

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Commissioning Brief for The Altus School 2025-26

1.	<p><b>AIM AND PURPOSE</b></p> <p>The Altus School is commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) to provide a supportive and ambitious three-tier model* of high-quality education for KS1 - 4 pupils (5-16 yrs.) who, because of exclusion, risk of exclusion or other reasons (outlined below in Section 4) would not otherwise receive a suitable full-time education.</p> <p>It is recognised that many of the pupils accessing the provision will have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) and often early childhood trauma, as well as negative experiences in their education and schooling before they reach APS. Provision is therefore based on trauma informed practice with a strong focus on nurture and therapeutic approaches, throughout the teaching and learning.</p> <p>The school will work collaboratively with mainstream schools, partners and parents and carers, to plan and deliver high quality, coherently sequenced learning, and holistic packages of support. Where capacity allows, they will offer tier 2 placements to support and encourage a preventative approach for those at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>The curriculum will be broad, balanced, developed and appropriately adapted so that it enables pupils to re-engage with education. The provider will, through its relational approach, seek to address any emotional or behavioural difficulties experienced by the child or young person, which affect learning, development, and barriers to personal growth.</p> <p><i>*Tier-1 primary outreach and Tier-2 secondary has been piloted during 2024/25, Tier-3 already in existence</i></p>
2.	<p><b>STUDENT OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>The Altus School will take a child-centred approach, be outcome focused and fully engaged with use of <a href="#">Gloucestershire's Graduated Pathway</a>.</p> <p>It is commissioned by GCC to achieve the following outcomes.</p> <p>Children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can re-engage in education, have a positive attitude to learning and increased confidence in their academic abilities.</li><li>• Have increased emotional resilience.</li><li>• Are kept safe and understand how to make safe lifestyle choices.</li><li>• Achieve stretching academic and vocational attainments to improve future life chances.</li><li>• Can successfully re-integrate into mainstream or other identified setting, or transition on to the next phase of their education.</li></ul>
3.	<p><b>DETAILS OF THE SERVICE:</b></p> <p><b>Capacity</b></p> <p>The school is commissioned to provide 262 full time equivalent places at any one time across 6 sites. This is based on the current physical capacity of each phase and site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Primary: <b>38</b></li><li>• KS3: <b>80</b></li><li>• KS4: <b>120</b></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible KS3/4: <b>24</b></li> </ul> <p><i>*As of September 2025, the above numbers will change to:</i></p> <p>The school is commissioned to provide <b>280</b> full time equivalent places at any one time across <b>7</b> sites. This is based on the current physical capacity of each phase and site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary: <b>46</b></li> <li>• KS3: <b>80</b></li> <li>• KS4: <b>120</b></li> <li>• Flexible KS3/4: <b>34</b></li> </ul> <p>The school will determine and manage the capacity for each service area. However, as part of this contract, the provider must prioritise within this capacity, clearly structured full-time education placements for a child or young person who has been permanently excluded, in order to meet the LA's statutory duties under Section 19 of the Education Act.</p> <p>In addition, if the school reaches its onsite capacity, the school will be commissioned to provide on roll/off site co-ordination and oversight of <b>up to 48</b> students who are in receipt of 15 hours of mentoring provision until a place becomes available.</p> <p>Where a higher than anticipated number of permanent exclusions creates pressure on the overall service, the school is expected to notify GCC at the earliest opportunity to discuss what solutions can be put in place.</p> <p><b>Client Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age: 5-16yrs</li> <li>• Year Groups: 1-11</li> <li>• Gender: Co-educational</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE:</b></p> <p><b><u>Tier 1 Primary Outreach Service</u></b></p> <p>The school will develop and pilot an outreach service and packages of support to primary schools that are targeted to individual or small groups of children who are struggling to engage in education and/or at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>Requests for outreach packages will be made through and commissioned by the referring school.</p> <p><b><u>Tier 2 Provision</u></b></p> <p>The school will offer a range of preventative, short-term placements* to mainstream schools for children and young people who are struggling to engage in education and/or are at risk of exclusion. It is expected that all tier 2 placements will meet the following referral criteria:</p> <div data-bbox="205 1760 1374 1991"> <p><b><u>Tier -2 Place Referral Criteria:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil on Graduated Pathway or equivalent for support (e.g., 'My Plan' or 'My Plan +')</li> <li>• Referring school has evidence of providing a range of intervention over time, to support self-regulation and emerging behaviours.</li> <li>• Referring school has evidence of involving other agencies either to support the student or family.</li> </ul> </div>

- Referring school understands and commits to maintaining regular contact with the pupil whilst on placement with the alternative provision school and the pupil returning to their school

In an effort to engage earlier with children facing barriers to education the Altus School will engage with and attend multi-agency, child facing forums (e.g. TALC & Intervention Circle) to share information and expertise that inform next steps and may lead to intervention and or placements being made available.

