How Compass Meets the DfE Voluntary National Standards

Evidence statement for non-school alternative provision

Our commitment

Compass Learning & Education has adopted the Department for Education's Non-school alternative provision: voluntary national standards (August 2025). This document explains how our systems, policies and day-to-day practice meet every standard and identifies the evidence available to commissioners.

Scope

The standards are currently non-statutory and apply to non-school alternative provision in England. They are used by Compass as an operational and quality-assurance framework alongside applicable law, statutory guidance and commissioner requirements.

Commissioner Assurance at a Glance

Compass meets all 21 standards through integrated safeguarding, health and safety, placement-management and educational-quality systems. Evidence is maintained securely and can be made available to commissioners through due-diligence and quality-assurance processes, subject to data-protection and confidentiality requirements.

PART 1
Safeguarding and the welfare of children
6 standards evidenced

PART 2
Health and safety
6 standards evidenced

PART 3
Admissions, support and guidance
5 standards evidenced

PART 4
Quality of education
4 standards evidenced

How to read this document

Each entry reproduces the DfE standard, describes how Compass meets it and lists the records, policies and operational evidence used to demonstrate implementation. References to evidence include documents retained centrally and placement-level records created as applicable to the learner, venue or activity.

Important evidence principle
A policy alone is not treated as proof of implementation. Compass supports its policies with recruitment records, training evidence, risk assessments, case records, learner plans, attendance and progress information, communication records and quality-assurance activity.

PART 1

Safeguarding and the welfare of children

Standard 1.1

> **The DfE standard**
> All staff, including proprietors, should undergo recruitment checks including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with barred list check where appropriate. Checks should be recorded on a single central record and persons who fail to meet those checks should not be employed.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass operates a robust safer-recruitment process overseen by Rosie Aylward, who is trained in safer recruitment and holds the relevant certificate. All employees, tutors and mentors are subject to identity, enhanced DBS and children's barred-list checks where appropriate, right-to-work checks, qualification and experience verification, employment-history and reference checks, medical-fitness declarations, prohibition checks and section 128 checks where relevant. Appointments remain conditional until satisfactory checks are complete. All checks are recorded securely on the single central record and individuals who do not meet the required standard are not engaged.

> **Evidence available**
> Single central record; Safer Recruitment Policy; recruitment checklist; conditional offer documentation; identity and right-to-work evidence; DBS and barred-list evidence; references; qualification records; prohibition and section 128 check records; safer-recruitment training certificate.

Standard 1.2

> **The DfE standard**
> Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children attending the provision.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass maintains and reviews a comprehensive suite of safeguarding policies written for its delivery model. These include child protection, child-on-child abuse, online safety, behaviour and anti-bullying, reasonable force, staff conduct, low-level concerns, allegations against staff, whistleblowing, data protection and lone working. Policies set out clear actions, escalation routes and external referral contacts and are made available to commissioners, families and staff.

> **Evidence available**
> Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy; Safer Recruitment Policy, Online Safety Policy; Staff Code of Conduct; Low-Level Concerns Policy; Whistleblowing Policy; Data Protection Policy and privacy notices; Lone Working Policy; annual policy-review register, Health & Safety policy, Missing Learner Absence and Welfare Check Procedure, Photography, Filming and Social Media policy, Reasonable Force Policy, Recruitment & Probation policy.

Standard 1.3

> **The DfE standard**
> Robust procedures are in place outlining how to respond when a safeguarding or welfare concern arises.

How Compass meets this standard

Tutors report concerns immediately to the DSL in writing, and they are recorded them on CPOMS. Compass has agreed that it will make necessary safeguarding referrals, while sharing relevant information promptly with the commissioner and maintaining appropriate updates. Procedures cover early help, referral to children's social care, emergency police action, allegations, anonymous reporting, information sharing and secure record keeping. Every concern is recorded, including where no further action is taken.

> **Evidence available**
> CPOMS records and chronology; safeguarding concern and referral procedures; placement-level safeguarding agreement; referral records; commissioner communications; allegations and low-level-concern records; information-sharing protocol.

Standard 1.4

> **The DfE standard**
> All staff should be familiar with the provider's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

How Compass meets this standard

Before working with learners, all staff complete mandatory safeguarding training incorporating Prevent and separate Home Office Prevent training. Staff receive induction on Compass policies, the DSL reporting route, CPOMS, professional boundaries, lone working and local escalation arrangements. Understanding is refreshed through updates, supervision and annual training, and training certificates are retained. Compass maintains a staff training record. All tutors and mentors are also made aware, during induction, of procedures for reporting absence within 30 minutes of sessions starting. All tutors and mentors receive a handbook with this information as a reminder.

