



Mersham Primary School Private Provision Policy and Procedures

Date Agreed	19 th May 2026
Signed by Headteacher	
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Date Policy to be Reviewed	May 2026

Introduction

The school recognises that some parents may wish to secure additional support for their child through privately funded provision.

While such provision may be beneficial in some circumstances, requests for private provision during the school day raise important considerations regarding:

- Equality of access
- Loss of curriculum time
- Safeguarding and accountability
- Consistency of provision across the school

This policy sets out how the school will consider and respond to such requests in a clear, consistent and child-centred manner.

2. Aims of this Policy

- To ensure a consistent and transparent approach to private provision
- To protect pupils' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum
- To maintain high standards of safeguarding and accountability
- To ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the child
- To avoid inequity or unintended advantage

3. Definition of Private Provision

Private provision refers to any support arranged and funded by parents or carers, including:

- Speech and language therapy
- Play therapy or counselling
- Specialist tuition (e.g. dyslexia support)
- General academic tutoring

This includes provision that:

- Takes place on the school site during the school day, and/or
- Requires a pupil to be absent from school during the school day in order to attend provision off-site

4. Principles

All decisions will be guided by the following principles:

- Child-centred approach: Decisions are based on the needs of the pupil
- Equity: Provision during the school day must not advantage some pupils over others
- Curriculum entitlement: Pupils should access their full learning entitlement
- Consistency: Similar requests will be treated in the same way
- Clarity of responsibility: The school retains responsibility for provision during the school day

5. School Position

The school does not routinely permit private provision during the school day.

This applies to:

- Provision delivered on-site, and

- Provision delivered off-site during school hours which requires absence from school

Requests will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where the criteria outlined in this policy are met.

6. Criteria for Consideration

Requests may be considered where:

- There is a clearly identified and evidenced need
- The provision cannot reasonably take place outside of school hours
- The provision does not significantly impact core curriculum learning
- The provision complements, and does not conflict with school-based support
- Safeguarding requirements can be fully met
- There is clear evidence that the provision will benefit the pupil
- There is a suitable space available in the school; the needs of the school will always take priority for any available spaces.
- For off-site provision, the time out of school is limited, proportionate and justifiable

All criteria must be met for approval to be granted.

7. Circumstances Where Requests Will Not Be Approved

The school will not normally approve:

- General academic tutoring
- Requests based primarily on parental preference, convenience or scheduling
- Withdrawal from core curriculum subjects
- Provision that duplicates existing school support
- Multiple or conflicting external providers
- Requests that result in regular or sustained absence from school
- Requests where provision could reasonably take place outside school hours
- Parental work patterns or scheduling difficulties alone will not normally constitute exceptional circumstances

8. Types of Provision

Clinical or Therapeutic Provision

Requests for provision such as speech and language therapy may be considered where:

- There is professional involvement or recommendation
- The provision aligns with school-based strategies

The school will prioritise:

- Embedding strategies within classroom provision
- Consistency of approach

Requests may be declined where:

- Provision conflicts with clinical guidance
- It risks over-intervention or inconsistency

Specialist Tutoring

Requests for specialist tutoring (e.g. dyslexia support) during the school day will not normally be approved.

In exceptional cases, approval may be granted where:

- There is a clearly identified need
- The school cannot reasonably meet that need

Any approval will be:

- Time-limited
- Subject to review

Other Activities

Requests for withdrawal for activities such as sport, music or enrichment will not be approved during the school day.

Off-Site Private Provision During School Hours

Requests for pupils to leave school during the school day to attend private provision off-site will not normally be approved.

Such requests will only be considered where:

- There is a clearly evidenced need
- The provision cannot take place outside of school hours
- The impact on the pupil's education is minimal

Where approved:

- The absence will be recorded appropriately
- The arrangement will be time-limited and reviewed regularly

The school reserves the right to decline requests where:

- The absence would negatively impact learning
- The request creates inequity or sets an unsustainable precedent

9. Safeguarding and Operational Requirements

Where private provision is approved:

- A written agreement will be established
- External providers (where on-site) must:
 - Hold appropriate DBS clearance
 - Adhere to school safeguarding procedures

For off-site provision:

- Responsibility for safeguarding during the session rests with the parent/carer and provider

The school will not:

