



# The Fernwood School

*High Achievement with Care & Discipline for All*

## Policy for Off-Site Provision

This policy will be monitored regularly and evaluated so that it remains responsive to current issues. This will be co-ordinated by the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)

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## Statement of Intent

The Fernwood School has a legal duty to ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs or Social, Emotional, or Mental Health (SEMH) needs receive suitable education so that they continue to make progress in line with expectation, following a carefully considered bespoke package. Due to a range of factors, some students may need to access Alternative Provision if they are unable to access mainstream education and others, due to the nature of their mental or physical health needs, may be admitted to hospital and educated there or educated in their own home. We recognise that, whenever possible, students should receive their education within their school setting and our aim will always be to reintegrate young people back into school as soon as possible, if indeed they are able. It is also recognised that each individual case will require input and guidance from all parties involved to find the best solution. At Fernwood, we acknowledge that we have a continuing role in a children's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work with the local authority (LA), healthcare partners, alternative providers, and families to ensure that all children with additional needs receive the necessary levels of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

## Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- ✿ Education Act 1996
- ✿ Equality Act 2010
- ✿ Data Protection Act 2018
- ✿ DfE (2013) Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- ✿ DfE (2015) Supporting students at school with medical conditions
- ✿ DfE (2025) Alternative Provision: Statutory guidance for local authorities and schools

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- ✿ Attendance Policy
- ✿ Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ✿ Data Protection Policy
- ✿ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

This policy clarifies the steps taken to ensure that there is clear pathway for two groups of students:

- ✿ Those who have medical needs or who have SEMH needs and require a bespoke package of education at the Hospital Home Education Learning Centre
- ✿ Those who require another educational setting due to SEMH needs, i.e., Alternative Provision



## 1. Provision for students with Medical/SEMH needs requiring bespoke home or hospital tuition

### Guidelines

Children who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs may include those with:

- ✿ Physical health issues
- ✿ Physical injuries
- ✿ Mental health problems, including anxiety issues
- ✿ Emotional difficulties or school refusal
- ✿ Progressive conditions
- ✿ Terminal illnesses
- ✿ Chronic illnesses

Children who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend any of the following:

- ✿ Hospital school: a special school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment
- ✿ Hospital Home Education: many LAs have home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and on occasions where children are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment. HHELC has, this year, joined an Academy Trust and has moved site and been renamed 'Nottingham Hope Academy'
- ✿ Medical PRUs: these are LA establishments that provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs

### Local Authority Duties

The LA must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The school has a duty to support the LA in doing so.

The LA should:

- ✿ Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a student will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the student
- ✿ The Education division of the Education Welfare Service has been allocated funding to establish a new team to support children not attending school due to their mental health. These referrals are made using the Section 19 Health Referral Form. At Fernwood, these referrals are made by the attendance team in conjunction with pastoral leaders



- ✿ Ensure the education is of good quality, allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind their peers in school, and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible
- ✿ Address the needs of the individual in arranging provision
- ✿ Have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs and ensure parents know who this is
- ✿ Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education
- ✿ Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards children with additional health needs. The policy should make links with related services in the area - for example, Special Educational Needs and Disability Services (SEND), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Education Welfare/Attendance Improvement Services, Educational Psychologists, and, where relevant, Public Community Health Nurses
- ✿ Where full-time education is not in the best interests of a child, due to physical or mental health, the LA should provide part-time education, and both should still aim to achieve a good academic attainment particularly in English, Mathematics and Science. The law does not define full-time education, but children should have provision that is equivalent to the education they receive in school. For example, if they receive one to one provision the hours may be fewer as the provision is more concentrated

## The Fernwood School

Professionals will work alongside the relevant agencies and the LA to support the children and families through times of illness due to physical or mental health needs. Where appropriate, work will be provided prior to support from the LA. Staff at The Fernwood School are committed to work in the best interests of the child to ensure arrangements are put in place and acted upon and that everyone fully understands the child's needs.

