

Dorset County Council



**CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**INCLUSION SERVICES GUIDANCE**

**Policy for Admission to Learning Centres (Pupil Referral Units) in Dorset**

January 2013

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## **Policy for Admission to Learning Centres (Pupil Referral Units) in Dorset**

### **1. Statutory Duties of the Local Authority**

Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision. Full time provision must be made unless the pupil's health (mental or physical) means that full-time education would not be in his or her best interests. This applies to all children of compulsory school age resident in the local authority area, whether or not they are on the roll of a school, and whatever type of school they attend. Full-time education for excluded pupils must begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion. (Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, as amended by section 3 of the Children, Schools and Families Act 2010)

Any school that is established and maintained by a local authority to enable it to discharge the above duty is known as a pupil referral unit (PRU). There is no requirement on local authorities to have or to establish a pupil referral unit, and they may discharge their duties by other means. However, only a local authority can establish a pupil referral unit. Others can establish Alternative Provision Academies or AP Free Schools.

Provision in PRUs is defined as Alternative Provision (AP). However AP also encompasses education arranged by schools for pupils from the sixth day of a fixed term exclusion and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.

In Dorset PRUs are known as learning centres. The Local Authority (LA) has established 5 learning centres so that it can make suitable provision for children and young people described in Section 19 of the Education Act 1996. Places are commissioned in the five Dorset learning centres to enable the LA to fulfil this function.

In addition Dorset learning centres are able to receive pupils who are at risk of exclusion and for whom the school wishes to make off-site provision. Such pupils are dual registered and may receive a substantial part of their provision in school.

The Local Authority is required to set an overall policy for admission to its alternative provision, based on clear criteria for requesting involvement and admitting pupils, including those who are dual registered. For the purpose of the school census a pupil should be dual main registered at their school and dual subsidiary registered at the alternative provision.

### **2. Panels for Admission to Learning Centres**

There is a central panel which meets every three weeks in term time which considers and decides upon requests for involvement from a range of professionals.

The Chesil Partnership has its own panel.

Dorset learning centres will admit those pupils whom the Admissions Panels have deemed to be appropriate admissions.

Both panels have head teacher, learning centre, inclusion services and early intervention service representation.

Both also function as a Fair Access Panel (in a separate part of the meeting which is chaired by an Admissions Manager) and decide on placement in both schools and learning centres under fair access arrangements.

Admissions to learning centres may be agreed under the fair access protocol (eg when a pupil has attended a PRU in another authority) but only when there are demonstrable and defensible reasons for doing so.

### 3. Who can make a request for involvement?

The decision to make a request for involvement will always be collaborative, with the lead officer seeking the views of parents/carers, the pupil, schools and other key adults who work with the child and drawing together information about current areas of need and of success and levels of attainment. This information will be used to complete the request for involvement/ information passport which will inform the panel's decision and will be passed to the learning centre.

Area of need	Who leads?	How?
<b>Permanent Exclusions</b>	Exclusions Officer	Completed request along with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion letter</li> <li>• Relevant dates</li> </ul>
<b>Dual Registration</b> Pupils 'at risk of permanent exclusion' from school may be referred for full or joint provision which will be subject to regular review.	Exclusions Officer	Completed Request for Involvement Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background reports/statements &amp; evidence of appropriate interventions and graduated response, including use of a Pastoral Support Plan</li> <li>• Details of multi-agency involvement</li> </ul>
<b>Medical</b> Pupils who are unable to attend school as a result of illness or mental health difficulties	A Medical/CAMHS Consultant or a Community Paediatrician (not a GP) must support a request for provision	Completed Form must be accompanied with supporting documents from a Medical or CAMHS Consultant or Community Paediatrician.
<b>School Refusers/Phobics</b> Pupils who, for a variety of reasons, have a record of school non-attendance and where all attempts at re-integration have been unsuccessful. Will be considered on a case by case	Locality Social Workers within the Early Intervention teams  Educational Psychologists	Completed Form along with- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance details</li> <li>• Background report/statement &amp; details of interventions</li> <li>• Supporting papers</li> <li>• Details of multi-agency</li> </ul>

