



Student Induction Policy (Alternative Provision)

Policy title	Student Induction Policy (Alternative Provision)
Applies to	All pupils, parents/carers and staff
Policy owner	Head of Centre / DSL Danielle Martin
Approved on	05/2026
Review cycle	Annual

1. Purpose and ethos

Our induction ensures every learner joining Therapy Wood experiences a safe, welcoming and structured start. We recognise that many pupils referred to nature-based Alternative Provision have experienced anxiety, disrupted attendance, sensory overwhelm or contextual risks. Induction therefore focuses on emotional safety, belonging and predictable routines as much as on learning. It provides early help, builds trust with families and establishes the relational and environmental supports that enable success.

2. Legal and policy framework

This policy sits within Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023, updated 2025), the DfE Non-school Alternative Provision Voluntary National Standards (2025), the Equality Act 2010 and UK GDPR. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the DSL oversees all aspects of learner induction and information-sharing.

3. Scope

The policy applies to all learners placed with us by local authorities, schools or other commissioners, including part-time, EOTAS or medical placements. It covers pre-admission engagement, the first day, the first four weeks and the transition into steady-state provision.

4. Pre-admission (days -10 to -1)

Once a referral is agreed in principle, the DSL coordinates pre-admission checks. The referrer supplies a full chronology (attendance, engagement, behaviour, risk history), safeguarding information, EHCP/SEND documents and any therapeutic or medical plans. We meet the pupil and parent/carer—ideally on site—to explain our offer, tour the woodland and gather the learner's voice. Reasonable adjustments are identified and recorded, including sensory, relational and environmental needs. Where risks are significant (e.g. exploitation, self-harm, violence), the DSL convenes a multi-agency discussion to agree mitigations before start. Transport arrangements and timings are confirmed in writing.

5. First day experience

On arrival the learner is greeted by name and introduced to a trusted adult. A calm, predictable welcome covers essentials—where belongings go, how movement around the site works, who to ask for help, and what to do if worried. The DSL or deputy provides a short safeguarding briefing, including reporting routes, trusted adults, online safety and expectations around attendance, phones and conduct. A safety orientation covers boundaries, fire procedures, assembly points and first-aid locations. The learner signs a simple relationships and safety agreement written in accessible language; parents/carers sign a parallel home-setting agreement. We complete initial wellbeing and regulation screens and agree a same-day check-out call with home.



6. Baseline assessment and initial plan (week 1)

During the first week we complete Therapy Wood baseline observations, focusing on communication, regulation, sensory needs and engagement. Core curriculum skills in English, maths and science are gently woven into natural activities such as describing experiences, counting or measuring materials, and noticing changes in the environment. Staff observe strengths, interests and any barriers to participation. The SENCo/OT reviews SEND history and updates the pupil support plan, with EHCP outcomes translated into practical, nature-based strategies. Where health or therapy is involved, we confirm consent and information-sharing protocols. The DSL finalises a safeguarding and risk management plan that includes arrival/departure safety, contextual risks, and triggers/early warning signs with agreed de-escalation strategies.

7. Induction curriculum and routines (weeks 1–4)

Learners follow a settling-in timetable that blends high-success, sensory-regulating activities with gentle coaching on routines—arrivals, transitions, safety boundaries, restorative conversations and digital responsibility (where relevant). Core curriculum skills are embedded naturally through hands-on woodland experiences, such as storytelling, measuring materials, problem-solving and observing nature. A key worker meets the pupil at least twice weekly to review wellbeing, engagement and attendance, and to support problem-solving. Parents/carers receive weekly contact to reinforce attendance and celebrate progress. Where attendance dips or the pupil does not arrive as expected, we follow the Attendance and CME escalation pathway immediately and liaise with the referrer.

8. Placement review and handover (end of week 4)

At the end of week four the key worker coordinates a multi-agency review with the pupil and family. We evaluate attendance, wellbeing, engagement and safeguarding. The plan is then converted into the longer-term placement plan with measurable targets (curriculum engagement, qualification pathway where relevant, regulation, attendance). Any adjustments to timetable, transport or specialist support are confirmed in writing.

9. Recording and quality assurance

All induction activities are recorded on our MIS and safeguarding system. The Provision Lead samples induction files each half-term against this policy and the DfE AP standards, with actions tracked to completion. Induction content is updated following audits or changes to statutory guidance.

10. Equality, diversity and inclusion

We make reasonable adjustments so that induction is accessible for all learners, including those with SEND, EAL or disabilities. Materials avoid jargon and are provided in alternative formats upon request. Sensory, communication and cultural needs are considered throughout.

11. Data protection and information-sharing

We collect and share only what is necessary, proportionate and lawful under UK GDPR/DPA 2018 and safeguarding exemptions. Privacy information is issued to families at admission and consent captured where required.