



Somerset Council Policy on fulfilling duties under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996

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1. Introduction and purpose

Somerset Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people in Somerset have opportunities to thrive by growing up in a safe, child-friendly county that supports them to be happy, healthy, and prepared for adulthood. This commitment is outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan, developed in partnership with children and young people who live, go to school, and work in Somerset.

Children and young people have helped to shape the following partnership priorities:

- Inclusive education experiences where students feel supported and valued.
- Healthy lifestyles, with improved access to sport, leisure, and health services.
- Positive mental health and wellbeing, with support available in schools, colleges, and communities.
- Safe communities, where public spaces feel secure and welcoming.
- Strong relationships, with family and friends.
- Preparation for adulthood, including life skills education and support into employment.

2. Policy and legal context

This policy sets out how Somerset Council fulfils its statutory duty under [Section 19\(1\) of the Education Act 1996](#), which requires local authorities to:

“Make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made.”

Section 19 support applies when a decision has been made that a pupil of compulsory school age cannot attend school, even with reasonable adjustments. If a child can attend school, the law requires that reasonable adjustments be made. In such cases, the responsibility for attendance remains with the parent or carer.

This policy outlines how the local authority, with input from relevant professionals and multi-agency partners, determines whether a pupil is unable to attend school and requires alternative provision.

Suitable education is defined as “efficient education suitable to the age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child or young person may have.”

Education must be full-time, unless the local authority determines that full-time provision is not in the child’s best interests due to their physical or mental health.

Relevant legislation and statutory guidance includes:

- [Education Act 1996](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Arranging Education for Children Who Cannot Attend School Because of Health Needs \(DfE, 2023\)](#)
- [Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Statutory Guidance \(2023\)](#)
- [Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance \(2025\)](#)
- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(DfE, 2024\)](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#)

Relevant local policies and protocols include:

- [Somerset Fair Access Protocol](#)
- [Somerset Part-Time Timetable Protocol](#)
- [Somerset CME Policy](#)
- [Somerset Graduated Response Tool](#)

3. Definitions and eligibility for Section 19 provision

The legal duty for the provision of educational support under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 applies only to children and young people of compulsory school age. It does not apply to those under or over this age range. Section 19 may apply to children in the following categories:

Permanently Excluded

Definition: A pupil is considered permanently excluded when a school governing body has ratified a decision to exclude the pupil permanently, and that exclusion meets the published criteria within the local area for determining whether it is lawful, reasonable, fair, and proportionate. Where this test is not met, any exclusion from the school where the pupil is on roll may be considered off-rolling, and intervention action may apply.

Eligibility: Where a permanent exclusion meets the test, the local authority must provide alternative education, funded from the High Needs budget. This

duty is fulfilled through the funding agreement with Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in the area, starting from the sixth school day after the exclusion.

Medical Needs

Definition: The Department for Education (DfE) defines a medical need as a condition or diagnosis that affects a child's health or ability to attend school. This includes any health-related issues that may hinder a child's access to education, such as mental health conditions or physical health needs.

Eligibility: Most children with a medical condition or diagnosis and requiring active medical intervention or treatment will be able to continue their education in their usual setting through the deployment of reasonable adjustments.

In a small minority of cases, pupils may be unable to receive suitable education in their usual setting for example, an extended hospital stay that may require alternative provision.

Other Reasons

Definition: There is no statutory definition of "other reasons" that may prevent a pupil from attending school. However, a significant number of children struggle with education due to factors that may be associated with health or non-health conditions, including neurodivergence.

Eligibility: Most pupils in this group including those with neurodivergent profiles and a wide range of presentations can continue their education in their usual setting through reasonable adjustments. These adjustments should take into account factors that commonly impact education, such as sensory, environmental, or social triggers for internalised or externalised dysregulation.

In a small minority of cases, pupils may be unable to receive suitable education in their usual setting and may require provision that cannot be reasonably accommodated within their school.