<b>Area of need</b>	<b>Who leads?</b>	<b>How?</b>
basis.		involvement
<p><b>Special Educational Need (SEN)</b> All requests for involvement for pupils with Statements of SEN must be co-ordinated by the SEN caseworker and approved by an SEN Team Leader</p>	Team Leaders - SEN	Request for Involvement, collated by the SEN Caseworker with information from school, approved by the SEN Team Leader and accompanied by a copy of the statement and latest annual review
<p><b>High level of Emotional/Social Vulnerability</b> Educational Psychologists and Locality Social Workers may refer pupils needing a flexible, supportive, individual educational programme which will support a return to school following the breakdown of an earlier school placement. Will be considered on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>Educational Psychologist</p> <p>Locality Social Workers within the Early Intervention teams</p>	<p>Completed Form along with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant background history</li> <li>• Areas of difficulty</li> <li>• Desired outcome</li> </ul>
<p><b>Children in Care</b> Children who are Looked After by the local authority and who have experienced a breakdown in school placement may be referred.</p>	Head of Virtual School for Children in Care	Completed Form along with relevant supporting information
<p><b>Fair Access</b> Pupils who are identified by School Admissions.</p>	Admissions Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions Form</li> <li>• Admissions Additional Information Form</li> <li>• Case history</li> </ul>

#### 4. What criteria apply?

##### Permanent Exclusions

The LA has a statutory duty to make provision for all pupils who have been permanently excluded by the 6<sup>th</sup> day of their exclusion. For this reason decisions about the placement of permanently excluded pupils do not rest with the panel and are the responsibility of the Schools Exclusion Guidance and Training Officer who will gather additional information from the excluding school and other agencies, liaise with parents/carers and with the pupil, seek advice from other professionals as appropriate and reach a decision on whether the pupil should access a place at another mainstream school or be placed at a learning centre. If the former, the Officer will identify an appropriate placement according to an established protocol with the

admissions team which is consistent with the Fair Access Policy. The choice of learning centre will largely depend on where the pupil lives, although other factors may be taken into account.

## Dual Registration

When considering the appropriateness of a request for dual registration, school leaders must be aware of the need to evidence the work that has been undertaken to support the pupil in school.

There is a strong expectation that, when a young person is experiencing difficulties in managing his or her behaviour, the school will use a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP). The purpose of the PSP is to offer the pupil opportunities to manage his or her behaviour better and to address the underlying causes of that behaviour. It is an important feature of the plan that the school, the parent/carer and the pupil together agree the support strategies which are put in place.

Appendix A from the PSP guidance notes (available on schoolsnet – Inclusion Services Guidance) provides a summary of information explaining the expected process that should have been followed before a PSP is put into place. Once in place, there is an expectation that sufficient time will have been allowed to effect change. Consideration of moving towards a request for the involvement of a learning centre will be made only when evidence is available that this process has been followed. This will be first explored during a meeting between the most suitable senior person in school and the Exclusion Guidance and Training Officer.

Consideration of a request for learning centre placement should only be made when there is evidence that there has been a graduated response (where the school has sought to identify the areas where the pupil is experiencing difficulty and has put in place and evaluated appropriate incremental and multi-agency support) **or** in response to an exceptional one-off incident that would normally result in a permanent exclusion.

Given that a request for dual registration is a response to a level of behavioural, social and emotional difficulty there should be evidence of

- meetings with parents/carers and the appropriate involvement of other agencies. Schools should see it as part of their core work to engage with parents and carers, particularly those who are hard to reach, and to take steps to access the multi-agency support available to them. There should be evidence that the school has been pro-active in establishing those relationships in respect of the pupil concerned
- appropriate and personalised behaviour support in addition to that provided by the school's universal provision for pastoral support, whether delivered in-house or by an outside agency
- tailoring the curriculum offer at Key Stage 4
- personalisation of programmes, including literacy support
- mentoring
- planning with members of Inclusion Services

Failure to have evidenced and meaningful intervention in place is likely to prevent a request being taken forward; however it is not expected that plans are created for the purpose of achieving learning centre involvement – evidence of support being identified; facilitated and monitored for a reasonable amount of time will be required.

