

# **St Margaret's Academy**

## **Alternative Provision Policy**

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## **Statement of intent**

St Margaret's Academy recognises the need to ensure that our curriculum is inclusive and accessible, providing opportunities for all pupils to succeed; furthermore, we recognise the need to offer other provisions to some pupils that allow them to achieve their potential outside of what is accessible at the school.

Alternative provision is educational provision for pupils who are unable to access, or unsuited to, mainstream education for a variety of reasons. It aims to ensure the continued education of pupils in the school in a supportive and nurturing environment. The school strives to reintegrate all pupils back into mainstream education wherever possible.

This policy outlines the key aspects of alternative provision at the school, including the reasons for which a pupil may be directed to alternative provision, the referral process and the methods for reintegrating pupils back into the school.

## **1. Legal framework**

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

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Education Act 2002
- DfE (2013) 'Alternative Provision'
- DfE (2022) 'Suspension and Permanent Suspension from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Information
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Taking overall responsibility of the school's use of alternative provision and the implementation of this policy.
- Reporting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy to the governing board.
- Ensuring that budgets for alternative provision are established in due time, approved by the board of trustees and managed effectively.
- Notifying parents when their child has been directed to alternative provision.
- Sharing the relevant information with the chosen alternative provision provider to facilitate the transition from the school to the provider.

The SLT will be responsible for:

- Supporting members of staff with the monitoring and support of alternative curriculum provision.
- Arranging the appointment of the alternative provision lead.
- Continually assessing the quality and suitability of providers of alternative education.
- The alternative provision lead will be responsible for:

- Liaising with the relevant members of staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to ensure that the appropriate measures are in place to support pupils in alternative provision.
- Undertaking visits to the alternative provision sites, as requested by the SLT, to review the progress of relevant pupils.
- Deciding on an appropriate course of action, in conjunction with the SLT and headteacher, if informed by a provider of any serious behavioural incidents involving the school's pupils.

The LA will be responsible for:

- Arranging suitable full-time education for pupils who have been permanently suspended from the school.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for pupils who would not receive suitable education without alternative provision, e.g. because of illness.

The board of trustees will be responsible for:

- Arranging suitable full-time education for pupils who receive a fixed-period suspension of more than five school days.
- Where appropriate, directing pupils off-site for education to improve their behaviour.
- Monitoring and reviewing the implementation of this policy.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the alternative education providers used by the school are registered and approved, and that they have the relevant policies in place to cover safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety.
- Ensuring that all adults at the provision are cleared to work with pupils, e.g. they have the relevant DBS checks.
- Ensuring that all alternative providers receive and adhere to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The designated mental health lead will be responsible for:

- Assisting in the identification of pupils with SEMH needs and developing appropriate support plans for these pupils, in line with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.
- Assisting in the development of reintegration plans for pupils with SEMH needs.
- Giving alternative provision settings details of a pupil's SEMH needs, where appropriate, so their placement can be catered to them.

The attendance lead will be responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance of pupils who have been referred to alternative provision and updating the school's records on a weekly basis.
- Providing attendance updates to the alternative provision lead and headteacher on a weekly basis.

The assessment lead will be responsible for:

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- Coordinating with the provider to make arrangements for pupils who are required to sit public examinations.
- Liaising with the alternative provision lead to ensure there is a system in place for tracking pupil progress.

The SENCO will be responsible for:

- Giving alternative provision providers details of a pupil's SEND, where appropriate, so their placement can be catered to them.

### **3. Purpose of alternative provision**

The school will recognise that all pupils are individuals with different strengths and weaknesses, and that mainstream education is not suitable for everyone.

Alternative provision will focus on ensuring that pupils continue to receive a high-quality education whilst their needs are being addressed and will offer a variety of alternative curriculum provisions in order to support pupils' wider development.

The school will arrange alternative provision for pupils for several reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- To encourage the inclusion in education of pupils who have had one or more fixed-period suspensions, or who are at risk of permanent suspension
- To ensure pupils are offered a variety of alternative curriculum provisions as a way of supporting their wider development, and equip them with skills and experience that will benefit them later in life
- To further personalise the curriculum for some pupils, where there is a need
- To meet the needs of pupils who struggle to meet the academic and social demands of mainstream education expectations
- To meet the needs of pupils who because of illness or other reasons, including SEMH needs, would not receive suitable education.
- To negate any damage caused by negative experiences a pupil may have had in subject areas they cannot access
- To meet legal obligations

Once directed to alternative provision, the length of time a pupil spends there will be dependent on what best supports their needs, providing the placement is appropriate and their progress is regularly monitored.

