

Off-Site Direction and Managed Moves: Suffolk Protocol

What is an Off-Site Direction?

This refers to a process wherein a pupil is directed off-site to another mainstream setting for a time-limited period.

There can be two outcomes at the end of this period:

- The pupil will return to their current school
- The receiving school offers a managed move when this period comes to an end

DfE guidance states that 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 alternative provision or another mainstream school”.

What is a Managed Move?

The DfE advise that “managed moves are a permanent move to another mainstream school, [and] they can be undertaken following a period of off-site direction. These are part of required planning and review of the time limited placement, alternative options are considered, including a managed move on a permanent basis (if a pupil is placed in a mainstream school).”

When is an Offsite Direction Appropriate?

This is an intervention that should be used to improve behaviour, or to support other pastoral concerns that are impeding the child’s ability to access their education. It may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- When a one-off incident has led to a circumstance where the safeguarding concerns are best served by this process
- Where all internal strategies and interventions have been exhausted and the pupil would benefit from a fresh start at another school.
- Where the pupil is at risk of exclusion

Where a Child has an EHCP or is a Child In Care, or has a Social Worker, schools must consult with the Local Authority or Virtual School before considering a Managed Move or an Off-Site Direction.

Process for a Direction Off-Site

Submission to IYFAP

A request for support from another school with an Off-Site Direction is made via an addition to the agenda for the In Year Fair Access Panel. Schools should submit the information via the Inclusion Referral form and include a risk assessment. In this referral form schools will make clear the reason for the Off-Site Direction. These will broadly fit into three categories:

- For pastoral/safeguarding needs
- To support a fresh start following a period of poor behaviour
- At a point when the child is vulnerable to being permanently excluded.

The home school may have already approached another school in the interests of the safety of the child or children in the school. If this is the case, this should be made clear in the covering email to the IYFAPinbox@suffolk.gov.uk mailbox.

All schools commit to sharing both prior and current attainment data. This will include outcomes of any exploration of SEND. They will also share details of what strategies will support the child to succeed, together with a detailed list of what strategies have been put in place, the impact and outcomes. It is essential that prior to any request for an off-site direction that schools have completed a wide range of assessments and engaged and exhausted their own strategies.

This may include but is not limited to:

- Behaviour log
- reports with details of successful strategies
- Lunch/Break/After School detentions and subsequent follow up
- Phone calls and effective home/school agreements
- Meeting with parents and subject teacher/relevant pastoral staff
- Details of involvement of SENCO
- EWO involvement if appropriate
- Health involvement including mental health teams
- Social Care or Family Support engagement
- Emotional Wellbeing Hub referrals and actions
- Engagement with counselling services
- Adjustments to curriculum and/or school day
- Engagement of services such as SES/YJS
- Any AP provision
- Outcomes from risk assessments

The home school will seek parental acknowledgement that this process requires the sharing of information to enable this direction.

Agreement at IYFAP

Only under very specific circumstances will transport be funded. This may be considered under safeguarding reasons where the funding of transport is vital to maintain the child's safety. The IYFAP minutes will reflect when transport has been agreed by SCC; otherwise, the minutes are to be interpreted that transport is not funded.

The IYFAP chair will ensure that the table reflects the number of Off-Site Directions occurring and the category under which they have been referred.

The schools will agree the next steps between them, but in the first instance the point of contact at the school is the IYFAP attendee. Schools will arrange between themselves the process of contacting the parent, as the circumstances allow.

On occasion, safeguarding concerns will result in schools needing to direct off-site with immediate effect, in which case these will be noted at the next IYFAP under Chairpersons' Actions.

Post IYFAP process

It is usually the responsibility of the home school to make contact with the parent in the first instance, and therefore services and the receiving school should be mindful not to make contact or pass on information until the home school has done so.

Home Schools will send in writing details of the following to both the family and the host school:

- The details of the school day in the host school
- The contact details of the host school
- The meeting schedule for the duration of the placement and who will be involved
- Arrangements such as uniform and lunch.

The host school will contact the family within two school days of the letter being sent.

In usual circumstances, when the Off-Site Direction begins, a planning meeting must be organised by the host school. This meeting should be attended by the home school, the host school, the parents/carers, the pupil and where appropriate, other professionals who may be supporting the pupil and their family. The purpose of the planning meeting is the following:

- To ensure that the pupil and parents/carers understand the process
- To establish any additional support which may be required, for example: SEND adjustments, engagement with social care professionals, transition timetables etc.
- To agree an individual engagement level which could trigger a review of the process and to consider whether the pupil's engagement in the process will allow the pupil to meet the objectives
- To identify and agree dates for regular review meetings
- To ensure that the curriculum adjustments and provision are considered so that the child is not disadvantaged by the process
- To identify any requirement for transport. It is important at this point that parental expectations are managed and they are made aware of their responsibilities.