Schools should also be able to demonstrate that their actions are compliant with the New Statutory Guidance on Alternative Provision which was issued by the DfE in September 2012 and revised in January 2013. It may be found at

[www.education.gov.uk/g00211923/alternative-provision](http://www.education.gov.uk/g00211923/alternative-provision)

Head teachers and governing bodies need to be aware of the requirements which this guidance places on them when the school wishes to set up dual registration at a Dorset Learning Centre. They must

- ensure that parents are given clear information about the placement: why, when, where, and how it will be reviewed;
- keep the placement under review and involve parents in the review. The regulations specify regular review but do not specify how often reviews must take place (that should be decided on a case-by-case basis), but they should be frequent enough to provide assurance that the off-site education is achieving its objectives and that the pupil is benefiting from it
- have processes in place for re-integration

While the Head teacher and governing body have the right to direct a pupil off site for education to improve behaviour, they have the responsibility to ensure that the parents/carers of the pupil concerned are fully informed of the arrangements made for Alternative Provision. This includes dual registration at a learning centre. Heads of centre will work with their named school contact to ensure that a shared responsibility for review is discharged.

There is also guidance on the responsibility of the school when a pupil completes KS4 in Alternative Provision

- The school should work with the provider to ensure that the young person can move on into suitable education, or employment alongside part-time study or training. The school should collect and record information about the pupil's next destination as part of its planning for alternative provision intervention.

This new requirement is in line with the new Ofsted framework which requires schools to be ready to report on their use of Alternative Provision and its effectiveness.

In Dorset, with parental agreement and where the school no longer has direct involvement, Head teachers have generally sought to remove Year 11 pupils in learning centres from the school roll before the January Census. This new regulation does not preclude this but it does mean that the school must be ready to give an account of outcomes for any young person whom it has placed in Alternative Provision.

Please note that any changes in placement for a pupil with a Statement of SEN may only be made through the Annual Review process and in consultation with SEN.

## **Medical**

Dorset Guidance concerning request for involvement on medical grounds may be found on dcc-schoolsnet Inclusion Guidance and Templates and on dorsetforyou. The title of this document is

[Access to Education for Children and Young People with Medical Needs - May 2012](#)

Please note that in January 2013 the DfE issued new statutory guidance for pupils with medical needs. The title of the new guidance is

***'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.'***

Following consultation with the Community Paediatricians, we will update our existing Dorset guidance in the light of this statutory guidance by the end of April 2013.

Please note that, although school staff will be involved in providing pupil information, the request for out of school provision may only be made by a Consultant or Community Paediatrician and that all avenues to support the pupil to continue with provision in school should be explored.

### **School Refusers/Phobics**

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that a child or young person attends school. It will always be preferable to support a school placement rather than seek placement in a learning centre.

Requests for involvement must be able to demonstrate fully that all avenues to support re-integration and attendance at school have been explored, including the consideration of legal action where appropriate.

Requests must evidence the involvement of other agencies. We would expect most pupils referred in this category to have a completed Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and have been given team around the child support and that the school would have sought advice from their link Educational Psychologist (EP).

### **Special Educational Needs**

Requests for involvement from the SEN team will be considered on a case by case basis.

### **High level of Emotional/Social Vulnerability**

Requests for involvement must be able to demonstrate fully that all avenues to support integration and attendance at school have been explored.

Requests must evidence the involvement of other agencies. We would expect most pupils referred in this category to have a CAF and have been given team around the child support and that the school would have sought EP advice.

### **Children in Care**

Children in care are a priority group. The Head of the Virtual School for Children in Care is a member of the Admissions Panels. He will make a detailed assessment for presentation to the panel.

### **Fair Access Admissions**

Admissions to learning centres may be agreed under the fair access protocol (eg when a pupil has attended a PRU in another authority) but only when there are demonstrable and defensible reasons for doing so.

Circumstances are likely to encompass situations when a pupil has attended a PRU in another LA or where there are very substantial reasons why a school placement is not appropriate.

#### **5. Are requests ever considered outside panel?**

On rare occasions there may be cause for provision at a learning centre to be agreed outside panel. This is likely to be in circumstances when there are significant safeguarding issues or when there are overwhelming reasons why education provision must be made without delay. Such requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

#### **6. How are placements funded?**

The LA has commissioned places at each learning centre. Centres will have received base funding for each place from the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The admissions panel will agree an appropriate level of place plus funding at the point when the placement is agreed. This is determined by an agreed funding matrix. The overwhelming majority of pupils will be dual registered with schools and a proportionate amount of place plus funding will be recouped from schools to support placement. In such cases the school and the LA will be deemed to have jointly commissioned the place. The amount recouped will not exceed the Age Weighted Pupil Unit.

If the learning centre has already filled its number of places, then further places may be commissioned.

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