4. Reasonable adjustments

Before requesting Section 19 support, schools must demonstrate a robust graduated response and confirm that they have considered reasonable adjustments in line with equalities legislation. These adjustments are essential to ensure that pupils are not unnecessarily excluded from education and that their individual needs are met within their usual educational setting.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- Proactive collaboration with the pupil and their parents/carers to understand barriers to attendance and engagement.
- Flexibility in the application of school policies, including behaviour and uniform policies, where appropriate.
- Adapted curriculum to suit the pupil's learning needs and circumstances.
- Part-time timetable, where this is part of a planned and reviewed intervention.
- Access to specialist assessment to inform targeted support strategies.
- External advice and support, such as outreach from special schools or advisory services.
- Community-based support services, including mentoring programmes and initiatives like Connect Somerset.

These adjustments should be documented and reviewed regularly as part of the school's graduated response. They form a critical part of the evidence base when considering whether Section 19 support is appropriate.

5. Parental engagement and attendance

Regular school attendance is a shared responsibility between parent carers, schools, and the local authority. Somerset Council's duty under [Section 19 of the Education Act 1996](#) applies only when a child is genuinely unable to access suitable education, even with reasonable adjustments in place.

If suitable provision is available but the parent or carer does not engage with it, the child may not meet the eligibility criteria for Section 19 support. In such cases, schools and the local authority should take proactive steps to support re-engagement and ensure the child's educational needs are met. These steps may include:

- Convening a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting to coordinate multi-agency support
- Initiating targeted attendance interventions to address barriers to education
- Considering, as a last resort, legal action such as issuing a School Attendance Order (SAO) or pursuing enforcement under [Section 444 of the Education Act 1996](#), which outlines the offence of failing to ensure a child's regular attendance at school.

These actions should be taken in partnership with families, recognising that attendance challenges may be complex and require a compassionate, tailored response.

6. Requests to consider the application of Section 19

Requests for Section 19 support should be made directly to the local authority by a state-funded school in Somerset using the official referral form.

The referral form must be completed with all relevant information and submitted for consideration by the multi-agency panel.

7. Decision-making on eligibility

Decisions about whether a pupil meets the criteria for Section 19 support are made as follows:

a) **Permanent exclusion**

When a child is permanently excluded, they are automatically eligible for education provision under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996. The Local Authority must ensure that suitable, full-time education is in place from the sixth school day following the exclusion.

b) **All other cases**

In all other circumstances, a multi-agency panel reviews the evidence submitted through the referral process. The panel includes professionals from relevant disciplines, such as:

- Psychiatrist
- Educational Psychologist
- Senior Social Worker
- Paediatrician
- Somerset Council Virtual School
- Pupil Referral Unit
- Primary School rep
- Secondary School rep

A decision regarding the pupil's eligibility for Section 19 provision will be communicated in writing to the school and parents/carers within five working days of the panel discussion.

If the panel decides that there is no necessity for alternative provision or further adjustments, where a child can attend school, they must attend school immediately. The Education Act 1996 determines that a child's parent or carer is responsible in law for the child's attendance at school.

8. School registration, funding and accountability for outcomes

Where the multi-agency panel determines that a pupil meets the criteria for Section 19 support, the local authority will fund the pupil's educational provision. The local authority becomes accountable for the pupil's outcomes, although this responsibility may be delegated to a suitable provider, such as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or a commissioned Alternative Provider.

The panel must also decide whether the pupil should:

- Be retained solely on the roll of the PRU or school, with the alternative provision acting as the delivery setting but not holding the pupil's registration; or
- Be dual registered between the PRU and the pupil's current school, where appropriate, ensuring that a registered provider maintains responsibility for the pupil's education.

This decision will take into account the pupil's individual circumstances and the likelihood of their next mainstream or special school placement being in their current school. If the pupil is expected to return to their current school, dual registration should be maintained to support continuity and reintegration.

9. Arranging Education other than at School

If a child is unable to attend school due to a permanent exclusion, education will be arranged for them at a Somerset Council Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

The placement at a PRU may be short-term or longer-term, depending on the pupil's individual needs. PRUs provide:

- Access to a balanced curriculum
- Smaller working groups
- Specialist assessment
- Reintegration support

The aim is to support pupils to return to mainstream education wherever possible.

Provision at a PRU will be arranged by the Council's Preventing Exclusions Team once the permanent exclusion has been formally notified.

If the child has an Education, Health and Care plan, the exclusions team will liaise with the Virtual School to seek its views on the suitability of the proposed alternative provision.

