

Off-Site Direction and Managed Moves: Suffolk Protocol

Purpose

Off-site direction is a short-term, planned intervention used to support pupils whose behaviour has not improved despite appropriate in-school strategies and targeted support. Its aim is to provide an opportunity for behavioural improvement while maintaining the pupil's access to mainstream education.

All off-site direction arrangements must be time-limited, child-centred, and regularly reviewed, and must be underpinned by clear safeguarding and information-sharing practices.

What is an Off-Site Direction?

This refers to a process whereby a pupil is directed off-site to another education setting for a time-limited period as a supportive intervention.

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

- The pupil returns to their current school
- The receiving school offers a managed move

DfE guidance states that off-site direction is when the governing board of a school requires a pupil to attend another setting to improve their behaviour.

In line with updated statutory guidance (2026):

- Off-site direction must be used as a supportive intervention, not a sanction
- It must be time-limited and regularly reviewed
- It may also be used in safeguarding contexts where a temporary placement is required to manage risk (sometimes referred to as safeguarding separation).

What is a Managed Move?

Managed moves are a permanent move to another mainstream school and may follow a period of off-site direction as part of planned intervention and review.

Principles of Use of an Off-site Direction

- Must be proportionate and time-limited
- Must not be used as a replacement for exclusion
- Must support improved outcomes and reintegration
- Must include the voice of the child and family
- Must be underpinned by clear safeguarding arrangements

When is an Off-site 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:

- a) When a one-off incident has led to a circumstance where the safeguarding concerns are best served by this process
- b) Where appropriate and timely internal strategies and interventions have been explored and the pupil would benefit from time at another school.
- c) Where the pupil is at risk of suspensions or exclusion

Where a Child has an EHCP or is a Child in Care, or has a Social Worker, schools must inform 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
- A supportive intervention following a period of detrimental conduct
- 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.

Schools should ensure that all safeguarding information and risk assessments included within referrals are sufficiently detailed to support safe decision-making and placement planning.

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 applied their own strategies.

This may include but is not limited to:

- Behaviour/conduct 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 inform parents that relevant information will be shared to enable safe and appropriate placement.

In line with statutory safeguarding guidance, consent is not required where information sharing is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child. All data sharing must be proportionate, recorded, and compliant with data protection legislation.

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 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.

Decisions should take into account safeguarding needs, the suitability of provision, and the ability of the receiving school to meet the pupil's needs safely.

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.

Initiating the Off-Site Direction

In most circumstances it will be 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.

The home school must provide written confirmation of the off-site direction to parents, including:

- Reason for the placement
- Duration
- Review arrangements
- Expectations of all parties

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.

It is best practice, before the Off-Site Direction begins, to hold a planning meeting 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 explain the conduct or behaviour policy of the host school and commit to equity in its application
- 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.

As part of the planning meeting, a clear safeguarding communication plan must be agreed, including how concerns will be shared between settings and how records will be maintained.

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.

Both schools must ensure that all safeguarding and wellbeing concerns are communicated immediately between settings.

Reviews must consider:

- Whether the placement remains appropriate
- Whether outcomes are being achieved
- Whether alternative provision, reintegration, or managed move is required

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.

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/carers 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.

Prior to placement, the home school must ensure that the following is shared with the receiving provision:

- Child protection records and multi-agency plans where appropriate
- Behaviour and safeguarding risk assessments
- Details of allocated professionals
- Medical and SEND-related risks

A clear plan must be in place outlining:

- How safeguarding information will be updated

- Who holds responsibility at each stage
- How concerns will be escalated

Roles and Responsibilities

Home School retains responsibility for:

- Overall safeguarding oversight
- Attendance monitoring
- Reintegration planning
- Communication with professionals

Receiving School is responsible for:

- Day-to-day safeguarding while on site
- Immediate reporting of concerns
- Implementing agreed support strategies

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. Host schools may consider the usual support strategies that would apply to host school children. 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.

Decisions should be based on:

- Progress against intended outcomes
- Engagement of the pupil
- Ongoing safeguarding considerations

When can an 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).”

If 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. This will also reflect the reason for the managed move under the categories of the Off-Site Direction.

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.

This protocol aligns with statutory guidance including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance (2026)

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