ALMA EDUCATION

Assessment Policy

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Approved by:	 Melanie Steel, Director of Education
Approved by:	Maxine Wellsbury, Advisory Board

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Statement of Intent

Alma Education assesses learning so that every learner's progress is understood, evidenced and acted on. This policy sets out how Alma assesses, plans and tracks each learner's learning. Every learner in Alma's provision has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that sets out their starting point, their targets, and the approach that will be used to support progress.

Assessment at Alma is practical and ongoing, a tool that helps learning mentors understand what is working, identify what needs to change, and give families and commissioning bodies clear information about how the learner is progressing. Assessment is woven into ordinary sessions rather than treated as a separate event, and is low-stakes for the learner, since many learners who come to Alma have had negative experiences of formal testing.

Many learners arrive at Alma having lost confidence in themselves as learners. Building that confidence back, helping a learner trust an adult, stay with a task, and want to come back next time, is often the first achievement of a placement. Alma records and reports on this alongside academic progress.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance
Children and Families Act 2014
Equality Act 2010
UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 Years (Jan 2015)
Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
Non-School AP Voluntary National Standards (Aug 2025)

1. Legal Framework and Related Policies

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the legislation and guidance listed in the table above.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Alma policies:

- Curriculum Policy
- Student Induction Policy
- SEND Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

2. Types of Assessment

Alma uses two broad forms of assessment:

- Formative assessment: embedded in every session, informing what the learning mentor does next.
- Summative assessment: reviewing progress at key points and reporting to commissioning bodies and families.

Type	When	Purpose
Baseline	On entry, within the first two weeks	Establishes starting point in English, mathematics and wellbeing; informs the ILP
Formative	Every session, ongoing	Identifies gaps and misconceptions session by session; informs next session planning
Summative	Each ILP review, at least termly	Reviews progress against ILP objectives; informs revised plan and commissioning body report
Qualifications	As agreed in the ILP	Functional Skills (English and mathematics) or GCSE preparation; entry managed by the commissioning body

3. Baseline Assessment

Baseline assessment is completed within the first two weeks of provision, before the ILP is finalised, and covers three areas:

- English: reading level and fluency, writing ability, and specific literacy barriers. Conducted within sessions, not as a separate test.
- Mathematics: number knowledge, calculation and reasoning; what the learner can do securely and where gaps exist.
- Wellbeing and barriers to learning: a short conversation or activity covering what gets in the way of learning and what helps.

All results are recorded in the learner's file and inform the ILP. Where a learner has SEND or anxiety, the process is adapted: shorter activities, spread across sessions, or conducted verbally rather than in writing.

4. Formative Assessment and Feedback

Formative assessment happens in every session, through questioning, observation and conversation as part of the natural flow of a session.

After each session, the learning mentor completes a session note recording:

- What was covered and what the learner understood.
- Any gaps or misconceptions identified.
- What will be addressed next session.

Feedback is verbal, immediate and specific. Where a learner is stuck, the learning mentor re-approaches through a different route. Where a learner has sensitivities around feedback, the approach is adapted, for example framed as exploration rather than correction, or given as a brief written note.

5. Learner Involvement

Learners are kept informed of what they are working on, why it matters and how they are getting on, in straightforward, accessible terms, through the learning mentor regularly sharing what they have noticed.

In practice, this means:

- ILP objectives are explained to the learner at the start of each term, in language they can understand.
- At ILP reviews, the learner's view of their own progress and what is helping them is sought and recorded.
- Where a learner is able to contribute to setting their next objectives, they are supported to do so.

6. What Progress Looks Like

Progress at Alma is personal and non-linear. It is measured against each learner's own starting point, not against age-related expectations. Small steps count.

Examples of academic progress include:

- Improved concentration across a session.
- A piece of writing where the learner stayed on task.
- A maths concept understood this week that was not understood last week.
- Greater confidence or willingness to attempt a task.

Progress is what a learner knows or can do now that they could not when they arrived, and it is evidenced through session notes, work produced in sessions, ILP reviews and progress reports. It does not require a formal test.

Engagement as progress

For many learners, the first thing Alma is working towards is a willingness to show up, try, and keep going, and this is tracked and reported as progress in its own right.

Examples of engagement as progress include:

- Attending sessions more consistently.
- Staying with a session for longer, or returning to a task after a difficult moment.
- Trying something new or difficult, rather than avoiding it.
- Building a trusting relationship with a learning mentor.
- Taking a more active part in shaping their own sessions.

The learning mentor records engagement alongside academic observations in every session note, and engagement is reviewed at every ILP review with the same weight as progress in English and mathematics.

7. ILP Review

The ILP is reviewed at least once per term by the Director of Education and the learning mentor. The review covers:

- Progress against each learning objective.
- Current level in English and mathematics against the baseline and last review.
- Progress in engagement: confidence, resilience and willingness to take part.
- Any changes in wellbeing or circumstances.
- Whether the curriculum approach and qualification pathway remain appropriate.

The revised ILP is shared with the family and the commissioning body.

8. Reporting to Commissioning Bodies and Families

Alma provides a written progress report to the commissioning body at the end of each term, or at a frequency agreed at placement. The standard report covers:

Section	Content
Attendance	Sessions delivered and attended; absences and reasons where known
English progress	Progress since baseline or last report; current working level; content covered
Mathematics progress	Progress since baseline or last report; current working level; content covered

Engagement	Progress in confidence, resilience and willingness to take part, reported as an achievement in its own right
Wellbeing	How the learner has presented; any significant changes or concerns
Objectives	Which ILP objectives have been met; which are ongoing; new objectives for next term
Next steps	Revised plan for the coming term; any recommended changes to the placement
Safeguarding	Confirmation of no concerns, or a summary of any concerns raised and actions taken

Families receive informal updates from the learning mentor throughout the placement, and a copy of the ILP at each review point. The Director of Education is the point of contact for reporting to the commissioning body.

9. Qualifications

Where a learner's ILP includes a qualification pathway, Alma works with the commissioning body to support it. The two routes most commonly agreed are:

- Functional Skills, the primary route: English and mathematics at Entry Level, Level 1 or Level 2. Teaching is aligned to the relevant awarding body specification. Examination entry is arranged in liaison with the commissioning body; Alma does not enter learners independently.
- GCSE: where the commissioning body requires preparation in English, mathematics or science. Teaching is aligned to the relevant specification and examination board. Entry remains the responsibility of the commissioning body.

The qualification pathway is agreed at the ILP and reviewed termly. It is not fixed: if a learner's circumstances or aspirations change, it is revised accordingly.

10. EHC Plan Outcomes

For learners with an EHC plan, session notes and ILP reviews are structured so that progress against EHC plan outcomes can be identified and evidenced.

At the Annual Review, the Director of Education provides a written contribution covering:

- Progress in English and mathematics since the last review.
- Progress against relevant EHC plan outcomes addressed through Alma's provision.
- Engagement, attendance and general wellbeing during the period.
- Alma's view of the appropriate next step.

The Director of Education attends the Annual Review meeting where requested.

11. Records and Data

All assessment records are held securely in the learner's file and retained in accordance with the Data Protection and Privacy Policy. Assessment information is shared only with the family, the commissioning body and, where relevant, the EHC plan reviewing authority. Where a safeguarding concern arises, information is shared in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy regardless of consent.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Director of Education and the Advisory Board, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or statutory guidance. Any necessary amendments will be communicated to all staff. This policy was approved by Melanie Steel, Director of Education, in August 2026 and is due for review in August 2027.