Where PRU provision is not deemed appropriate, the Council will make alternative arrangements, which may include:

- Access to an alternative provider
- Access to home tutoring arranged through a provider approved by Somerset Council
- Access to online learning through an approved online school

10. Medical conditions and illness

This section outlines how local authorities and schools can best support children who are unable to attend school due to physical or mental health needs, in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Arranging Education for Children who cannot Attend School because of Health Needs](#).

The guidance also sets out the role of the child's home school (if applicable) in ensuring that the child receives a suitable education while unwell, and is successfully reintegrated once they are well enough to return. Reintegration planning should be collaborative and tailored to the child's needs.

The guidance highlights the importance of the role played by:

- The child and their parents/carers in agreeing suitable provision.
- The school in maintaining contact and planning for reintegration.
- The local authority in arranging appropriate education when the school cannot.

The term 'home school' refers to the school where the child is on roll at the time they become ill. Not all children will have a home school for example, if their health needs arise before they are old enough to enrol.

11. School responsibilities and support for families

Schools must establish strong support systems for pupils with physical or

mental health conditions. This includes making reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, implementing individual healthcare plans where appropriate, and maintaining regular communication with families.

Effective information sharing between schools, health services, and the Council is essential. Schools should assess whether additional support from external partners such as the Council, health services, or specialist SEND teams is needed. If so, referrals must be made promptly, and schools should work collaboratively with these services to deliver the necessary support.

Schools play a vital role in ensuring that the provision offered is effective and that pupils can reintegrate into school successfully. They are encouraged to work closely with professionals and make full use of available services, including:

- School Nursing Service
- Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings, which ensure regular reviews and support during a child's absence, and help plan their return to school
- Specialist SEND services via the Virtual School and locality teams
- Children's Social Care services available in each locality

If it becomes clear that a pupil will be absent from school for 15 days or more, or is too unwell to access education at their usual setting, the school or academy must convene a TAC meeting with the family and relevant professionals before making a referral to the named Local Authority (LA) officer (see Appendices). This referral must include medical evidence.

Schools and academies must demonstrate a graduated response to supporting the pupil, including evidence of why previous interventions were unsuccessful. They should also show that they have accessed the following resources:

- [Emotional Based Non-Attendance \(EBNA\) guidance – Somerset](#)
- [Ordinarily Available Provision \(OAP\) guidance – Somerset](#)
- [Individual Attendance Support Plan \(IASP\) – Somerset PSP Template](#)
- [Somerset's Graduated Response Tool](#)

If, after these interventions, the school is unable to meet the child's health needs or provide suitable education, the Council must be notified.

Important note

The law does not specify a fixed point during a child's illness when the Council becomes responsible for securing suitable full-time education. While schools are required to include pupils in sickness returns after 15 days of absence (consecutive or cumulative), Section 19 support may be required sooner.

Once the Council is aware that a child of compulsory school age is unable to attend school due to illness and suitable education is not otherwise being arranged, it has a duty to secure appropriate and flexible education tailored to the child's individual needs, potentially in advance of the 15-day threshold.

The Local Authority will **not** provide education in cases where:

- Families are in dispute with the home school
- Children have been withdrawn due to a disagreement with the LA regarding school placement
- Family or social care issues are preventing school attendance

12. School registration and Section 19 applications

As outlined in the previous section, schools must follow a graduated response when supporting pupils with health needs. This includes accessing relevant guidance and maintaining regular communication with families and professionals.

A child who is unable to attend school due to health needs must not be removed from the school register unless they meet one of the criteria specified in Regulation 9 of [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). This applies even when the Council assumes responsibility for arranging the child's education.

Maintaining a school place provides continuity, which is vital for a child's recovery and educational progress. Familiar surroundings and peer relationships offer reassurance and stability during periods of ill health.

In situations where a child is not currently on a school roll, the lead professional involved should promote an application for a school place as the first step. A lead professional is the person who takes primary responsibility for coordinating support and services for a child or young person, ensuring that all involved agencies work together effectively to meet their need. If all professionals involved agree that the child's needs should be considered under [Section 19 of the Education Act 1996](#), the lead professional presenting the case is responsible for gathering the necessary evidence and submitting the application to the Council.

