

17. Direction Off-Site



What Is Direction Off-Site?

Sometimes, a school may feel that your child would benefit from spending time in a different educational setting; for example, another mainstream school or an alternative provision to help improve their behaviour. This is called “direction off-site”.

It’s usually considered when a child is at risk of permanent exclusion, and the goal is to help them succeed in a new environment, not to punish them.

Who Can Use It?

- Maintained schools (run by the local authority) can use direction off-site under the law (Section 29A of the Education Act 2002).
- Academies can do this too, but only if their governing rules (called Articles of Association) allow it.

Is Parental Consent Needed?

Parental consent is not needed for a direction off-site, however, your involvement is very important to make sure the placement works well for your child.

When Might It Be Used?

Direction off-site should only be used:

- To improve future behaviour, not as a punishment
- When other support strategies in school haven’t worked
- As a temporary measure, with regular reviews.

It can be full-time or part-time, depending on your child’s needs.

What Schools Must Tell You

If your child is being directed off-site, the school must give you written notice at least two school days before it starts. This must include:

- The address of the new setting
- Who your child should report to
- How long the placement will last
- The purpose of the placement
- The daily schedule (start and end times, breaks).



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Reviews and Next Steps

- The school must review the placement regularly – how often depends on your child's needs
- You should be invited to review meetings and have a say in what happens next.

If the placement goes well and everyone agrees, it might lead to a managed move (a permanent change of school), but only with your consent.

What If My Child Has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP):

- The school must consult the local authority before directing them off-site
- The school must continue to meet your child's special educational needs during the placement
- Off-site direction must not be used just because the school is struggling to meet your child's needs. If that's the case, you can ask for an early review of the EHCP to explore better options.

What You Can Do

If you're unsure or concerned, you can:

- Ask the school for a written explanation of their decision
- Make sure the EHCP is being followed
- Request an early review of the EHCP if the placement doesn't feel right
- Raise concerns with the local authority SEN Team
- Consider whether the placement might be discriminatory if your child has a disability.

What if my Child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) but no EHCP

If your child is on the school's SEN register but does not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), schools still have a duty to follow best practice and ensure that your child's SEN needs are shared with the setting and can be appropriately met.

Managed Move

In the guide, we've mentioned "managed moves". You might hear the school use this term too. We have a separate guide on managed moves, but you can read about the key differences below.

Key Differences Between a Managed Move and Direction Off-Site

Feature	Managed Move	Direction Off-Site
Parental Consent	Required. This is a voluntary agreement	Not legally required , but the school should still involve you.



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Duration	Permanent transfer to a new school.	Temporary and time-limited , with regular reviews
School Roll	If the move is successful, your child's name is deleted from the original school's register and added to the new schools. If the move was unsuccessful, they would remain on their home schools school role.	Your child remains on the register of the original school and is dual registered with the temporary placement.
Purpose	To provide a permanent fresh start in a new environment.	To provide a temporary intervention to improve behaviour with the aim of returning to the original school.
Outcome	If the move is successful, your child starts a new school. If the move is unsuccessful then they would stay on their home school's register.	Your child either returns to their original school or, if agreed, a managed move is arranged.

Need More Support?

If you would like further information on direction off-site, please contact Doncaster [SENDIAS Service](#) by calling [01302 736920](tel:01302736920) or email sendias@doncaster.gov.uk.



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