Evidence available
Safeguarding induction checklist; training matrix; safeguarding and Prevent certificates; Home Office Prevent certificates; policy acknowledgements; briefing and supervision records; update communications, Tutor and Mentor handbook.

Standard 1.5

The DfE standard
Providers should have a named child safeguarding lead who has received appropriate, documented training.

How Compass meets this standard

Rosie Aylward is Compass's named and trained Designated Safeguarding Lead. She has 12 years' experience in mainstream educational leadership involving safeguarding and is available throughout all Compass working hours. Her training is documented and refreshed in line with current expectations, and all staff, tutors and mentors know how to contact her and how to escalate if immediate action is required.

Evidence available
DSL appointment record and role description; DSL training certificates; safeguarding training record; staff induction materials; published safeguarding contacts; cover and escalation arrangements, safeguarding policy.

Standard 1.6

The DfE standard
Site access should be restricted to children receiving provision, the provider's own staff, and supervised visitors.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass does not operate from its own premises. Before tuition or mentoring begins, Compass completes a written risk assessment of each school, home, community or third-party venue. The assessment confirms access, supervision, visitor, student travel arrangements, emergency and safeguarding arrangements. Venue expectations are shared with the assigned tutor or mentor, the commissioner and unsuitable locations are not used.

Evidence available
Venue and activity risk assessments; home and community-working assessments; venue agreements; visitor and access information; tutor briefing records; student travel arrangements.

PART 2

Health and Safety

Standard 2.1

> **The DfE standard**
> An appropriate health and safety policy is in place and implemented effectively.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass implements a health and safety policy across all delivery locations. A proportionate risk assessment is completed before provision begins and updated when the learner, activity, venue, travel or staffing arrangement changes. Staff receive relevant information before each placement and report hazards and incidents promptly. Medical, SEND, lone-working and safeguarding factors are integrated into planning.

> **Evidence available**
> Health and Safety Policy; placement, venue, activity, travel and lone-working risk assessments; staff briefings; learner medical and emergency information; review records; hazard and incident logs.

Standard 2.2

> **The DfE standard**
> First aid equipment and/or facilities are readily available and there are arrangements for access to a qualified first aider.

How Compass meets this standard

The risk assessment for every delivery location confirms the first-aid equipment, facilities, emergency contacts and route to a qualified first aider before a session proceeds. At schools and managed venues, Compass follows the host's first-aid arrangements. For home or community work, the assessment identifies an appropriate accessible arrangement and emergency response. Where adequate provision cannot be confirmed, Compass puts an alternative arrangement in place before delivery. Where a young person has significant health needs, a responsible adult with parental responsibility or authorised by the parent/carer with parental responsibility will remain with the young person for the duration of the session. This will be arranged prior to placement, and be stipulated in the risk assessment.

> **Evidence available**
> First-aid needs assessment; venue risk assessment; host-venue first-aid confirmation;

> emergency contact sheet; student profiles for tutors, individual healthcare plan where applicable; first-aid arrangements recorded in the placement plan.

Standard 2.3

> **The DfE standard**
> A system should be in place and in use for recording and reporting health and safety and first aid incidents.

How Compass meets this standard

All accidents, injuries, near misses, first-aid events and health-and-safety incidents are recorded promptly and reviewed by the Programme Lead. Parents and commissioners are notified in accordance with the seriousness and agreed reporting arrangements. Significant events are escalated to the relevant authorities, including under RIDDOR where applicable, and risk assessments are revised in response to learning.

> **Evidence available**
> Accident, incident, near-miss and first-aid records; parent and commissioner notifications; RIDDOR assessment and reports where applicable; investigation notes; updated risk assessments; action log.

Standard 2.4

> **The DfE standard**
> All specialist equipment used by the provider should have undergone relevant inspection and safety checks consistent with industry standards.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass uses only equipment that is suitable for the learner, activity and setting. Where specialist, electrical, sports, cooking or practical equipment is used, its condition, inspection and maintenance status is confirmed before use. Equipment that cannot be evidenced as safe is not used, and host-venue assurance is obtained for equipment owned by another organisation.

> **Evidence available**
> Equipment inventory where applicable; inspection, servicing and maintenance records; PAT or other statutory checks where applicable; pre-use checks; venue assurance; activity risk assessments.

