

Pupil Movement Guidance

(Off-Site Direction and Managed Move)

Rotherham Exclusions Team

2025/26

Introduction

Although recognised by DfE as essential management tools for headteachers, suspension and permanent exclusion, for the vast majority of pupils, may not be necessary, as other strategies could potentially manage behaviour more effectively.

It is clear in guidance that schools should take appropriate steps to assess and address any underlying causes of behaviour **at an early stage**. This should include assessing pupils' special educational need or disability (SEND).

The DfE's document [Behaviour in schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) should have been followed before resorting to suspending or permanently excluding a pupil and schools should consider any contributing factors that are identified after an incident has occurred.

A permanent exclusion should always be the very last resort.

Statutory Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance was updated in 2022 to include pupil movement, placing greater emphasis on off-site direction and Managed Move protocols, to create clearer pathways to support inclusion.

Before taking a final decision to exclude, the headteacher should consider whether it is in the best interests of all parties to initiate off-site direction and/or a Managed Move as preventative measures to avoid exclusion.

All Governing Boards should have access to data and be familiar with 'pupil movement' and any emerging local trends. For **Governance and accountability for pupil movement** see [Understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees](#)

Off-site direction

Maintained schools have the power to direct a pupil off-site for education, to improve their behaviour (see section 29(3) Education Act 2002 and the Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Amendment) Regulations 2012).

The Governing Board may require any registered pupil to attend a setting outside the school premises for 'the purpose of receiving education intended to improve behaviour'. This may be at another mainstream school or an alternative provision setting. The Governing Board and the Headteacher will decide, in communication with the pupil and their parents, whether off-site direction is an appropriate strategy for supporting the pupil and to avoid exclusion.

Note: This should not be confused with a suspension and never be used in place of one; regulations **must** be followed when formally suspending a pupil from the school site.

An alternative setting should be able to provide a pupil with an opportunity, through a support plan, to develop skills to overcome the barriers they have been experiencing. The length of time a pupil spends in another setting will depend on what best supports their needs and potential improvement in behaviour. Like any move, careful planning and preparation is needed, with pupil's strengths and difficulties clearly emphasised within planning.

In order to support a pupil with reintegration back into their referring school, the focus of intervention whilst off-site should remain on ensuring the pupil's behaviours, those which require intervention, are being addressed.

Note: This must not be a period of time spent in another school's isolation room. Pupils must continue to receive **a broad and balanced education; this is an entitlement that will also support reintegration.**

The Governing Board will decide at review meetings whether the arrangements will continue and for how long; at each meeting the next review will be confirmed. Less formal reviews between schools can take place in addition if closer monitoring is required. Reviews must be recorded in writing, detailing any decisions made regarding the placement. Written representations must be accepted if received by any parties unable to attend.

Note: 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) SEND reviews must continue throughout this period.

Where a pupil has an identified Social Worker, whether at Child in Need or Child Protection level, they must be informed, involved in planning and invited to reviews. The Virtual School Head must also be included if the pupil is a Child in Care.

If a Governing Board decide to direct a pupil off school site, they must:

- ensure that the nature of the intervention, its objectives, and the timeline to achieve these objectives are clearly defined and agreed with the alternative placement in advance.
- provide parents and relevant professionals involved (Social Worker and Virtual School Head etc) with detailed information about the placement and of the expected outcomes, agreed with the alternative placement i.e. What specific interventions will be implemented to help the pupil to 'improve behaviour'.
- ensure that parents are given the information about the placement, clearly and in advance (**at least 2 school days in advance of the placement starting**) how and when it will be reviewed by the Governing Board, and the potential end date. Where the pupil has an Education, Health & Care (EHC) plan, the Local Authority must also be involved in discussions and kept informed, plans should be updated to reflect this change.
- keep the placement under review, formally inviting parents, relevant professionals (and the Local Authority in the case of a pupil with an EHC plan) to the review, at least 6 days in advance.
- ensure reviews are frequent enough to provide assurance that the off-site education is achieving its objectives and that the pupil is benefitting from it.
- ensure reintegration planning arrangements are considered in advance of the final review, *including the option of a managed move on a permanent basis*, if a pupil has been attending a mainstream school. (The **Reintegration Toolkit** is available within the **Exclusion Toolkit**, sent to all schools each new academic year).
- have regard to guidance from the Secretary of State on the use of this power.

Alternative Provision guidance can be found in Arranging [Alternative provision](#) – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities” (February 2025). This legislation refers to maintained schools and not academies.

It is recommended that as academies have the power to direct pupils off-site for the purpose of improving behaviour (if stated in their funding agreement and/or articles of association), it is good practice to follow the same maintained school's framework. The Board of Trustees may use their general powers to arrange for any registered pupil to attend at a setting outside the school premises.

It is also recommended that off-site direction features in schools' behaviour policies.

It is important to note that pupils must remain on roll at their home school during the prescribed period attending off-site provision.

The home school must accept the pupil back once the prescribed period off site has lapsed.

Note: Attendance **Code D** should be used if attending another educational establishment; if the activity does not involve the pupil being registered at any other school **Code B** should be used.

Further guidance for off-site direction can be found on page 20 of DfE's Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance (August 2024) categorised under pupil movement.

Managed Move

A Managed Move must not be confused with off-site direction. A pupil can attend another school as part of a 'managed move' but this must only be arranged with the full consent of all parties involved, including the pupil and their parents. This is not a 'trial' placement at another school.

Managed Moves are voluntary and must only ever be initiated when in the pupil's best interest, parents can refuse a Managed Move and must never feel pressured to agree.

Note: The threat of exclusion must never be used to influence parents to remove their child from the school.

The original, 'home' school, will consult with another school to secure an opportunity for a pupil to attend. It must be clear from the outset that this is a permanent transfer. Careful transition planning and preparation is needed, with pupil's strengths and difficulties planned for accordingly.

Where a pupil has an EHC plan or is a Child in Care, consideration to a Managed Move must always be aired with caution. Discussions must take place with the relevant teams to ascertain what is in the pupil's best interest. Discussions between schools must not take place around initiating a Managed Move unless an agreement has been reached by all parties.

It is vital that reviews take place on a regular basis to address any difficulties at an early stage- pupil's views and them being heard are vital to success.

The permanent transfer should allow a pupil to have a fresh start.

A Managed Move may be considered if a pupil,

- has completed a successful period of time at the school already, through an off-site direction, and has expressed a view to remain at that school.
- is at risk of permanent exclusion but might succeed in a new school.
- has social, emotional or mental health difficulties or needs that could be better met in a new environment.
- finds that attendance at the current school is having a negative impact on their well-being.

A Managed Move is not a 'trial' at another school, it is a permanent transfer

This list is by no means exhaustive.

Statutory Guidance emphasises:

'Telling or forcing a pupil to leave school, or not allowing them to attend school, is a suspension (if temporary) or permanent exclusion (if permanent). Whenever a pupil is made to leave school, or forbidden from attending school, on disciplinary grounds, this must be done in accordance with the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 and with regard to relevant parts of this guidance.'

Suspending a pupil for a short period of time, such as half a day, is permissible, however, the formal suspension process must be followed. Each disciplinary suspension and permanent exclusion must be confirmed to the parents in writing with notice of the reasons for the suspension or permanent exclusion.

- Any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods, must be formally recorded'. (Pg 16 DfE suspension and permanent exclusion guidance 2024)

All off-site directions and managed move arrangements should be recorded and submitted to the Local Authority via the Rotherham Council Website or Trade Rotherham.

Please contact exclusions@rotherham.gov.uk if you need any assistance.