



Norfolk
County Council



Directory of Unregulated Alternative Provision

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Introduction

This document refers to the following guidance:

[Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools](#) (updated February 2025)

[Independent schools inspection handbook - GOV.UK](#) (www.gov.uk)

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

[Providing remote education: guidance for schools - GOV.UK](#)

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

[School inspection handbook - GOV.UK](#) (www.gov.uk)

[School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK](#) (www.gov.uk)

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) (www.gov.uk)

Purpose

This directory aims to provide information regarding ‘unregulated’ alternative provision [AP] in Norfolk. We use the term ‘unregulated’ to define an AP setting which is **not a registered school or college** (for pre-16 pupils). There are, however, unregulated AP settings which are registered for post-16 and offer education/training to school-age pupils.



It is important to note that this directory is not a Norfolk County Council ‘approved list’. The responsibilities for carrying out appropriate checks and reviews lie with commissioners.

As per [Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools](#) (updated February 2025):

All children, regardless of circumstance or setting, should expect to receive a good education. Commissioners responsible for arranging alternative provision should 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 education or move onto a sustained post-16 destination in mind.

Identifying a suitable placement (p13)

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 education or into a sustained post-16 destination. As such, the commissioner should always ensure that a placement will address the individual needs of the child as well as providing education in line with that of their home school to better enable re-integration.

When identifying any placement, the commissioner should always consider the individual circumstances of the child and whether the setting is appropriate. This includes discussions between the home school 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.

To support commissioning practice, many areas use quality assurance frameworks, with local authorities, schools and providers working collaboratively to produce approved lists of all local providers, including unregistered alternative provision, which are measured against clear, locally defined standards (including registration where necessary, safeguarding, health and safety, quality of accommodation, quality of education etc). These frameworks assist local authorities and schools to meet commissioning responsibilities, as set out in this guidance, as well as enable unregistered alternative providers to demonstrate compliance with the standards before their services can be used.

These lists, where they exist, can provide a helpful starting point. However, the commissioning school or local authority is ultimately responsible for the provision they put in place. As such the commissioner, prior to placement, should always conduct their own due diligence to assess whether the provision is safe, offers high quality education and is suitable for meeting the child’s individual needs.

Arranging a placement (p15)

As soon as a suitable placement is identified, the commissioner and alternative provision setting should 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 the commissioner and the provider should 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 should be responsible for advising commissioners on any necessary changes and next steps to support transitions.

Where reintegration back into a mainstream school is the main objective, there should be agreement between the home school and the provider on how to assess when the child is ready to return. A joint plan between the provider and home school should be put in place outlining the support package and resources needed from both the placement and the home or new school to help the child to reintegrate back into mainstream schooling successfully.

All objectives and plans should be agreed with all relevant stakeholders, including the parents and child, where appropriate. Objectives, plans, roles and responsibilities should 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, the mainstream school and provider should agree on the nature of the intervention, the intended outcomes, and how progress will be monitored and evaluated. Any intervention should be led by the evolving needs of the child and should be kept under review.

Oversight of placements (p15)

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.¹

Commissioners should maintain regular contact with the provider and child, with clear procedures in place to exchange information, monitor progress and provide pastoral support. A child should not be removed from the home school's admission register, with the school making every effort to ensure that the child continues to feel that they belong and are part of the school.

The commissioner and alternative provider should discuss and agree a proposed maximum period of time as part of the planning phase for an off-site direction.

The commissioner and alternative provider should 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.

Commissioning schools and local authorities should maintain a full record of all placements they make, including a child's progress, achievements and destination following the placement. This should also include the child's own assessment of their placement.

Where a child has been directed off-site to an alternative provision school, the child should always be dual registered from the beginning of the first day on which the school has directed the pupil to attend the provision. For the purpose of the school census a child should be dual main registered at their school and dual subsidiary registered at the alternative provision.

¹ Note this guidance states that schools 'should' provide this information to the LA. At the time of publication of this directory, there are not yet systems in place to facilitate this.

Safeguarding (p16)

Where a child is placed in alternative provision, the commissioning school or local authority 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.

Commissioners should 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 schools would otherwise perform in respect of their 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.

The commissioner 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.

Commissioners should regularly review placements they make in alternative provision. 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.

Schools and local authorities should always have regard to *Keeping Children Safe in Education* guidance and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

Adapting education to a child's needs (p17)

All children, regardless of circumstance or setting, should expect to receive the same high standard of education as their peers in a mainstream school (or special school if applicable).