- Manage or quality assure private provision
- Accept responsibility for outcomes

10. Monitoring and Review

All approved arrangements will be reviewed at least termly

Approval may be withdrawn if:

- There is a negative impact on learning
- Conditions are not met
- School provision changes

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

- Makes final decisions on all requests
- Ensures consistency and fairness

SENDCo / Inclusion Lead

- Advises on pupil need and provision
- Liaises with external professionals

Class Teachers

- Monitor impact on learning
- Provide feedback on provision

Parents/Carers

- Submit requests in writing
- Ensure external providers meet requirements
- Work in partnership with the school

12. Application Process

Requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher

Requests should include:

- Nature of provision
- Rationale and supporting evidence
- Proposed timing and frequency
- Whether provision is on-site or off-site

Decisions will consider:

- The needs of the child
- Impact on learning
- Alignment with school provision
- Equity and precedent

13. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- SEND Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy

Appendix 1: Private Provision Request Decision Tool (SLT Use)

This tool supports consistent decision-making regarding requests for privately funded provision during the school day.

It should be used alongside the school's Private Provision in School Policy.

Stage 1: Initial Screening

1. Is the request for provision during school hours?
 - Yes
 - No → Policy does not apply

2. Is the provision:
 - On-site?
 - Off-site requiring absence from school?

3. What type of provision is requested?
 - Clinical / therapeutic
 - Specialist tutoring
 - General academic tutoring
 - Other

Stage 2: Core Criteria Check

Question	Yes	No
Is there a clearly identified and evidenced need?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the request child-centred rather than preference/convenience-led?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can the provision reasonably take place outside school hours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would curriculum impact be minimal and manageable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the provision complement school support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would safeguarding requirements be fully met?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would approval create an inequitable or difficult precedent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a suitable space available for that intervention to take place that does not impact the needs of the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Stage 3: Automatic Non-Approval Indicators

If any apply, the request would normally be declined.

- General academic tutoring
- Request based primarily on convenience
- Regular withdrawal from core curriculum
- Provision duplicates existing support

- Multiple/conflicting external providers
- Significant ongoing absence from school
- Provision reasonably available outside school hours

Stage 4: Professional Considerations

Consider:

- What provision is already in place in school?
- Is the school currently able to meet need appropriately?
- Is there professional recommendation or involvement?
- Is the request time-limited or open-ended?
- Would refusal be reasonable and defensible?
- Would approval likely lead to similar future requests?

Stage 5: Decision

Outcome

- Approved
- Approved with conditions
- Declined

Conditions (if applicable)

- Time-limited arrangement
- Termly review
- Restricted withdrawal times
- Parent responsibility for transport/safeguarding
- DBS/safeguarding checks required
- School may withdraw approval at any time

Decision Rationale

Review Date

Decision Made By

Date

Appendix 2: Off-Site Provision Safeguarding Assurance Form

This form must be completed for any privately arranged provision taking place off-site during the school day.

Completion of this form does not imply endorsement, recommendation or quality assurance of the provider by the school.

Section 1: Pupil Information

Pupil Name	
Class	
Type of Provision	
Day(s)/Time(s) of Provision	
Expected Duration of Arrangement	

Section 2: Provider Details

Provider Name	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Address of Provision	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	

Section 3: Parent/Carer Declaration

I confirm that:

- I have satisfied myself that the provider is suitable to work with children
- I have checked that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place
- I understand that safeguarding responsibility during off-site provision rests with the parent/carers and provider
- I understand that the school is not responsible for quality assuring or supervising the provision
- I understand that approval may be withdrawn if concerns arise regarding attendance, safeguarding or impact on learning
- I will inform the school immediately of any safeguarding concerns relating to the provider or provision

Parent/Carer Name	
Signature	
Date	

Section 4: Provider Declaration

I confirm that:

- Appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place
- I hold appropriate DBS clearance for working with children
- I will notify parents immediately of any safeguarding concerns
- I understand that the school is not responsible for the provision delivered

Provider Name	
Signature	
Date	

Section 5: School Record

The school acknowledges that:

- This provision is privately arranged by the parent/carer
- Responsibility for safeguarding during the session rests with the parent/carer and provider
- Approval relates only to authorised absence from school and does not constitute endorsement of the provision

Decision

- Approved
- Approved for a fixed period only
- Not approved