Alma Education

COMMISSIONER INFORMATION PACK 2026

Every learner is unique.

1:1 and small group alternative provision.

Led by qualified, SEND-specialist teachers.

Sessions designed around learner needs & interests.

For young people aged 5 to 18, who are not thriving in mainstream.

Contents

This pack sets out who we are, how we work and what every Alma placement includes. It covers our approach, the young people we support, our provision and delivery, and the safeguarding, governance and compliance arrangements behind our work.

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Our approach, who we support and how we work

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The Alma Approach

Alma provides personalised education built around the individual. We create calm, purposeful learning environments where young people can build confidence, develop independence and make meaningful progress.

Each learner has a clear plan, with progress monitored and evidenced throughout. We work closely with families, schools and professionals to provide consistent support and clear communication.

Who We Work With

SEMH and Anxiety
Significant anxiety, school based anxiety or placement breakdown.

Permanently Excluded or at Risk of Permanent Exclusion
Young people who need a suitable and supportive education pathway.

Neurodivergence
Autism, ADHD, OCD, PDA and other neurodivergent profiles, whether diagnosed or awaiting assessment.

Medical Needs
Long term physical health conditions or mental health needs affecting access to education.

Children in Care
Young people in residential care or supported accommodation, including those with complex histories or unmet SEND needs.

Placement Gaps
Awaiting an EHCP decision, between education settings or without suitable interim provision.



WHAT WE OFFER

Our Provision

1

Individual EOTAS Provision

Bespoke 1:1 education for young people with an EOTAS package, delivered from our Alma Hubs or an agreed setting.

2

Small Group Provision

Calm, personalised group learning at our Alma Hubs, combining core subjects with practical and creative learning.

3

School Based Support

Targeted 1:1 or small group support for young people at risk of permanent exclusion or persistent absence, delivered within school.

4

Bespoke Learning Placements

Flexible 1:1 education shaped around each learner's needs, interests and goals.

Included in Every Alma Placement

- ✓ **Individual Learning Plan**
  Agreed with the commissioner and family, with EHCP outcomes and individual targets reviewed every half term.
- ✓ **Attendance and Safeguarding**
  Daily attendance monitoring, absence follow up and same day reporting of safeguarding concerns and significant incidents.
- ✓ **Professional and Family Liaison**
  Regular communication with families, schools and relevant professionals, including attendance at key review meetings.
- ✓ **Risk Assessments**
  Every venue and activity assessed before the first visit, reviewed whenever settings change.
- ✓ **Baseline Assessment**
  Completed at induction from EHCP, school records and family information, shaping the Individual Learning Plan from day one.
- ✓ **Qualified, Safeguarded Staff**
  QTS, SEND and trauma informed training, enhanced DBS and ongoing safeguarding training.
- ✓ **Progress and Reporting**
  Daily session records and half termly progress reports shared with the commissioner and family.
- ✓ **Transition Planning**
  Clear handover and pathway planning at the end of every placement.
- ✓ **Professionals' Meetings**
  EHCP reviews, TAF, LAC reviews and EP consultations attended on request.

THE TEAM

People and Governance



Melanie Steel

Founder, Director of Education and DSL

Qualified teacher with 20+ years' experience across mainstream education, alternative provision and SEND. Senior safeguarding trained across three local authorities.



Cathryn Williams

Safeguarding and Trauma-Informed Practice Consultant

Level 5 qualified in Trauma Informed Practice, with 20 years' experience supporting children in care and families with complex needs. Provides independent safeguarding advice and DSL supervision.

Advisory Board

Our voluntary Advisory Board brings external expertise, challenge and oversight.

Holly Power

Headteacher, Christ The King

Education, provision quality and standards

Maxine Wellsbury

Experienced School Governor

Governance, finance and data protection

Cathryn Williams

Social Worker, Children in Care

Safeguarding, SEND and independent escalation

Laura Kay

HR Director

Safer recruitment, HR and staff welfare

OUR STANDARDS

Compliance and Standards

21
STANDARDS MET

Alma Education meets all 21 DfE Voluntary National Standards for Non School Alternative Provision (August 2025)

Full policy pack and compliance evidence are available on request.

STAFF AND SAFEGUARDING

- ✓ Qualified teachers with QTS, SEND and trauma informed training
- ✓ Enhanced DBS and appropriate safeguarding checks
- ✓ Level 3 DSL training with Wirral, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester
- ✓ NSPCC: 5 safeguarding qualifications
- ✓ Safer recruitment and Prevent training
- ✓ Annual KCSiE update for all staff
- ✓ Level 3 Paediatric First Aid

REGISTRATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- ✓ Alma Education Ltd, Companies House 17260926
- ✓ ICO registered, UK GDPR compliant
- ✓ Single Central Record maintained
- ✓ CPOMS safeguarding case management software
- ✓ Secure Alma Portal for attendance and progress monitoring

