Use only where no suitable registered provider is available, or for specialist interventions not met elsewhere.

8.2 Additional safeguards must apply (see section 4.3).

8.3 Placements should be time-limited, with rigorous review and reintegration planning.

8.4 DSAT central oversight should maintain a register of unregistered providers used, and track outcomes.

8.5 The local authority should be informed when unregistered provision is used, where required.

9. Governance, Assurance & Quality

9.1 DSAT Board should receive at least termly reports on the use of AP.

9.2 The Trust should conduct periodic audits of academy AP arrangements, contracts, safeguarding, value for money.

9.3 DSAT should support academies to share best practice, training, peer review of AP providers, and continuous improvement.

9.4 Schools should report use of AP to AP@dsat.education, submitting completed forms from the appendix to this policy.

10. Parental Engagement & Communication

10.1 Parents / carers must be consulted early, informed clearly of the rationale, process, expectations, review schedule and reintegration goals.

10.2 Consent (in writing) should be obtained, especially for external/unregistered placements.

10.3 Regular updates on progress, attendance, behaviour and review outcomes must be provided.

10.4 Where the parent/carer declines a proposed AP, attempts should be made to provide alternatives and record all communications, ensuring compliance with statutory duties.

11. Policy Review & Version Control

- This policy will be formally reviewed annually by the DSAT Trust Board
- It may be updated more frequently to reflect changes in legislation or statutory guidance.

Appendices (to be included as separate documents)

- **Appendix A:** Individual AP Plan Template
- **Appendix B:** Monitoring / Review Meeting Record Template
- **Appendix C:** Risk Assessment Template for AP Placement

Date reviewed: July 2026
Date of next review: July 2027

Appendix A

Individual Pupil Alternative Provision (AP)

Plan/Record

Name of school:

PUPIL DETAILS	
Full name	
Date of Birth	
Year Group	
SEND status (if any)	
EHCP (Yes/No)	
Pupil Premium (Yes/No)	
Known to social care (Yes/No)	
DSL: notified (Yes/No)	
AP DETAILS	
Name of AP Provider	
Contact Person	
Contact details (phone/ email)	
Type of provision (part/time, full-time, tutoring, therapy etc)	
Ofsted Registered (Yes/No)	
Address of Provision	
Safeguarding policy and checks provided and checked by school (Yes/No)	
Reasons for Alternative Provision	
(Brief summary of the reason for the use of AP. Include any relevant behaviour, attendance, SEND, or medical context.)	
Start and Review Dates	
Start date	
Review date	
Frequency of reviews	
Planned end date	
Timetable	
Outline of sessions attending throughout the school week	

Appendix B

Monitoring / Review Meeting Record – Academic Progress (AP)

School Name: _____

Date: _____

Review Period: _____

Meeting Type: ☐ Initial ☐ Mid-Year ☐ End-of-Year ☐ Interim

PUPIL DETAILS	
Full name	
Date of Birth	
Year Group	
AP DETAILS	
Name of AP Provider	
In attendance	
Summary of progress	
What is going well?	
What could be improved?	
Attendance and Behaviour	
Outline of sessions attending throughout the school week	
Agreed next steps/ actions	

Signatures

Date

Appendix C Sample Risk assessment

Alternative Provision (AP) – Risk Assessment Template

School Name: _____

AP Provider: _____

Assessor Name: _____

Position: _____

Assessment Date: _____

Review Date: _____

1. Purpose of Assessment

(Outline the purpose — e.g., assessment of individual student risks, off-site learning, vocational placement, etc.)

2. Identified Hazards

Ref	Hazard Description	Who Might Be Harmed and How	Existing Control Measures	Risk Level (L/M/H)	Further Action Required	Person Responsible	Date Completed
1							
2							
3							

3. Individual Risk Factors (if applicable)

Category	Details / Concerns	Current Strategies / Support	Risk Rating (L/M/H)
Behaviour			
Attendance / Engagement			
Mental Health / Wellbeing			
Physical Health / Medication			
Peer / Community Relationships			
Safeguarding / Home Circumstances			

4. Control Measures & Interventions

Control / Intervention	Description	Person Responsible	Timescale	Review Date
Supervision Arrangements				
Staff Training / Briefing				
Environment Modifications				
Behaviour Plan / Risk Management Plan				
External Agency Support				

5. Emergency Procedures

Scenario	Procedure Responsible Person Contact Details
Medical Emergency	
Behavioural Incident	
Missing Student	
Fire / Evacuation	
Other (specify)	