### **In addition:**

- ✿ There will be a named member of staff who is responsible for children with healthcare needs who liaises with parents, children, the LA, key workers and others involved in the child's care. At The Fernwood School this is the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) who will liaise closely with the relevant staff involved in each case
- ✿ The support put in place will focus on and meet the needs of individual
- ✿ Appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting children with health needs will be arranged
- ✿ There will be regular contact with the LA, ensuring that teachers who support those with health needs have suitable information relating to the individual's health condition and the possible affect the condition and/or medication taken has on the child
- ✿ Progress and possible reintegration into school will be actively monitored
- ✿ Relevant reports will be provided to outside agencies



- ✿ The school has a responsibility to draw up an appropriate IHP, overseen by the member of staff overseeing the case

#### **Teachers and support staff are responsible for:**

- ✿ Understanding confidentiality in respect of the child's health needs
- ✿ Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate fully, ensuring they are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason
- ✿ Understanding their role in supporting the child with their health needs, ensuring they attend the required training
- ✿ Ensuring they are aware of the needs of the student through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual's health needs
- ✿ Ensuring they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and know what to do in an emergency
- ✿ Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school

#### **Parents are expected to:**

- ✿ Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school/provision where possible
- ✿ Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child
- ✿ Notify the school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay
- ✿ Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs
- ✿ Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned

Under the Education (Registration) England Regulations 2013, a school can only remove a child from roll who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs where:

The child has been certified by the Lead Medical Administrator as unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither the child nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

#### **Reintegration**

When a student is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the LA and AP Provider:

- ✿ The school will work with the LA and AP Provider when reintegration into school is anticipated to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside school
- ✿ As far as possible, the child will be able to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in school



- ✿ If appropriate, the Community Public Health Nurse will be involved in the development of the reintegration plan and informed of the timeline of the plan by the appointed named member of staff, to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the child
- ✿ The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the child
- ✿ Following longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the student's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill child or their parents in the early stages of their absence. The school is aware that some students will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with them, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return
- ✿ The school will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage the student and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period. A risk assessment would be undertaken if necessary

**The reintegration plan will include:**

- ✿ The date for planned reintegration, once known
- ✿ Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration
- ✿ Details of the named member of staff who has responsibility for the student
- ✿ Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved
- ✿ Details of social contacts, including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period

Following reintegration, the school will support the LA and AP Provider in seeking feedback from the student regarding the effectiveness of the process.

**Information sharing**

Sharing of information will be vital when working with children that cannot attend school due to health/mental health needs. All information that needs to be shared will be done so in line with our data protection policy and GDPR regulations.

**Public Examinations**

The Fernwood School will work closely with outside agencies to ensure that those who cannot attend school due to health needs, who are approaching public examinations, are supported.

Awarding bodies may make special arrangements for students with permanent or long-term disabilities and learning difficulties, or temporary disabilities and illnesses. Applications for such arrangements will be submitted by the school, or LA if more appropriate, as early as possible.



## 2. Provision for students with SEMH needs requiring another educational setting due to SEMH needs, i.e., Alternative Provision

Alternative Provision can be necessary for a number of reasons:

- ✿ The student's key talents are not being developed through the national curriculum. Alternative Provision recognises that all students' education needs to be individualised and for some learners this is not necessarily achieved through mainstream education
- ✿ The student has had a number of fixed term exclusions and is considered to be at risk of permanent exclusion from The Fernwood School. In this situation, Alternative Provision should be adopted alongside other strategies including curriculum modification and supported transfers
- ✿ The student has not been attending The Fernwood School regularly. Despite following the attendance policy and employing all appropriate attendance interventions, the impact of this continued non-attendance means that there is a risk of severe underachievement, disengagement and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). In this situation, Alternative Provision can offer a more varied selection of subjects in a more appropriate setting
- ✿ A student may be experiencing exceptionally challenging or traumatic circumstances at home or in relation to family matters and may need a smaller, more therapeutic learning environment with more bespoke 1-1 support to meet their individual needs

### Key Principles of Alternative Provision at The Fernwood School:

At The Fernwood School we have a small number of students who, for a variety of reasons, are educated off site at alternative provisions or have tutoring either at home or in establishments such as libraries or leisure centres. These students have bespoke education, carefully chosen and designed to meet their needs. It is important to note that at The Fernwood School any decision for a student to move to an Alternative Provision will always focus on a student's very specific individual needs and circumstances. The same high expectations of care, support, behaviour, motivation, and attainment remain. The Fernwood School only uses Alternative Provision in exceptional circumstances, and generally has very small numbers of students on placements.