Professionals should refer to the graduated response and guidance materials listed in the previous section before proceeding with a Section 19 application.

13. Evidence of medical needs

To determine the most appropriate educational provision for a child unable to attend school due to health needs, the Council must be provided with clear evidence of the child's medical condition and its impact on their ability to access education. This evidence should ideally come from a clinical specialist, such as a medical consultant.

All medical evidence will be used to build a comprehensive understanding of the child's needs. The Council will work in partnership with the child's school, relevant medical professionals (including consultants and GPs), and the family to identify suitable educational provision and minimise disruption to the child's learning.

Where consultant-level evidence is not immediately available, the Council will consider information from other qualified medical professionals, such as the child's GP, to avoid unnecessary delays in support.

Once appropriate medical evidence has been received, the Council will only request further updates where necessary to review or adjust the provision in place.

14. Notification: sickness returns and Section 19 support requests

Schools have a statutory duty under Regulation 13(9)(a) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to inform the Local Authority when a pupil of compulsory school age is absent due to illness for 15 or more cumulative or consecutive days in an academic year, or where it is reasonably believed that such absence will occur.

In addition, schools must provide, at agreed intervals, the full name and address of any pupils of compulsory school age who are not attending school regularly, including those whose absence is due to health needs.

How to Notify

- **Maintained schools:** via routine attendance returns
- **Independent schools:** via a dedicated online sickness return

Note: This process is separate from requesting Section 19 support. It does **not** automatically trigger an assessment or provision under Section 19 and should **not** be confused with the support request process.

Section 19 Support Requests

Where a school believes a child may require and is eligible for education under the Local Authority's Section 19 duties, they must complete and submit a Section 19 Support Request Form for consideration by the multi-agency panel.

Request Requirements

The request must include:

- The child's full name, date of birth, and Unique Pupil Number (UPN)
- Parent/carer contact details
- Information about the child's medical needs, including supporting medical evidence
- Details of any special educational needs (SEND), including whether the child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Information about any current involvement with social care
- A summary of the educational provision and support already in place, including outcomes and impact

Decision Process

The Local Authority will review the request and determine whether its duty to secure suitable alternative provision has arisen. A decision will be communicated to the school and parents/carers within five working days of receiving the request.

15. Children and young people with an EHC plan and health-related absence

When a child or young person with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan) experiences health difficulties that affect their attendance, their educational setting must involve appropriate external professionals who can offer advice and support.

These professionals are involved in addition to those already supporting the child through their EHC plan and may include:

- SEND Advisory Services will include Special School Outreach, Virtual School, Complex Physical Needs and Sensory Loss Team
- Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
- Health services, including the School Nursing Service
- Social Care

These professionals can help ensure that the child's education remains appropriate, accessible, and responsive to their changing health needs.

Referrals to these professionals must be made in a timely manner, and the setting must work collaboratively with them to implement any recommended support. In addition, the setting must notify the Statutory SEND Teams via the Inclusion Advice Line so that appropriate guidance and support can be offered.

Where there has been a change in the child or young person's needs or the provision they require, it may be appropriate for the setting to request an early annual review of the EHC plan.

If a child or young person of compulsory school age with an EHC plan is unable to access their educational setting due to illness for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, the setting must notify both:

- The Council's named Section 19 Officer: James Caswell
- The SEND Teams via the Inclusion Advice Line

Any arrangements for alternative provision must be made in consultation with the SEND team, taking into account the child's identified needs and the special educational provision outlined in their EHC plan.

16. Arranging alternative provision

Children who are unable to attend school due to health needs must be provided with suitable and flexible education that meets their individual circumstances. The nature of this provision should be responsive to changes in the child's health status. Once the Council has identified that alternative provision is required, arrangements must be made without delay.

The provision should aim to:

- Support pupils to make good progress and avoid falling behind their peers
- Minimise disruption to learning and maintain continuity within the school curriculum
- Enable pupils to achieve qualifications appropriate to their age and ability
- Facilitate successful reintegration into school as soon as their health allows
- Ensure pupils remain connected to their school community and peers

Alternative provision should be full-time, reflecting the education a pupil would normally receive in school. For example, pupils in Key Stage 4 typically receive around 25 hours of education per week. However, if the provision is delivered through one-to-one tuition, fewer hours may be appropriate due to the intensity and focus of the support.

