

Pathway to Provision and Child Protection

1. Introduction

This document outlines how our setting identifies and responds to the needs of children and young people through the Pathway to Provision, while distinguishing this process from Child Protection procedures. Both frameworks are essential for safeguarding and promoting welfare, but they operate at different levels of need.

2. What is the Pathway to Provision?

The Pathway to Provision is a graduated response model used to identify the level of support required by a child or young person. It ensures that pupils receive the right support at the right time, reducing risk and promoting positive outcomes.

Levels of support within the Pathway to Provision:

1. Universal Services – Support available to all children through education, health, and community services.
2. Early Help (Targeted Support) – Additional support when emerging needs are identified. Coordinated through an Early Help Assessment (EHA).
3. Specialist Services – Involvement of targeted or specialist services for children with complex or persistent needs.
4. Statutory/Safeguarding Services – Social Care intervention where children are at risk of significant harm, or their needs cannot be met through lower levels of support.

3. How Pathway to Provision Relates to Child Protection

While the Pathway to Provision addresses a broad spectrum of needs, Child Protection specifically focuses on children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

- Pathway to Provision is proactive and preventative. It seeks to identify needs early and provide support before issues escalate.
- Child Protection is reactive to immediate concerns of harm or abuse and follows statutory safeguarding procedures.

Both processes can run in parallel:

- A child may be receiving Early Help support but also become subject to a Child Protection Plan if safeguarding risks are identified.
- Staff must always consider whether a safeguarding referral is required at any point on the pathway.

4. Staff Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers must:

- Be familiar with the Pathway to Provision framework and use it to identify and escalate concerns.
- Record concerns clearly and accurately in line with organisational policy. - Share information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the earliest opportunity.
- Understand that child protection concerns override all other considerations and require immediate action in line with safeguarding policy.

5. Decision-Making and Escalation

- If a pupil has additional needs but no safeguarding risk → follow the Pathway to Provision and consider an Early Help Assessment.
- If a pupil is at risk of significant harm → this becomes a Child Protection matter and must be referred immediately to Children's Social Care via the DSL. - If unsure → staff should always seek guidance from the DSL.

6. Key Principles

- Support should be proportionate to the level of need.
- Child Protection procedures are not optional and must always be prioritised where risk of harm exists.
- Multi-agency working is vital across both frameworks.
- The child's voice must be central in all decisions.