Annual verification and evaluation visits are conducted with all alternative providers in Nottingham. There is an agreement that all Nottingham schools and academies will only place young people on Alternative Provision which has undergone a process of QA.

To be a recommended provider of alternative education in Nottingham the provider will have to demonstrate that they meet the criteria as set out by Jodi Stead, our Nottingham City contact for Alternative Provision, QA and Safeguarding Checklists. The Fernwood School focuses on finding the right provider to make sure every individual student can meet their full potential and go on to the next steps in their education or training with confidence and the skills they need for their future. We regularly seek guidance from the CME and complex placements co-ordinator at the Local Authority.



The school adheres to the February 2025 DfE guidance "Alternative Provision, Statutory guidance for local authorities and school". As emphasised in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 placements are set up with due diligence and an understanding that as the commissioner, we are responsible for securing the Service Level Agreement, ensuring that all policies and procedures that pertain to safeguarding and health and safety are in place and that the education and pastoral care for students is high quality. We fully recognise that the safeguarding of the children remains our responsibility and to this end, secure a letter of assurance that confirms the safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures are in place.

At The Fernwood School this quality assurance can be done in a variety of ways:

- ✿ Obtaining the overview of the provider's quality assurance of education processes, including schemes of learning, method of assessments, reporting processes
- ✿ Observations of lessons when visiting the child in placement
- ✿ Feedback from the child when visiting; hearing their views on the progress they are making and their next steps
- ✿ Regular meetings in school with the child and a parent to discuss progress and look in books and folders
- ✿ Maintenance of a portfolio of work

The school works hard to build strong relationships with the highest quality providers. For this reason, the school has forged very close links with key providers who have a proven track record for excellent care and support for students, and well as providing a more bespoke learning environment with much smaller class sizes, with, in some instances, clear break-out spaces with counsellors and key mentors and pastoral staff able to adapt timetables on the spot to support individual students.

The Fernwood School works very closely with the following providers in Nottingham:

**RISE:** A bespoke, therapeutic learning environment based in Balloon Woods very close to Fernwood with class sizes of 3-5, an immediate clear break-out space and a maximum capacity of around 15 students. Fiona Bourne is the key contact there and oversees this provision with a particular emphasis on the individual pastoral programme for all students.

**CRISP:** A provision in Bulwell which offers a broad and varied curriculum allowing students the opportunity to study vocational courses alongside core subjects. Small group settings allow for greater tailoring of learning across a variety of courses such as \mechanics, Construction, Digital Media, Catering, Art and Sport.

**GLOW Education Project:** A provision in Lenton, offering an academic focused education with diverse pathways, tailored to suit the needs of the individual. They offer qualifications in English, maths, citizenship studies and a BTEC in Personal Growth and Wellbeing. They offer bespoke support to children with SEND.



**First Class Tailored Solutions:** Provides a flexible bespoke 1-1 tutoring programme or timetable with specialist tutors who will work with students in their homes or in suitable local spaces such as libraries and community centres. This provider can often form part of a totally bespoke timetable for students who need 1-1 support and tutoring for English, maths and science, and can also provide a more vocational element to their weekly offer of activities. This provides great flexibility for any student suffering from trauma/anxiety (or recovering from challenges such as these) or for those with serious illness or a challenging medical situation. Gary Harris is the key contact for school and builds bespoke 1-1 tutoring for individual Fernwood students.

If a cross-border commissioning occurs, all participating local authorities must collaborate during the planning process.

### Process

The Fernwood School will arrange a meeting involving all relevant stakeholders including parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate.