In some cases, full-time provision may not be in the child's best interests due to their physical or mental health. In such instances, the Council will arrange part-time provision in consultation with the child's parent carers, educational setting, and medical professionals, ensuring the approach is tailored to the child's needs.

All alternative provision must be reviewed at least half-termly to ensure it remains suitable. This review is the responsibility of the officer, school, or hospital that commissioned or referred the child for alternative provision.

If the current arrangements are found to be unsuitable, the Council will make alternative arrangements. These may include:

- Access to an alternative provider
- Home tutoring through a provider approved by Somerset Council
- Online learning, either through the child's registered school or an approved online school

17. Pregnancy

Pregnancy and maternity are protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#). It is unlawful to treat a pupil less favourably because she is pregnant or a new mother.

Pregnancy in itself does not constitute a health need. However, complications during or after pregnancy may result in physical or mental health issues that affect a young person's ability to attend school. In such cases, these health needs should be considered in line with the guidance outlined in the earlier sections of this document.

Pupils who are pregnant or are school-age mothers should continue to be educated in a school setting for as long as it is practicable. Schools should work with relevant professionals to ensure appropriate support is in place and that any necessary adjustments are made to enable continued access to education.

18. Reintegration

Plans for a pupil's longer-term educational outcomes and next steps must be agreed at the outset of any commissioned support, intervention, or provision, in line with the statutory guidance for [Alternative Provision - Statutory Guidance \(DfE\) 2025](#).

In most cases, the expectation is that pupils will be reintegrated into their home school. Progress towards reintegration should be reviewed regularly. Where reintegration is the agreed goal, staff from the local authority, health services, and the school should work collaboratively with the family to assess readiness and support the transition back into school.

Upon return, each pupil should have an Individual Healthcare Plan and/or Individual Provision Plan that outlines the reintegration arrangements. This may include reasonable adjustments and additional support provided by the school and other services.

If a pupil was not on a school roll at the time they became ill, or if they do not wish to return to their previous school, the local authority should consult with the family to identify a new, suitable placement when the pupil is ready to return to mainstream education.

19. Absence for 'Otherwise' reasons

In addition to illness and exclusion, there may be other circumstances that prevent a child from attending their educational setting. These may include complex social, emotional, or family-related factors. Each case must be considered individually to determine whether the Council's duty under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to arrange suitable alternative education applies.

In addition to illness and exclusion, there may be other circumstances that prevent a child from attending their educational setting. These may include complex social, emotional, or family-related factors, or other exceptional situations where it is not reasonably possible for the child to attend school.

In such cases, the Council has a duty under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to arrange suitable alternative education if the child is not receiving suitable education otherwise.

Each case must be considered individually, taking into account the child's specific circumstances and the reasons why they cannot access their existing school placement. There is no statutory requirement for the child to have been

absent for 15 days before this duty applies. Similarly, there is no statutory time frame within which this process must be completed and suitable provision provided.

To ensure children have access to the provision they require as quickly as possible, every effort will be made to put appropriate education in place without undue delay. It is important to be clear that this process is not subject to the often-quoted 15-day absence threshold.

Where a school believes the child may be eligible for Section 19 support, they must follow the notification and referral process outlined in Section 15: Requesting Section 19 Support.

The Council and multi-agency panel will carefully consider the information provided and determine whether its duty to secure a suitable interim alternative education package has arisen. A decision will be communicated to the school and parents/carers within five working days of receiving the referral.

The Council and multi-professional panel will carefully consider the information provided and determine whether its duty to secure a suitable interim alternative education package has arisen. A decision will be communicated to the school and parents within five working days of receiving the notification.

20. Arranging alternative provision

If a child is unable to attend their school for reasons other than health, and the Council accepts that its Section 19 duty has arisen, it will arrange suitable alternative provision. Where the child has an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan), the Council will seek the view of the SEND case worker on the suitability of the proposed provision before finalising arrangements.

Alternative provision may include:

- Access to an alternative provider or Pupil Referral Unit
- Home tutoring arranged through a provider approved by the Council
- Online learning, either through the child's registered school or an approved online school

It is recognised that alternative provision should be a short-term intervention, with a clear pathway toward reintegration into a suitable education setting. The provision must be reviewed at least half-termly to ensure it remains appropriate and that progress is being made toward reintegration.

