



Blended Placement Guidance

What is a blended placement?

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to meeting the additional support needs of children and young people in their local mainstream school. The presumption of mainstream education forms the basis of planning for all children and young people. At the early stages of the planning process there should be a focus on ***need rather than place***. That is, planning must start with the assumption that the child or young person will attend their local mainstream school. There should always be a full and authentic exploration of what a child or young person's needs are and what steps need to be taken to ensure they are met in their local mainstream school. This includes consideration of, for example, curricular adaptations, teaching and learning approaches, support strategies, environmental adaptations, communication requirements, specialist equipment or staff training needs. A solution-focused approach is essential to overcoming any barriers to inclusion which are identified, with support from relevant Education Support Services and multi-agency partners as appropriate.

A small number of children and young people benefit from a "blended placement" between two settings (mainstream/enhanced provision; mainstream/complex needs provision; enhanced provision/complex needs provision) whereby both schools are involved for a period of time in the provision of a pupil's education. Enhanced Provision schools do not offer blended placements for Primary 1 and Primary 2 children.

The purpose of a blended placement is to allow the pupil to access a blend of teaching, learning and curricular experiences across two schools, at least one of which is a specialist provision. The aim of a blended placement is for a specialist provision to intensively support specific areas of the pupil's development, whilst also supporting the pupil's local mainstream or enhanced provision school to further develop staff knowledge, skills and confidence in supporting that pupil.

What is the difference between a blended placement and other flexible arrangements?

A blended placement is distinct from curriculum flexibility. Curriculum flexibility may involve accessing a particular activity or facility which is only available within the local Enhanced Provision or zoned Complex Needs Provision (e.g. swimming pool). In such circumstances the pupil's own school retains responsibility for the pupil's education in its entirety. This includes carrying out risk assessments, ensuring appropriate supervision arrangements are in place, making transport arrangements, and covering any other costs associated with the arrangement.



A blended placement is also distinct from a Learning Pathway Plus. A Learning Pathway Plus is a centrally funded arrangement for the commissioning of additional Third Sector/independent services to meet the needs of children and young people, identified through the Multi-agency Child Planning process who are at risk of being placed in an out-of-authority school, outwith their home community. Children and young people in this situation will be at Level 3 of the Staged Intervention process. Learning Pathway Plus guidance can be found on the ASN Inclusion, Equity & Wellbeing website.

What things should be considered before proceeding with a blended placement?

Whilst blended placements can be highly beneficial for some pupils, they are not suitable for all. It is an intensive intervention which some children and young people may find very difficult to cope with. It is therefore important that the following questions are considered by the Team Around the Child prior to a blended placement proceeding. It is also helpful to consider these points during key review points throughout the blended placement.

Inclusion-Centred Planning:

1. What needs cannot currently be met in the zoned school through an individualised programme?
2. What resources/skills/facilities can the Enhanced Provision / Complex Needs Provision offer that the zoned school cannot?
3. Are there staff professional learning needs in the zoned school that, if met, would negate the need for a blended placement?
4. Would a flexible curriculum that utilises specific resources within the Enhanced Provision / Complex Needs Provision meet the pupil's needs without the requirement for a blended placement?

Child-Centred planning:

1. Does the pupil want a blended placement? How will the pupil's views be meaningfully gathered and incorporated into planning?
2. What is the pupil's history of coping with transitions between people, places and activities?
3. How easy is it for the pupil to develop new relationships with teachers and peers?
4. What is the pupil's perception of themselves as a learner, and what impact might the requirement to access the Enhanced Provision / Complex Needs Provision have on this?
5. What is the likely impact on the pupil of missing some of the day-to-day shared learning and social experiences with their current peer group?
6. How will the pupil feel included in both settings (e.g. sports days, school trips, school uniform, Christmas plays etc) in a way that does not overwhelm them?
7. How will the pupil be kept-up-to date with important events / news in each school?



Partnership working between schools:

1. Is it clear which school is responsible for different aspects of the pupil's curriculum?
2. Does the Individual Education Plan clearly set out the targets that will be supported through the blended placement and how these will be measured?
3. What arrangements are in place to ensure there is regular communication between teaching staff in the two schools?
4. What arrangements are in place to ensure that the blended placement further develops staff knowledge, skills and confidence within the pupil's own school?

Which school roll should the pupil be on?

Pupils accessing a blended placement remain on the roll of the school that was responsible for their education at the point of the blended placement commencing. It is expected that pupils will spend at least 50% of their time within their own school throughout the time that the blended placement arrangement is in place.

How does assessment and planning work within a blended placement?

The school that the pupil is enrolled with retains named person responsibility.

Assessment and planning processes, including Child's Plan meetings and Individual Education Plan reviews, should involve strong collaboration between the two educational settings. It is the responsibility of the pupil's own school to arrange and lead these processes.

There should be clarity within the Individual Education Plan on the outcomes being sought from the blended placement and the aspects of the IEP that the blended placement setting is responsible for progressing.

How often should a blended placement be reviewed?

A blended placement is not a permanent arrangement. The placement should be reviewed by the Team Around the Child a minimum of twice per year, through Child's Planning processes.

Date issued	2016
Update	June 2020
Update	January 2024