Alternative provision and the framework surrounding it should offer good quality education equivalent to that provided in mainstream (or special) schools. 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 their home school community, and are able to 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.

Unregistered alternative provision (p24)

Local authorities and schools can arrange alternative provision in settings which are not schools or colleges. This is commonly known as unregistered alternative provision because, unlike schools or colleges, this type of provision is not subject to a national registration scheme or inspection framework.

As with other types of alternative provision, commissioners are responsible for the safety and quality of the provision they use and that the placement is appropriate for the child's needs. Commissioners should have regard to this guidance when arranging unregistered alternative provision.

To support commissioning practice many areas use quality assurance frameworks, with local authorities, schools and providers working collaboratively to produce approved lists of local unregistered alternative provision. Approved providers are measured against clear, locally defined standards, including where registration may be necessary, safeguarding, health and safety, quality of accommodation, quality of education etc.

These frameworks assist local authorities and schools to meet commissioning responsibilities set out in this guidance and enable unregistered alternative providers to demonstrate compliance with the standards before their services can be used.

Education providers offering full-time education for five or more children of compulsory school age or at least one child with an EHC plan or who is looked-after by the local authority are required to be registered as independent schools and meet the Independent School Standards.

Commissioners should ensure that they do not place children with an unregistered provider if that would mean that the setting would need to be registered as an independent school.

Typically, unregulated AP settings are used to provide alternative education or training to young people for whom a full-time mainstream or special-school timetable is not appropriate. Current government guidance does not always differentiate between regulated AP (e.g., an alternative school setting for a pupil who has been permanently excluded from school) and unregulated AP (e.g., where a young person may access a vocational course for 1-2 days per week). Young people accessing unregulated AP would remain on the roll of their home school.

Schools 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. Governors and Headteachers must adhere to the regulations set out in [School suspensions and permanent exclusions](#) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).



From this guidance:

The government recognises that school exclusions, managed moves and off-site direction are essential behaviour management tools for headteachers and can be used to establish high standards of behaviour in schools and maintain the safety of school communities (p3).

Schools should support pupils to reintegrate successfully into school life and full-time education following a suspension or period of off-site direction (see paragraphs 35 to 46). They should design a reintegration strategy that offers the pupil a fresh start; helps them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others; teaches them to how meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with the school culture; fosters a renewed sense of belonging within the school community; and builds engagement with learning (p17).

Schools can consider a range of measures to enable the pupil's successful reintegration which can include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining regular contact during the suspension or off-site direction and welcoming the pupil back to school
- Daily contact with a designated pastoral professional in-school
- Use of a report card with personalised targets leading to personalised rewards
- Ensuring the pupil follows an equivalent curriculum during their suspension or off-site direction or receives academic support upon return to catch up on any lost progress
- Planned pastoral interventions
- Mentoring by a trusted adult or a local mentoring charity
- Regular reviews with the pupil and parents to praise progress being made and raise and address any concerns at an early stage
- Informing the pupil, parents and staff of potential external support.

Any use of AP 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 (p19).

Off-site direction is when a governing board of a maintained school requires a pupil to attend another education setting to improve their behaviour. Whilst the legislation does not apply to academies, they can arrange off-site provision for such purposes under their general powers.

Where interventions or targeted support have not been successful in improving a pupil's behaviour, off-site direction should be used to arrange time-limited placements at an AP or another mainstream school.

During the off-site direction to another school, pupils must be dual registered. Code B should be used for any off-site educational activity, if the provision is an approved educational activity that does not involve the pupil being registered at any other school (p20).

To support a pupil with reintegration into their referring school, the focus of intervention whilst off-site should remain on ensuring that a pupil continues to receive a broad and balanced curriculum whilst any inappropriate behaviours which require intervention are being addressed. If a pupil with a disability or SEN has been moved off-site, the duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014 continue to apply (for example, to make reasonable adjustments or to put support in place to meet SEN) (p21).

Governing boards should consider whether the placements of pupils directed off-site into AP are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives and that pupils are benefiting from it (p36).

Attendance

[Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) states that alternative provision may be used to remove barriers to attendance:

20. Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners:

- If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include provision of mentoring, careers advice, college placements, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.

133. Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.



Register coding

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

293. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site). A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead.

294. Schools must also record the nature of the provision (regulation 10(5)), examples are:

- attending courses at college;
- attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring.

295. Schools should ensure that the arrangements are in place whereby the provider notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

296. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity

309. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience. The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

310. A pupil can only be recorded as attending a place for an approved educational activity if:

- the place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014;
- the activity is of an educational nature;
- the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and
- the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved.

311. Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity (regulation 10(5)), examples are:

- attending taster days at other schools;
 - attending courses at college
 - attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school
-

312. Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. The school will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the educational activity notifies the school of any absences by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

313. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Remote (online) education²

Remote education should not be viewed as an equal alternative to attendance in school. We expect schools to consider it only as a last resort when the alternative would be no education, and only after it has been established that the pupil is, or will be, absent from school. In such cases, remote education can have the benefit of allowing absent pupils to keep on track with their education and stay connected to their teachers and peers.

Schools should consider the approaches set out in this guidance and work closely with pupils, parents, carers, and any other relevant partners such as the local authority, to remove any barriers to attendance as detailed in the [school attendance guidance](#).

Pupils absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be marked as absent in the register. Schools must continue to record pupil absence in the register in line with the [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) and attendance guidance, using the most appropriate code.

² Providing remote education: guidance for schools - GOV.UK

Ofsted

The information below is correct at the time of publication (September 2025).

Under the Education Inspection Framework, the following should be noted regarding the use of off-site provision. The information in this section is relevant for schools, governors/trustees, proprietors (of independent schools) and unregulated alternative provision settings.

Maintained and academy schools³

Inspection planning conversation

99. The lead inspector will [...]

- establish whether the school has any pupils who attend off-site alternative provision, either full time or part time, run either by the school or by a different organisation; if the school uses off-site alternative provision, the lead inspector will ask for further details about this, including:
 - the number of pupils who attend
 - the number of off-site alternative providers used currently
 - the URNs and addresses of the alternative providers
 - the names and addresses of the alternative providers (if there is no URN for one or more alternative providers)
 - the range of needs that these providers cater for
 - the timetables for the pupils who attend
- arrange to visit a sample of off-site alternative providers during the inspection. Inspectors will normally visit a sample of any part-time unregistered alternative providers during the inspection, as directed by the relevant Ofsted region. Any registered alternative provision that we have not yet inspected will normally be visited during the inspection (see 'Evaluating schools' use of alternative provision on graded inspections')



³ Paragraph/page numbers refer to [School inspection handbook](#)

Seeking the views of parents

115. [Ofsted] will provide schools with a letter to pass on to parents that formally notifies them of a graded or ungraded inspection. This letter explains how to use Ofsted Parent View and how parents can contact inspectors. Schools should encourage parents to complete the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire (<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk>) by placing a link to it on their website. In addition, inspectors will encourage the school to notify parents using its own electronic systems (such as text messages), if these are available.

116. Schools will be expected to provide these details to parents on both graded and ungraded inspections. However, schools should note that, for graded inspections, they are required by law to take any reasonably practicable steps to notify the parents of registered pupils at the school (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/section/6>), including the parents of those who have been suspended, attend alternative provision or are away from school. Schools are also required by law to notify relevant bodies (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/2038/regulation/4/made>), including providers of alternative provision. Similarly, inspectors have a statutory duty to have regard to the views of parents and other relevant persons on graded inspections.

Evaluating the use of off-site alternative provision

299. Where pupils, including those in PRUs and other alternative providers, attend off-site alternative provision, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which these placements are safe and effective in promoting pupils' progress. Inspectors will normally visit a sample of the alternative providers used and, if required, may speak to local authorities, other agencies and parents/carers to gather evidence.

Inspectors will want to understand how providers ensure that pupils who attend multiple settings or part time are kept safe when they are not on site for the whole school day.

Ofsted's approach to evaluating behaviour and attitudes on graded inspections

333. Over the course of inspection, inspectors will carry out evidence-gathering activities. In some cases, inspectors will be able to gather this evidence as part of other activities they are carrying out. The activities [include]:

- visiting any off-site unit that the school runs (on its own or in partnership with other schools) for pupils whose behaviour is poor or who have low attendance. Inspectors will assess safeguarding procedures, the quality of education and how effectively the unit helps to improve pupils' behaviour, learning and attendance. For more information, see the 'evaluating the use of off-site alternative provision on graded inspections' section.

Ineffective safeguarding

411. While it is not possible to produce an exhaustive list, the following [is an example] of what may constitute ineffective safeguarding:

- pupils, particularly vulnerable pupils, who are not on the school site (whether long term, temporary or for part of the school day) and the school are either not clear where those pupils are or are not able to give reassurances as to the appropriate steps taken to safeguard them when off-site. This can include children missing in education and children attending inappropriate, unregistered or unmonitored alternative provision.