Standard 2.5

> **The DfE standard**
> Staff should hold appropriate qualifications and be suitably trained in the use of specialised equipment.

How Compass meets this standard

Only staff with verified competence, experience and any required qualification or training may instruct or supervise learners using specialist equipment. The staffing decision forms part of programme approval and risk assessment. Activities are amended or not delivered where suitable competence cannot be demonstrated.

> **Evidence available**
> Staff qualification and training records; competency checks; activity authorisation; risk assessments; supervision requirements; external instructor assurance where applicable.

Standard 2.6

> **The DfE standard**
> An appropriate fire safety policy should be in place.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass confirms fire and evacuation arrangements for every delivery venue before use. Staff and learners are familiarised with alarms, escape routes, assembly points and any individual evacuation support. For schools and managed venues, host arrangements are verified; for any location under Compass' control, a current fire risk assessment and evacuation plan are maintained and reviewed following change.

> **Evidence available**
> Fire Safety Policy; venue risk assessments; host fire-safety confirmation; evacuation plans; learner briefing or induction record; personal emergency evacuation plan where required; drill and review records where applicable.

PART 3

Admissions, support and guidance

Standard 3.1

> **The DfE standard**
> Admissions policies and referral processes should be clearly documented and well supported.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass operates a fair, transparent referral and admissions process that explains its offer, intended outcomes, delivery models and the needs it can safely support. A named Programme Lead works with the commissioner and family to assess suitability, identify reasonable adjustments and agree the proposed package. Decisions are non-discriminatory and informed by the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding, risk, staffing and the learner's individual needs.

> **Evidence available**
> Admissions and Referral Policy; referral form; suitability assessment; consultation notes; equality and reasonable-adjustment record; risk assessment; placement proposal; named-contact correspondence.

Standard 3.2

> **The DfE standard**
> Providers should maintain records, including information supplied by commissioners, for all children placed in their settings.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass maintains a secure individual record for every learner. Before delivery, it requests and reviews emergency contacts, education and attendance history, attainment information, EHCPs, PEPs, healthcare and learning plans, SEND and medical information, safeguarding information, exclusions, behaviour records and risk assessments. Records are updated through ongoing information sharing with the commissioner and family.

> **Evidence available**
> Learner file checklist; referral documentation; emergency contacts; attendance and attainment information; EHCP/PEP/healthcare plans; safeguarding and risk information; behaviour and exclusion records; data-sharing records; ILDP, MIS data.

Standard 3.3

> **The DfE standard**
> Providers should have an induction process to help children to understand the intended outcomes of their placements and their setting's safeguarding and health and safety policies.

How Compass meets this standard

Each learner receives an accessible, personalised induction. Compass explains the purpose and intended outcomes of the placement, timetable, attendance and behaviour expectations, key adults, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety information and how to raise a concern. Baseline assessment and learner voice inform an Individual Learning and Development Plan containing outcomes, adjustments, risks and the agreed programme.

> **Evidence available**
> Induction Policy and checklist; learner and parent induction guide; safeguarding and safety briefing; baseline assessments; learner voice record; ILDP; timetable and six-week programme; parent and commissioner information.

Standard 3.4

> **The DfE standard**
> Providers should record children's attendance for each session and share information promptly with commissioners. Processes should be in place for checking on the health and welfare of absent children, and to agree strategies to improve attendance.

How Compass meets this standard

Attendance is recorded for every planned session and shared promptly with the commissioner, with non-attendance reported ideally within 30 minutes of the session start. Unexplained absence triggers immediate contact and welfare checks under the agreed placement protocol. Compass works with the learner, family and commissioner to understand barriers, adjust provision and review attendance at least every six weeks. Where local authorities have arrangements for specific systems to be used to record and report attendance, Compass will comply and use this system – eg. IRIS connect.

> **Evidence available**
> Session attendance register; same-day commissioner notifications; absence and welfare-check log; family contact record; escalation record; attendance analysis; six-week review; attendance support plans, local authority attendance recording systems.

Standard 3.5

> **The DfE standard**
> All providers should have a strategy to support good behaviour for learning, to record children's behaviour and progress, and to share information about behaviour routinely with commissioners and parents.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass uses a relational, restorative and needs-led approach to behaviour, with clear expectations and reasonable adjustments. Staff are prepared to de-escalate difficulty and avoid restrictive intervention wherever possible. All new tutors receive Compass Student Engagement training during induction. Engagement, behaviour, incidents and progress are recorded, significant incidents are shared promptly, and patterns are considered during programme reviews so that support can be adapted.