INSURANCE

- Employers' Liability · Public Liability
- Professional Indemnity cover

POLICIES AND STANDARDS

- ✓ Full policy pack available on request
- ✓ Full suite of policies covering safeguarding, SEND and safer recruitment
- ✓ Attendance, behaviour and data protection policies in place
- ✓ Health and safety, fire safety and first aid policies in place

KEY FRAMEWORKS

- KCSIE 2026 · Working Together 2026
- DfE Statutory Guidance: Alternative Provision
- SEND Code of Practice · Equality Act 2010

SELF-ASSESSMENT

DfE Voluntary National Standards

Self-assessed against all 21 DfE Non-School AP Voluntary National Standards (August 2025)

REF	STANDARD	EVIDENCE PROVIDED BY ALMA EDUCATION	STATUS
PART 1: SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE			
1.1	**Recruitment checks and Single Central Record**	Enhanced DBS with Children's Barred List check for all staff before first contact with learners. Single Central Record maintained and available for inspection.	Met
1.2	**Safeguarding policies and procedures**	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Safer Recruitment Policy in place, with staff allegation procedures included. All reviewed in August 2026 against KCSIE 2026.	Met
1.3	**Procedures for responding to concerns**	Documented referral pathways for Wirral, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, each with confirmed MASH, LADO and out of hours contacts. CPOMS used for safeguarding and welfare records.	Met
1.4	**Staff familiarity with safeguarding arrangements**	Annual KCSIE update completed by all staff. Signed policy acknowledgements held on file. Prevent duty briefing completed by all staff.	Met
1.5	**Named DSL with documented training**	Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSL in place, both Level 3 trained, with training completed or scheduled across all three LAs (Wirral 07/26, Cheshire East 06/26, Cheshire West and Chester 09/26). All staff complete NSPCC safeguarding training at induction, plus regular training from our Safeguarding Consultant.	Met
1.6	**Site access restricted**	Visitors Policy in place. All visitors categorised, verified and supervised. No unsupervised access to learners. Hub settings are access controlled.	Met
PART 2: HEALTH AND SAFETY			
2.1	**Health and safety policy**	Health and Safety Policy in place. Risk assessments completed for all settings, including home, community and hub provision, before first use and reviewed when settings change.	Met
2.2	**First aid provision**	A designated first aider holds Qualsafe Level 3 Paediatric First Aid (RQF), including Catastrophic Bleeding, valid until June 2029. First aid kit available at all sessions.	Met
2.3	**Incident recording and reporting**	Safeguarding concerns recorded in CPOMS. First aid and health incidents recorded in a first aid log, with parents or carers notified for head injuries or follow-up. Serious incidents reported to the commissioning body immediately.	Met
2.4	**Equipment inspection and safety checks**	All specialist equipment checked before use. No specialist equipment used without appropriate safety verification. Responsibilities documented in the Health and Safety Policy.	Met
2.5	**Staff qualifications for specialised equipment**	No specialist equipment currently used requiring specific qualifications, with provision classroom and project based. Any future specialist activity will be risk assessed with staff competence established before introduction.	Met
2.6	**Fire safety policy**	Fire Safety Policy in place. Evacuation procedures agreed for each setting type. Home, community and hub settings each have documented fire exits and assembly points.	Met
PART 3: ADMISSIONS, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE			
3.1	**Documented admissions and referral process**	Admissions Policy in place. Referral form and commissioner agreement completed before placement begins.	Met
3.2	**Records for all children placed**	Individual Learning Plan (ILP) maintained for every learner. EHCP, school records and family information held securely in line with our Data Protection and Privacy Policy.	Met
3.3	**Induction process**	Student Induction Policy sets out a five stage process covering pre induction, induction meeting, information gathering, ILP creation and the first ILP review within six weeks.	Met
3.4	**Attendance recording and absence response**	Attendance recorded immediately on arrival. Parents or carers contacted within 15 minutes of unexplained absence, with full procedures set out in the Attendance and Absence Policy. Weekly attendance summary provided to the commissioner.	Met
3.5	**Behaviour strategy and progress sharing**	Behaviour Policy in place. Relational, trauma informed approach used throughout provision. Progress notes completed after every session, with a written report provided to the commissioner and family every week.	Met
PART 4: QUALITY OF EDUCATION			
4.1	**Staff qualifications and knowledge**	All teaching staff hold QTS, SEND and trauma informed training. Enhanced DBS checks completed before first contact with learners. Regular CPD completed by all staff and recorded in a CPD log.	Met
4.2	**Session planning aligned to outcomes**	ILP framework maps provision to relevant EHCP Sections B and F. Session plans identify knowledge, skills and targets for each session and are adapted to the individual learner.	Met
4.3	**Target setting, progress monitoring and reintegration**	SMART targets set within the ILP. Progress updated after every session. Six weekly reviews completed against EHCP targets. Reintegration planning considered from the beginning of each placement.	Met
4.4	**Self evaluation of commissioned services**	Annual self evaluation against the DfE Voluntary National Standards. DSL supervision every six weeks. Policies reviewed annually. Advisory Board reviews service effectiveness termly.	Met