### **4. Good alternative provision**

Alternative provision will differ from pupil to pupil dependent on their needs; however, the providers commissioned by the school aim to:

- Be suited to individual pupils' capabilities and identify their specific personal, social and academic needs in order to help them overcome any barriers to attainment.
- Achieve good academic attainment on par with mainstream schools

- Improve pupil motivation, self-confidence, attendance and engagement with education.
- Provide clearly defined objectives to the school and pupil, including the next steps following the placement such as reintegration into mainstream education.

## **5. Suitability of providers and safeguarding**

The school will have access to a variety of alternative provision placements and will have procedures in place to ensure pupils make good progress whilst at the provision.

The suitability of the providers of alternative provision commissioned by the school will be continually assessed to ensure they continue to offer the best path for the school's pupils.

The school's DSL will ensure all providers to the school are registered and approved, and that they have relevant policies in place to cover safeguarding and health and safety.

The DSL will 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 the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff.

The school will ensure that all relevant individuals are aware of the additional risk of harm to which pupils placed at alternative provision may be vulnerable.

The school will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of a pupil placed at alternative provision in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and will satisfy itself that the provider meets the needs of the pupil.

## **6. Planning for alternative provision**

The school will strive to encourage all pupils to achieve or exceed the standards of a good education.

The school will focus on the early assessment and identification of a pupil's needs, including any SEND or SEMH need, and will work in collaboration with partner agencies in health and children's social care, educational psychology, and children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS) to support the pupil to engage in education.

If support the school implements for the pupil does not lead to increased engagement in education or improvements in the pupil's welfare, the headteacher, in collaboration with other members of staff such as the SENCO, will consider if the pupil should be directed to alternative provision.

If a pupil is directed to alternative provision, the school will ensure that a personalised plan for intervention is developed, setting clear objectives for improvement and attainment, timeframes, arrangements for assessment and monitoring progress, and a baseline of the current position against which to measure progress.

Intervention plans will be linked to other relevant information, such as EHC plans.

Full records of all alternative provision placements will be maintained, including information on the pupil's progress, achievements and destination following their placement, as well as the pupil's own assessment of their placement.

## **7. Referral process**

The school will work in conjunction with alternative provision providers to develop procedures for referring and admitting pupils to alternative provision.

Once the school has taken the decision to direct a pupil to alternative provision, the pupil and their parents will be called for a meeting with the headteacher and alternative provision lead.

At the meeting, the alternative provision lead will clearly explain to the pupil and their parents the reasons for directing the pupil to alternative provision.

An agreement will be made between the school and the parents with regards to referring the pupil to alternative provision. This agreement will be reviewed on a termly basis, and the timescales and responsibilities for reviewing the agreement will be made clear to providers, parents and pupils.

Responsibilities for supporting the pupil and timescales for reviewing the alternative provision agreement will be made during the initial meeting.

Parents of the pupil will be fully involved in the referral process and any decisions taken to refer their child to alternative provision.

Once parents have agreed for their child to be directed to alternative provision, the pupil must attend any on- or off-site provision; failure to attend the provision will carry the same consequences as non-attendance at the school, as outlined in the Attendance Policy.

Where parents refuse to accept the offer of alternative provision, this will be documented.

A pupil referred to alternative provision will be dual registered from the day the provision commences.

## **8. Directing pupils off-site to improve behaviour**

Where necessary, the board of trustees will direct a pupil to off-site alternative provision in order to improve their behaviour.

In these instances, the board of trustees will:

- Ensure that the pupil's parents (and the LA, where the pupil has a statement of SEN or EHC plan) are given clear information about the placement, i.e. why their child has been directed to off-site provision, when the placement will begin, where the placement will be, and how it will be reviewed.
- Keep in touch with the pupil throughout the placement.
- Keep the placement under review and involve the pupil's parents in this process. The frequency of these reviews is decided on a case-by-case basis.

- Hold a review meeting upon the request of the parent or where the pupil has an EHC plan.
- Keep the length of time a pupil spends in alternative provision and the reintegration plan under review.