Evaluating schools' use of alternative provision on graded inspections

415. Inspectors will evaluate how well a school continues to take responsibility for its pupils who attend alternative or off-site provision. Inspectors need to be assured that leaders have ensured that the alternative provision is a suitable and safe placement that will meet pupils' academic/vocational/technical needs, pastoral needs and, if appropriate, SEND needs. Inspectors will speak to a selection of pupils who attend off-site provision, where possible, including potentially through video or telephone calls.

416. Inspectors will ask the school about the registration status of any alternative providers that they use. Any provider of alternative provision 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 looked after or has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. If a school uses alternative provision that should be registered but is not, inspectors will carefully consider whether this affects the likelihood that pupils are safeguarded effectively.

417. Inspectors will normally visit a sample of any part-time unregistered alternative providers during the inspection, as directed by the relevant Ofsted region. This may be completed remotely. This is to assess the adequacy of the school's quality assurance process. Inspectors will visit any registered alternative provision site that we have not yet inspected to assess the adequacy of the school's quality assurance process.

419. Inspectors will consider:

- the reasons why leaders considered off-site provision to be the best option for the pupils concerned, and whether leaders have kept that under review
- whether leaders have made the appropriate checks on the registration status of the provision and how that has influenced their decision to use that provider
- what safeguarding checks leaders have made and continue to make to ensure that the provision is a safe place for their pupils to attend
- the extent to which leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a well-planned and sequenced, well-taught, broad and balanced curriculum
- the attendance and behaviour of the pupils who attend the provision
- how well the provision promotes pupils' personal development

420. If a school uses a provider that is not registered, the inspector must contact the duty desk so that staff can notify Ofsted's unregistered schools team. Following the inspection, the team will determine whether Ofsted needs to take further action because there is reasonable cause to believe that the setting is operating as an unregistered school.

421. A school is likely to be judged inadequate for leadership and management if:

- it is making ineffective or inappropriate use of alternative provision
- it is using inappropriate alternative provision
- leaders have not taken the necessary steps to assure themselves of the suitability of a provision
- leaders are not aware of how many of their pupils attend alternative provision
- leaders are not taking responsibility for their pupils who attend alternative provision

Grade descriptors for evaluating behaviour and attitudes (p116)

Inadequate (4)

Behaviour and attitudes are likely to be inadequate if [...] the following applies.

- Poor behaviour means that pupils, or particular groups of pupils, are not safe or do not feel safe at school and/or at alternative placements.

Grade descriptors for leadership and management (p121)

Inadequate (4)

Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies.

- The school is making ineffective or inappropriate use of alternative provision or is using inappropriate alternative provision (including, for example, failing to ensure the suitability of a provision or not taking responsibility for their pupils who attend alternative provision).

Non-association independent schools⁴

Before the inspection

Inspection planning conversation

106. This conversation will be short and focused on practical issues. The lead inspector will:

- establish whether the school has any pupils who attend off-site alternative provision, either full time or part time, run either by the school or by a different organisation. If the school uses off-site alternative provision, the lead inspector will ask for further details about this, including:
 - the number of pupils who attend
 - the number of off-site alternative providers used currently
 - the unique reference numbers and addresses of the alternative providers
 - the names and addresses of the alternative providers (if there is no URN for one or more alternative providers)
 - the range of needs that these providers cater for
 - the timetable for the pupils who attend
- arrange to visit a sample of off-site alternative providers during the inspection. Inspectors will normally visit a sample of any part-time unregistered alternative providers during the inspection, as directed by the relevant Ofsted region. Any registered alternative provision that we have not yet inspected will normally be visited during the inspection (see ‘Evaluating the use of off-site alternative provision used by any type of independent school’)

Evaluating the use of off-site alternative provision used by any type of independent school

261. Where pupils in registered independent schools attend off-site alternative provision, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which these placements are safe and effective in promoting pupils’ progress. Inspectors will normally visit a sample of the alternative providers used by the school. If required, they may speak to local authorities, other agencies and parents/carers to gather evidence. Inspectors will want to understand how providers ensure that pupils who attend multiple settings or part time are kept safe when they are not on site for the whole school day.

⁴ Paragraph/page numbers refer to [Independent schools inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/independent-schools-inspection-handbook.pdf)

Ofsted's approach to evaluating behaviour and attitudes

292. Over the course of inspection, inspectors will carry out evidence-gathering activities. In some cases, inspectors will be able to gather this evidence as part of other activities they are carrying out. The activities [include]:

- visiting any off-site unit that the school runs (on its own or in partnership with other schools) for pupils whose behaviour is poor or who have low attendance. Inspectors will assess safeguarding procedures, the quality of education and how effectively the unit helps to improve pupils' behaviour, learning and attendance. For more information, see the 'Inspecting alternative provision used by any type of independent school' section.