During the Off-Site Direction

Once the agreement is in place, both schools should engage in information sharing to ensure that this process has the best possible chance of success.

The Direction should be monitored via regular contact between schools, as well as the pupil's family and wider professional network. Best practice to have fortnightly review meetings throughout with at least one being face-to-face, to review progress.

All contact should be recorded. The purpose of these review meetings is the following:

- To gain the voice of the pupil and their family
- To allow the receiving school to address any concerns that the pupil and their family have and to identify any additional support they may need.
- To discuss potential interventions for any behaviour or engagement concerns, and to ensure that the home school share known strategies for this purpose.
- To allow the home school to plan for a potential reintegration.

Safeguarding

As per 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' it is essential that everybody working in a school understands their safeguarding responsibilities. Schools and their staff are an important part

of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children.' Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.

In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. It is the responsibility of every member of staff, volunteer and regular visitor to schools to ensure that they adhere to the school's Safeguarding Policy, procedures and Code of Conduct. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which students can learn.

When an Off Site Direction is implemented, the relevant safeguarding information should be shared with the receiving school. This would include multi-agency plans, contact details for allocated workers and a plan made as to how safeguarding information will be recorded and shared with the Home School DSLs. The Home School should seek written assurances that appropriate safer recruitment checks have been undertaken on staff at the receiving school as required in Part 3 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education.'

A Direction Off-Site will usually last for 6 weeks but can be extended or withdrawn with the agreement of both schools for behaviour or engagement reasons. If the pupil is unable to attend school due to an unauthorised absence, the process may be extended until they have been in attendance for a total of six school weeks. The host school must update the Home School immediately of any reasons for non-attendance.

If a pupil is attending a Direction Off-Site, the home school should use Attendance code D for the pupil. The host school should code a pupil's attendance as Attendance code B.

In the event of the child not attending, it is the duty of the host school to contact the parent/carer to establish the reason. This should then be communicated with the home school immediately so that they can act on it in accordance with their attendance policy

Why might a Direction Off Site be ended?

If the pupil is involved in a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school behaviour policy, this could lead to the ending of the Direction. On occasion, a child may repeatedly refuse to attend the host school. If this is the case, the home school should be notified immediately and follow their attendance policy.

The receiving school should discuss any behaviour concerns with the home school, pupil and family as early as possible to establish a clear plan for maintaining the process.

When can a Off-Site Direction become the Intent to Managed Move?

This refers to a process wherein a pupil is directed off-site to another mainstream setting for a time-limited period and where the receiving school then has the intent to offer a managed move when this period comes to an end.

The DfE advise that "...whilst managed moves are a permanent move to another mainstream school, they can be undertaken following a period of off-site direction and as part of required planning and review of the time limited placement, alternative options are considered, including a managed move on a permanent basis (if a pupil is placed in a mainstream school)."

DfE guidance states that 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 alternative provision or another mainstream school".

In the event that an off-site direction becomes available to the pupil as a managed move, the two schools will write to the Local Authority confirming that decision and the IYFAP table will be amended to reflect the change.

Draft letters and protocols

The Local Authority has produced some templates to support schools with this process. However, these serve as a recommendation only and schools are able to compose their own letters comprising additional information if helpful.

Letters sent to parents for the duration of the Off-Site Direction should be copied to both home and host school.

TEMPLATE LETTERS

Dear Parent

CHILDS NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

YEAR GROUP

Following the incident that occurred on..... I have made the decision to direct XXX off-site for educational provision at XXXX school. This decision has been made pursuant to Section 29A of the Education Act 2002, which allows the headteacher to have the power to direct a child offsite for the purpose of receiving educational provision to improve the child's behaviour.

This decision has not been lightly and follows a period where we have worked together to bring about changes in XXXX behaviour, such as:

- LIST OF STRATEGIES USED IN LAST HALF TERM

We believe this will be beneficial to XXX and will provide XXX with a period of time to reflect on HIS/HER behaviour before returning to the school/academy. It will also enable us to explore what strategies will be put in place on their return.

For the purposes of attendance, XXX will be recorded in the usual way provided that, pursuant to sections 444(1) and (1A) of the Education Act 1996, you ensure XXX's attendance at XXX School as if it were their main school.

A meeting has been arranged for DATE at HOST SCHOOL at TIME.

The member of staff supporting XXX during this process is XXXX, and they will contact you shortly to arrange details of the placement.

If this placement is for more than 5 days, I will keep this placement under review with both you and HOST SCHOOL to provide assurance that the off-site education is achieving its objective and that XXX is benefiting from it.

I will then determine whether the placement should continue and, if so, for what period of time. In reaching my decision, I will of course take into account your views of the placement. Upon reaching a decision, I will notify you of my decision within five days.