## **9. Arranging provision for suspended pupils**

The LA will arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil permanently excluded from the school; this alternative provision will begin no later than the sixth school day of exclusion.

Where a pupil who is permanently excluded has an EHC plan, the LA may review the plan or reassess the pupil's needs, in conjunction with their parents, with a view to identifying a new placement.

Where it is not possible or appropriate to arrange alternative provision during the first five school days of an exclusion, the headteacher will ensure that the pupil is set work and that this is marked.

## **10. Pupils with additional needs**

Where the school has concerns about the behaviour, or risk of suspension, of a pupil with additional needs (including SEND and SEMH needs) and/or an EHC plan, or a looked-after child, the headteacher, DSL and SENCO will consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required.

The school will always ensure there has been an accurate assessment of a pupil's needs in order to ensure that suitable alternative provision is put in place.

## **11. Notifying parents**

Where the school directs a pupil to off-site alternative provision, their parents will be notified in writing.

Notification will be sent as soon as it is practical and no later than two days before the placement is due to begin.

The notification letter will explain the purpose of the alternative provision and the reason the pupil has been referred to this provision.

The notification letter will state the dates for which the pupil will be required to attend alternative provision, the time the provision will start, the amount of time the pupil is to spend at the placement each day, the address the pupil will need to attend and the name of the person responsible for the provision.

## **12. Communication with providers**

The objectives of placing individual pupils in alternative provision will be clearly communicated to providers and progress against these objectives will be monitored by the alternative provision lead.

The school will maintain ongoing contact with the provider and the pupil in order to exchange relevant information, monitor progress and provide pastoral support.

All relevant information shared between the school, provider and other parties will be communicated in a readable format and in accordance with data protection principles; including any information on SEND, literacy, safeguarding or other issues, as well as any information requested by the provider as appropriate.

Providers will be made aware that they should raise any safeguarding concerns regarding a pupil of the school with the DSL.

### **13. Monitoring academic progress, behaviour and welfare**

Upon placement in alternative provision, the school will provide the provider with the pupil's attainment data.

Whilst a pupil is placed in alternative provision, the school will monitor their academic progress, behaviour and welfare.

Providers will be required to complete a termly report on the pupil's academic progress, behaviour and welfare, as part of the school's monitoring process.

The alternative provision lead, or another suitable member of staff, will visit pupils placed in alternative provision at appropriate intervals.

If a serious behaviour incident occurs whilst a pupil is in alternative provision, the provider will contact the school.

Pupils who are not making satisfactory progress at their placement will undergo a formal review meeting, which will be attended by the headteacher, alternative provision lead, pupil, their parents and the provider.

If a pupil's progress does not improve following three formal review meetings, the school may end the placement.

The placement may also be ended in some extreme circumstances, e.g. safeguarding concerns.

### **14. Monitoring attendance**

The school will recognise that, for alternative provision to benefit pupils, they must attend the provision; therefore, the school will monitor the attendance of all pupils in alternative provision.

Providers will be required to contact the school whenever a pupil placed there is absent.

The school will contact pupils' parents, where their child has been absent from provision, in order to resolve the issue and to ensure regular attendance is achieved.

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The school will formally monitor the attendance of pupils placed in alternative provision and update attendance records on a weekly basis.

Pupils whose attendance falls below the school's target will be subject to interventions as per the school's Attendance Policy.

### **15. Reintegration**

Where it is considered appropriate for a pupil to return to mainstream education, the school and the alternative provision setting will work together to develop a reintegration plan.

The headteacher will arrange a meeting with the alternative provision setting to develop the reintegration plan.

Before reintegration, the headteacher will obtain a final report on the pupil's achievements during the placement; this includes academic attainment and progress, attendance records and evidence of a change in behaviour.

The headteacher will also speak to the pupil to assess their views on the success of the placement.

In light of the final report and views of the pupil, the headteacher will implement an appropriate reintegration plan based on the pupil's needs. This may include a discussion with the pupil's parents and/or setting specific objectives for the pupil to achieve on reintegration, e.g. attendance or behaviour.

Pupils that have reintegrated back into the school will be continually supported in line with their specific needs.

### **16. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher and governing board on a bi-annual basis.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is Summer Term 2028.