Ineffective safeguarding

361. While it is not possible to produce an exhaustive list, the following [is an example] of what may constitute ineffective safeguarding:

- pupils, particular vulnerable pupils, who are not on the school site (whether long term, temporary or for part of the school day), and the school are either not clear where those pupils are, or are not able to give reassurances as to the appropriate steps taken to safeguard them when off-site. This can include children missing in education and children attending inappropriate, unregistered or unmonitored alternative provision



Inspecting alternative provision used by any type of independent school

365. Inspectors will evaluate how well a school continues to take responsibility for its pupils who attend alternative or off-site provision. Inspectors need to be assured that the proprietor has ensured that the alternative provision is a suitable and safe placement that will meet pupils' academic/vocational/technical and, if appropriate, SEND needs. Inspectors will speak to a selection of pupils who attend off-site provision, where possible, including through video/telephone calls.

366. Inspectors will ask the school about the registration status of any alternative providers that they use. Any provider of alternative provision 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 looked after or has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. If a school uses alternative provision that should be registered but is not, inspectors will carefully consider the likelihood that pupils are safeguarded effectively.

367. Inspectors will normally visit a sample of any part-time unregistered alternative providers during the inspection, as directed by the relevant Ofsted region. This may be completed remotely. This is to assess the adequacy of the school's quality assurance process. Inspectors will visit any registered alternative provision site that Ofsted has not yet inspected to assess the adequacy of the school's quality assurance process.

369. Inspectors will consider:

- the reasons why the proprietor considered off-site provision to be the best option for the pupils concerned, and whether leaders have kept that under review
- whether the proprietor has made the appropriate checks on the registration status of the provision
- what safeguarding checks the proprietor has made and continues to make to ensure that the provision is a safe place for their pupils to attend
- the extent to which the proprietor ensures that the school's pupils benefit from a well-planned and sequenced, well-taught, broad curriculum
- the attendance and behaviour of the pupils who attend the provision
- how well the provision promotes the pupils' personal development

370. If a school uses a provider that is not registered, the inspector must contact the duty desk so that they can notify Ofsted's unregistered schools team. Following the inspection, the team will determine if we need to take further action because there is reasonable cause to believe that the setting is operating as an unregistered school.

371. A school is likely to be judged inadequate for leadership and management if:

- it is making ineffective or inappropriate use of alternative provision
- it is using inappropriate alternative provision
- the proprietor has not taken the necessary steps to assure themselves of the suitability of a provision
- the proprietor is not aware of how many of their pupils attend alternative provision
- the proprietor is not taking responsibility for their pupils who attend alternative provision

Grade descriptors for behaviour and attitudes (p103)

Inadequate (4)

Behaviour and attitudes are likely to be inadequate if [...] the following applies.

- Poor behaviour means that pupils, or particular groups of pupils are not safe or do not feel safe at school and/or at alternative placements.

Grade descriptors for leadership and management (p109)

Inadequate (4)

Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if [...] the following applies.

- The school is making ineffective or inappropriate use of alternative provision or is using inappropriate alternative provision (including, for example, failing to ensure the suitability of a provision or not taking responsibility for their pupils who attend alternative provision).

Illegal schools

Schools and unregulated AP settings must note the following statutory guidance regarding illegal schools⁵:

An independent school is defined as any school at which full time education is provided for five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one or more such pupils with an EHC plan or a statement of special educational needs or who is “looked after” by the local authority and is not a school maintained by a local authority or a non-maintained special school. A child is “looked after by a local authority” if he or she is in its care or is provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours by the authority under certain of its social services functions (see section 22 of the Children Act 1989 and section 74 of the Social services and Well-being (Wales) Act; 2014).

If your establishment falls outside the definition of an independent school given above, it cannot be registered with the department as an independent school. However, local authorities will need to be satisfied that children of compulsory school age who are attending your establishment are receiving full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, including any provision being made in parallel to that in your establishment.

It is an offence to operate an unregistered independent school, and anyone who does so is liable on summary conviction to a fine and/or imprisonment.

Full-time education: There is no legal definition of ‘full time’. However, we would consider an institution to be providing full-time education if it is intended to provide, or does provide, all, or substantially all, of a child’s education.