Responsibility for reviewing the provision lies with the officer, school, or hospital that commissioned or made the referral for the alternative provision.

21. Funding alternative provision for children and young people

Funding for alternative provision for children and young people whether due to exclusion, medical needs, or other circumstances, will be explored through appropriate and available funding streams in the first instance.

Where the provision relates to medical needs, the Council will work with relevant NHS services to secure an appropriate contribution toward the cost of provision.

Where no other suitable funding route is available, provision will be supported through Somerset Council's High Needs budget, in line with local funding arrangements and priorities.

Where a child is permanently excluded from a maintained school, the Local Authority (LA) must redetermine the excluding school's budget share (reduction) and increase the receiving school's budget share upon admission of the pupil. This is in accordance with the [School and Early Years Finance and Childcare \(Provision of Information About Young Children\) \(Amendment\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#), made under [section 47 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

In cases where a child remains on the roll of their home school but attends alternative provision, whether to avoid permanent exclusion or due to health needs, the LA and the home school may consider transferring a portion of the school's funding associated with that child to the alternative provision. This ensures that funding supports the child's education effectively.

This funding arrangement ceases when the child is reintegrated back into their home school or is no longer on the roll of that school. If a child permanently leaves the roll and is admitted to another school or alternative provision, a mandatory funding adjustment is made by the LA.

Details of these adjustments are outlined in the 'Redetermination of budgets' section of the '[Schools operational guide](#)' available on the GOV.UK webpage titled 'Local authorities: pre-16 schools funding' for the relevant financial year: [Local authorities: pre-16 schools funding – GOV.UK](#)

This consolidated approach ensures clarity and consistency in funding arrangements for all children and young people accessing alternative provision.

22. Children and young people below and above compulsory school age

The Council's duty to arrange alternative provision under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 applies only to children of compulsory school age, as defined in Section 8 of the same Act.

However, the Council recognises that there may be occasions when children and young people who are either below or above compulsory school age require alternative provision. In such cases, the Council expects the educational setting to work with the child or young person and their family to secure suitable support and minimise disruption to their education.

Although this policy applies to children of compulsory school age, there may be exceptional circumstances where a child or young person is outside of statutory school age, and does not have an Education, Health and Care Plan, but is unable to access their educational setting.

In these cases, the Council may consider whether early support or intervention is appropriate. This decision will be made in consultation with the school and relevant professionals and will be based on the individual circumstances of the child. It does not imply a statutory duty under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

For children and young people with an EHC plan, the Council has a duty under [Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#) to secure the special educational provision outlined in Section F of the EHCP, regardless of the child's age.

When the Local Authority is notified that a child or young person is unable to attend their setting due to illness, exclusion, or other reasons, it will consider whether alternative provision is required to ensure the delivery of the special educational provision specified in the EHC plan.

All queries or referrals related to Section 19 should be directed through the Inclusion Advice Line or directly to the allocated officer where one has been confirmed.

23. Raising concerns

If parent carers have concerns about the support being provided for their child by their school, they should first discuss these concerns directly with the setting.

If the issue is not resolved through informal discussion, parent carers may submit a formal complaint using the school's complaints procedure, which should be available on the school's website. In the case of academies, concerns should be raised directly with the Academy or Trust, following their published complaints procedure.

If parent carers feel their concerns have not been adequately addressed, they may escalate the matter to the Department for Education: [Complain about a school](#)

If a parent carer is dissatisfied with the Council's arranged alternative provision or other related matters, they should contact the Council in the first instance to discuss the issue. This can be done via the Inclusion Advice Line, which provides access to the relevant teams and officers.

If the issue remains unresolved, a formal complaint can be submitted through Somerset Council's complaints process: [Make a complaint, comment or compliment – Somerset Council](#)

The Council aims to respond to complaints within 10 working days. If further escalation is needed, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman may be contacted.

24. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every year unless earlier revision is required due to significant legislative or procedural changes. This will ensure it remains aligned with current legislation, statutory guidance, and best practice. The review will consider feedback from schools, professionals, and parent/carers, as well as any changes in national or local policy frameworks.