- ✿ A relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team along with the Head of Year will conduct the meeting. During the meeting the reasons for seeking an Alternative Provision will be explored with the child and parents/carers. If the offer is to avoid further serious sanction including permanent exclusion, this must be made clear to parents, so they are fully informed of the consequence of their decision
- ✿ The provision choice will consider the interests, skills and learning preferences of the student, the location of the placement and the most recent QA report carried out by Jodi Stead – The Fernwood School contact for Alternative Provision expertise in the City. Agreement must be reached by all parties and Head of Year and/or Senior Leader will accompany a visit to the provision before the referral is made
- ✿ An agreed referral form will be completed by The Fernwood School and sent to the provider
- ✿ The courses adopted will suit the student's ability and aspirations. The student's programme will usually be over five days. If a student's individual needs mean that the most appropriate timetable will be a combination of time at The Fernwood School and the Alternative Provision the timetable may be bespoke and tailored to the student's individual needs. There will always be an element of literacy and numeracy within the package
- ✿ If a 5-day programme is inaccessible for a student, they will be directed to complete work via Oak Academy which provides high quality online resources; this will be discussed with parents.
- ✿ The Fernwood School's attendance team establish communications with the relevant colleagues at the placement in order to meticulously keep attendance records up to date. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) oversees this. Concerns will be reported to the Head of Year and the SLT Link - who will then take action by contacting parents/speaking to the student over the phone or conducting any extra visits where needed
- ✿ Poor attendance will be followed up according to the school's attendance policy



- ✿ If the placement does not appear to be successful due to attendance, behaviour or the quality of provision, a formal meeting will be held involving all key stakeholders. The meeting will reinforce expectations of the original agreements and also investigate feasible adjustments and alternatives
- ✿ If the student is permanently excluded from an Alternative Provision placement or the placement breaks down, a meeting will be held between all the relevant stakeholders to identify another Alternative Provision, consider a supported transfer via the Fair Access Panel or a return to mainstream school. A permanent exclusion may also be considered at this time, depending on circumstances.

### Safeguarding

- ✿ The school seeks verification from each provider to ensure that their safeguarding procedures are robust, adhering to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025.
- ✿ The safeguarding procedures and legal requirements are assessed annually by our Alternative Provision contact Jodi Stead. The Fernwood School will not use providers that have not met the necessary criteria
- ✿ All professionals have a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and tracking and reporting attendance at Alternative Provision is an essential component in achieving this
- ✿ There is an expectation that any safeguarding concerns are raised with the DSL at The Fernwood School and that the providers adhere to the safeguarding policy

### Behaviour Expectations

Students attending an Alternative Provision will be expected to adhere to the code of conduct as outlined by each individual provider. They are expected to represent The Fernwood School positively through their behaviour and attitude and any breach of the provider's or The Fernwood School's code of conduct could result in a sanction or termination of the placement.

### Monitoring Progress

The Fernwood School will liaise with the provider to ensure that appropriate progression plans are being made and will, where appropriate, arrange for Futures appointments to be made.

### The Fernwood School

The overall responsibility for oversight of Alternative Provision lies with the Pastoral Deputy Headteacher. The Assistant Headteachers for KS3 and KS4 oversee the provisions for the students in their respective year groups and direct the named keyworker as required. Keyworkers will usually be Assistant Heads of Year, but they would never assume full responsibility as placements are always overseen by senior pastoral leaders.



These responsibilities include:

- Keeping meticulous records, including an overview of the placement, the reason for seeking AP and recording who will oversee the placement - see Appendix 1
- Monitoring and supporting attendance alongside the Attendance Lead – this is a daily routine and is then generated as a weekly report to the relevant pastoral staff
- Monitoring and supporting student well-being
- Monitoring and supporting behaviour
- Monitoring and supporting student progress and attainment
- Carrying out regular visits to the AP, at least once a half term (KCSIE 2025) and keeping up to date records – see Appendix 2
- Communicating successes and concerns to parents

Regular meetings will take place between The Fernwood School and the provider to review progress, attendance and behaviour and appropriate targets will be set. The member of SLT responsible for Alternative Provision placement will liaise closely with providers through Service Level Agreements to make sure regular progress reports support students to meet their full potential.



## Appendix 1

### Alternative Provision Overview Sheet

Name	DOB	Year Group	HoY

Context/Background

Who has oversight in school and who is the link at home?

Outside Agency involvement

Review



## Appendix 2

### Alternative Provision Monitoring Visit

<b>Student name and date of birth:</b>	
<b>Member of staff:</b>	
<b>Date and time of agreed visit:</b>	
<b>Name of Alternative Provision:</b>	
<b>Notes from visit: (staff to make notes under the following headings)</b>	
<b>Progress &amp; engagement</b>	
<b>Well-being</b>	
<b>Any safeguarding issues</b>	
<b>Discussion about next steps</b>	
<b>CEIAG advice/support (when relevant)</b>	
<b>Actions:</b>	
<b>Date of next visit:</b>	