Relevant factors in determining whether education is full-time include:

- the number of hours per week that is provided - including breaks and independent study time
- the number of weeks in the academic term/year the education is provided
- the time of day it is provided
- whether the education provision in practice precludes the possibility that full-time education could be provided elsewhere

Generally, we consider any institution that is operating during the day, for more than 18 hours per week, to be providing full-time education. This is because the education being provided is taking up the substantial part of the week in which it can be reasonably expected a child can be educated, and therefore indicates that the education provided is the main source of education for that child.

Inspectors from Ofsted may inspect any premises if they have reasonable cause to believe that an unregistered independent school is being conducted there. At such inspections, inspectors will assess whether the school meets the definition of an independent school, which will include assessing whether or not the school is intending to provide, or is providing, all or substantially all of a child’s education. Please see the Department’s policy statement on prosecuting unregistered independent schools on steps that might be taken if an unregistered independent school is identified, available at [Regulating Independent Schools](#).

⁵ Registration of independent schools, [Departmental advice for proprietors and prospective proprietors of independent schools in England](#); August 2019

In summary, if an unregulated AP setting is offering education/training which constitutes all, or substantially all of a child's education to five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one or more such pupils with an EHC plan or a statement of special educational needs or who is "looked after" by the local authority, then it is at risk of operating as an illegal school. If Norfolk County Council becomes aware of such practice, it will immediately report the institution to Ofsted.

In addition, if a young person is attending an unregulated AP setting, schools need to ensure that they are still receiving their full national curriculum entitlement. It is unlikely that this would be the case if the young person is out of school for more than 2 days per week.

The local authority therefore recommends that a school-age pupil attends unregulated AP for no more than 2 days (or 4 morning and/or afternoon sessions) per week.



Safeguarding

Leaders of unregulated alternative provision [AP] settings should refer to [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#). They are strongly advised to subscribe to the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership Safer Programme via the [Safer Programme webpage](#). A model safeguarding policy for unregistered/unregulated APs is available to members.

In addition, while the following document is not statutory for unregulated AP settings, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) is also recommended for good practice. Schools must note the following from the guidance:

Alternative provision

168. 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.

169. 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.

170. Schools should always know where a child is based during school hours. This includes having records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend. They should regularly review the alternative provision placements they make. Reviews should be frequent enough (at least half termly) to provide assurance that the child is regularly attending and 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.

171. The department has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners of Alternative Provision should have regard:

- Alternative Provision DFE statutory guidance, and
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) – DFE statutory guidance.

331. Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil, (further information provided in part 2).

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 ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

Safeguarding training

There are currently no formal requirements for safeguarding training in unregulated AP settings. As aforementioned, commissioning schools are required to check safeguarding arrangements at each unregulated AP setting used.

Unregulated AP settings are encouraged to access face-to-face Designated Safeguarding Person training via the [NSCP Safer Programme training](#) (rather than an online option).



Commissioning templates

To support schools and unregulated AP settings to carry out appropriate checks, Norfolk County Council has published a series of templates at [Unregulated alternative provision templates - Schools \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](#). These can be downloaded and adapted for school use.

The templates include:

1. Pre-placement visit record
2. Initial Referral and Admissions form
3. Pre-placement baseline
4. Learner Code of Conduct agreement
5. Alternative Provision Progress visit record
6. Mid or End of placement evaluation
7. Safer recruitment written confirmation template

In addition, there is a Model Policy for the Commissioning of Unregulated Alternative Provision which schools can adopt and adapt.

Quality Assurance

Norfolk County Council operates a system of voluntary quality assurance of unregulated AP settings. As this is voluntary (in the absence of a national framework), quality assurance reports are not published externally. However, commissioners should request to see the a report from the provider themselves.

As per Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools, responsibility for the oversight of the alternative provision used always rests with the local authority or school that commissioned the placement.

Commissioners should maintain regular contact with the provider and child, with clear procedures in place to exchange information, monitor progress and provide 16 pastoral support. A child should not be removed from the home school's admission register, with the school making every effort to ensure that the child continues to feel that they belong and are part of the school. The commissioner and alternative provider should discuss and agree a proposed maximum period of time as part of the planning phase for an off-site direction. The commissioner and alternative provider should 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. Commissioning schools and local authorities should maintain a full record of all placements they make, including a child's progress, achievements and destination following the placement. This should also include the child's own assessment of their placement.