> **Evidence available**
> Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy; behaviour policy; individual behaviour or support plan; reasonable-adjustment record in ILP and student profile; de-escalation training; session notes; incident records; parent and commissioner updates; six-week reviews.

PART 4

Quality of Education

Standard 4.1

> **The DfE standard**
> Teaching staff and instructors should have the appropriate skills, knowledge and qualifications to deliver programmes.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass verifies each tutor's or mentor's qualifications, subject knowledge, experience and ability to work with children before appointment. Programme Leads match staff carefully to the learner's age, curriculum, SEND profile, risks, interests and intended outcomes. Delivery is supported through induction, supervision, quality assurance and continuing professional development. All tutors are provided with a centralised curriculum and resources, ensuring a high quality of curriculum content across all tutors.

> **Evidence available**
> Staff files; qualification and reference checks; CV and experience records; matching rationale; role profiles; induction and CPD records; supervision records; observations and quality-assurance feedback, curriculum resources.

Standard 4.2

> **The DfE standard**
> Planning for learning shows lesson/session plans identify the knowledge, skills and understanding that all children attending their settings will aim to achieve.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass maintains curriculum and programme documentation showing the intended knowledge, skills, understanding and wider outcomes. Each learner's ILDP translates commissioner priorities and baseline information into measurable outcomes and a sequenced six-week plan. Tutors and mentors use the centrally planned curriculum and resources and adapt the materials to suit the learner, preparing session plans that identify learning intentions, activities, adaptations and evidence. Planning is age-appropriate, SEND-responsive and supports speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy where relevant. Our curriculum is designed with a three tier model; we complete baseline assessments to determine a students' ability and gaps in knowledge, and use this information for curriculum pathway placement. For example, if a student identifies significant gaps in literacy, we will place them on the literacy and reading intervention pathway, where we will

plug gaps in phonological knowledge and practice reading decoding, comprehension and fluency before building towards more difficult skills.

> **Evidence available**
> Curriculum intent statement; subject schemes of work and mentoring frameworks; ILDP; baseline assessment; six-week programme; session plans; SEND adaptations; learner work and portfolios; qualification specifications and awarding-body records where applicable.

Standard 4.3

> **The DfE standard**
> There is a clear process for setting targets and monitoring learning progress, supporting re-integration and transition where appropriate, and for taking actions if progress is not on track.

How Compass meets this standard

Baseline information and learner voice are used to agree clear ILDP targets with the learner, family and commissioner. Progress, attendance, engagement and work are monitored throughout delivery and formally reviewed at least every six weeks. Commissioners and families receive understandable updates. Where progress is not on track, Compass raises this early, convenes or contributes to an early review, changes the package and agrees additional support, transition or reintegration actions.

> **Evidence available**
> Baseline assessments and target-setting records; ILDP; session notes and learner work; attendance and engagement data; progress reports; six-week and early-review minutes; parent and commissioner updates; reintegration or transition plan; revised programme.

Standard 4.4

> **The DfE standard**
> Providers should have processes in place to self-evaluate whether they are effective in delivering the commissioned services.

How Compass meets this standard

Compass evaluates the quality and impact of its provision through learner outcomes, attendance and engagement data, staff supervision and observation, safeguarding and incident analysis, stakeholder feedback, complaints and compliments, policy review and commissioner quality-assurance activity. Findings inform an improvement plan, staff development and changes to curriculum, systems and delivery.

> **Evidence available**
> Self-evaluation framework; quality-improvement or development plan; outcome and

> attendance analysis; learner, parent and commissioner feedback; staff appraisal, supervision and observation; complaints and compliments log; safeguarding and incident analysis; audit reports; annual accounts; quality-assurance action plans.

Governance, review and availability

Responsibility for maintaining this evidence framework sits with Compass leadership. Policies are reviewed at least annually and sooner when legislation, statutory guidance, DfE expectations, commissioner requirements or learning from practice changes. Placement-level evidence is reviewed through ongoing oversight and the learner's six-week review cycle.

> **Information for commissioners**
> Commissioners may request relevant policies, assurance records and anonymised or placement-specific evidence as part of due diligence, contract monitoring or quality-assurance visits. Personal and safeguarding information is shared only where lawful, necessary and proportionate.

Reference

Department for Education (2025), Non-school alternative provision: voluntary national standards, published 31 August 2025. Available at GOV.UK.