During the voluntary QA process, LA officers scrutinise the following areas:

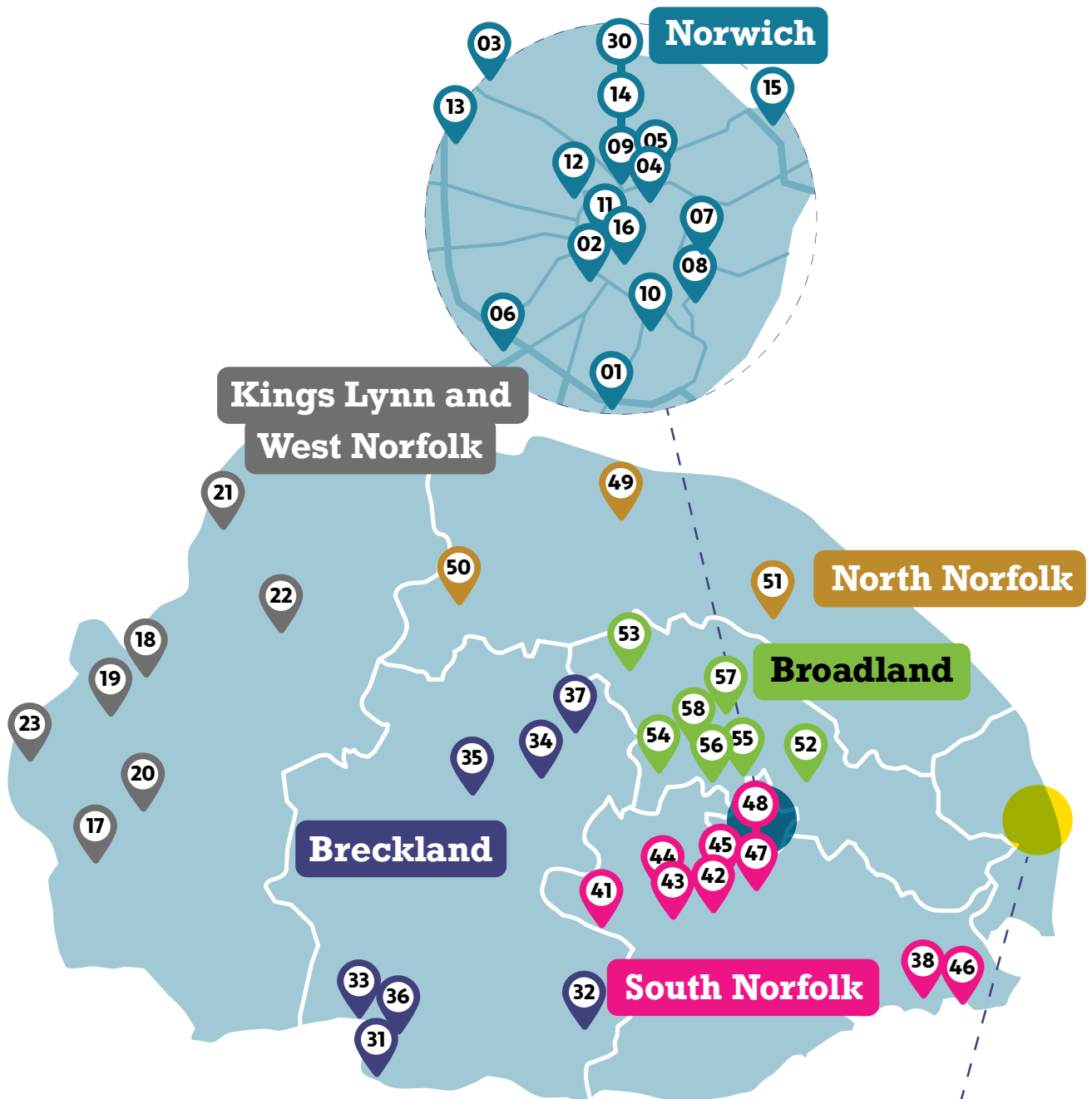
- Leadership and management
- Safeguarding
- Health and safety
- Progress and outcomes
- Communication with schools
- Progress monitoring and recording
- Learning environment
- Stakeholder engagement
- Programme offer
- External qualifications on offer/achieved
- Behaviour
- Special educational needs
- Vulnerable groups
- Transition (e.g., contribution to post-16 planning)

Quality assurance reviews typically take place initially via an online meeting to discuss systems and policies, for example. This is followed up by a site visit to observe a session in progress. A detailed report is produced, with suggested areas for development. These are reviewed after 6 months.

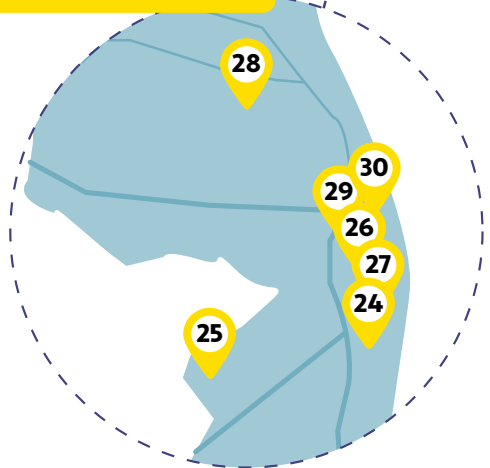
Unregulated AP settings who would like to book a quality assurance visit should email unregulatedap@norfolk.gov.uk.

The settings listed in this directory have provided the information on the following pages. Norfolk County Council is not responsible for updates/changes which have taken place since the September 2025 update.

The directory is updated annually ready for the new school academic year in September (and published via an MI sheet at Norfolk Schools). Each page presents a summary of the setting's offer; for further information, please contact the provider directly.



Great Yarmouth



Map

Please see the enclosed map for providers' locations. It must be noted however that this map is for Norfolk provisions only, where a specific location was submitted.

There are providers listed in this directory which operate out of county (but within reach of Norfolk schools, for example); please see individual pages for details.

There are providers which are peripatetic and can operate in several locations; please see individual pages for details.

Online providers do not feature on the map.

Norwich

- 01 Able2B CIC
- 02 Art4Youth
- 03 Back to Basics Bushcrafters CIC
- 04 Be Yourself
- 05 Boost (Norwich Youth for Christ)
- 06 Elevate-Ed
- 07 Juventas Services
- 08 Norwich City CSF – Tackle Learning
- 09 St Edmunds Society
- 10 St J's PE Providers
- 11 The Garage, Norwich
- 12 The Leadership Foundation Barbering
- 13 The Leadership Foundation
Boxing Development
- 14 The Leadership Foundation Delta Four
Skate, BMX and Scootering
- 15 The Leadership Foundation: SPORT,
Media& Photography, Camouflage
Learning
- 16 Tutor Doctor Norwich

Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

- 17 1-2 Achieve
- 18 Kip McGrath Education
- 19 Open Road West Norfolk Trust
- 20 The Magpie Centre
- 21 WILDlings Forest School
- 22 Willow Tree Farming
- 23 Wisbech Community Farm by
People & Animals UK CIC

Great Yarmouth

- 24 Action Community Enterprises CIC (ACE)
- 25 Castle Farm Countryside Classroom
- 26 Century Training Academy Ltd
- 27 Community-Ed CIC
- 28 Edfords Care Farm
- 29 Horizon Community Training CIC
- 30 The Bread Kitchen CIC

Breckland

- 31 Athena Education Support CIC
- 32 Bright Butterfly Tuition
- 33 Bush Adventures UK
- 34 JDT Music Academy Ltd
- 35 Manor Farm Riding School
- 36 Elite Hair and Beauty
- 37 The Grounded Forest

South Norfolk

- 40 Kings Dam Project
- 41 The Leadership Foundation Beauty Therapy
- 42 New Day New Way Alternative Provision
- 43 senSI Ltd
- 44 The Patch Dandelion Education Ltd
- 45 The Wilderness Grove Forest School
- 46 The WoodView Project
- 47 Treow Forest School
- 48 Whitlingham Adventure

North Norfolk

- 49 Holt Youth Project
- 50 Verbatim Therapy and
Consultancy Services
- 51 Dandelion Education Patch

Broadland

- 52 Action Community Enterprises CIC (ACE)
- 53 Field of Joy
- 54 Kimblewick Equestrian Centre
- 55 Sprowston Youth Engagement Project
- 56 Swallowtails Ltd
- 57 The Dragonfly Programme
- 58 X Adventure Activities

Community Providers

Absolute Mentoring
Ackerman Pierce Ltd
Alpha Inclusion & Communication
Art4Youth
Atypical Education
Elevate-Ed
Juventas Services
Lapwing Education
Liminal Education East Anglia
Prepped Academy Ltd
Targeted Provision
The Grounded Forest
Tutor Doctor Norwich
Unique to You

Online Providers

Gecko Community
Kip McGrath Education - King's Lynn
MindJam
Noise Solution
Prepped Academy Ltd
Targeted Provision
Tutor Doctor Norwich

Notice

If you are aware that there is an unregulated AP setting operating in Norfolk (or with Norfolk schools) that is not listed in this directory, please contact unregulatedap@norfolk.gov.uk



Norfolk
County Council



flourish