*\*Pupils accessing a tier-2 placement will be dual registered; the commissioning school is responsible for arranging and funding transport costs where applicable*

### **Tier 3 offer -Types of Placements**

Where it is the best interests of the child the local authority will commission placements at the school for children of compulsory school age who by reason of exclusion from school or otherwise may not for any period receive suitable education unless arrangements are made for them, under the LA's section 19 duties.

For example:

#### **Permanent Exclusion**

To fulfil our statutory duty to provide education to pupils as of the 6<sup>th</sup> day after a permanent exclusion has been issued by a school (1<sup>st</sup> day provision, where possible, for CIC or those supported by a social worker).

#### **Child in Care Protocol**

To fulfil our statutory duty to provide provision for children and young people in care who are unable to attend their current school.

The child will be dual registered.

#### **Child in Care who has previously been Electively Home Educated**

To fulfil our statutory duty for children and young people in care until a suitable placement can be found.

#### **Child Missing Education (CME)**

To fulfil our statutory duty to provide provision for children and young people who do not have an allocated school base and who could reasonably attend the setting.

#### **Exceptional circumstances**

In exceptional circumstances, and where there is capacity, and it is in the best interests of the child/young person, the local authority will consider use of full-time commissioned placements at the school.

Placements commissioned by GCC include transport funding where this meets GCC's transport policy.

### **Referral Process**

All referrals to the Altus School will be submitted by via the online JADU portal.

Once submitted the referral will initiate a notification to the school immediately. A link within the notification will enable access to the referral and any attached documentation.

GCC will create an APS Involvement, on the CAPITA system, within 24 hours, and upload all additional and supporting documentation.

	Wherever possible the pupil will start on day 6 (day 1 for children under social care). Placement start date to be confirmed and added to the Capita APS Involvement.
5.	<p><b>CURRICULUM AND ACCREDITATION OF LEARNING:</b></p> <p>The school will provide access to a good quality and balanced curriculum. All learning will be of high-quality and provide a suitable curriculum designed to meet the needs of the individual child or young person.</p> <p>The curriculum will be developed and adapted so that it enables pupils to re-engage with education. It will address barriers to personal growth, will be broad, balanced, and designed to prepare and enable pupils to return to mainstream education or, where applicable, transition to another specialist setting or next stage of their learning.</p> <p>The education offer will be of high-quality and provide a suitable curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of the individual child or young person. All potential opportunities for accreditation should be identified and will set challenging but achievable attainment targets for young people.</p> <p>All potential opportunities for accreditation should be identified and stretching but achievable attainment targets for young people should be set.</p> <p>The curriculum offer will extend beyond the academic to provide for personal development. It will therefore incorporate a therapeutic programme which will enhance resilience, self-esteem, and independence, whilst also developing the skills pupils need to self-regulate behaviour and become confident learners.</p> <p>The school should undertake or ensure due diligence with all off-site providers has been taken, adhere to best practice guidelines, including safeguarding protocols and quality assure the provision on a regular basis, in line with expectations from OFSTED.</p>
6.	<p><b>ATTENDANCE (Inc. PART-TIME TIMETABLES)</b></p> <p>All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.</p> <p>As with all schools, The Altus School can also make referrals into the following multi-agency forums for additional support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navigation Hub (Gloucester City sites)</li> <li>• TALC / Intervention Circle</li> <li>• Section 19 Referral</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Attendance</u></b></p> <p>The school must follow the legal requirement of registered schools in relation to attending and take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once after lunch in the afternoon using the appropriate attendance and absence codes.</p> <p>To help meet the expectations of <a href="#">Working Together to Improve School Attendance</a> all schools, including alternative provision and pupil referral units, are expected to share their attendance data with The Department for Education (DfE) through <a href="#">WONDE</a>. This enables schools and local authorities to access more up to date pupil level attendance data, allowing them to analyse data and ensure support is provided for identified pupils under the guidance.</p>








	<p>The school must follow up any absences by following the <a href="#">Gloucestershire guidance</a> which is in accordance to Working Together to Improve School Attendance expectations.</p> <p><b><u>Part-time and alternative provision timetables</u></b></p> <p>A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution and should be part of a broader inclusive approach. Such arrangements must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. Part-time timetable arrangements must be regularly reviewed. The school will use the JADU form on Schoolsnet to submit details of any part-time timetable or alternative provision arrangements as they occur, as they are reviewed, and when they cease by following the processes outlined in <a href="#">Gloucestershire guidance</a>.</p> <p>If a part time timetable is being considered, full consultation with, and the agreement of, the parent whom the pupil lives with, children's social worker and/or youth support worker should be sought, where applicable.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the school to promote good attendance and reduce absence, as well as provide attendance data to the Local Authority in line with Local Authority protocols, including where provision is subcontracted for some of the timetable, these also need to be reported to GCC as per PTT's above. The school will have an attendance policy which clearly sets out roles and responsibilities.</p> <p><b><u>Risk of exclusion from the Altus School</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where there are indications that a pupil's placement with the school may breakdown, the school should make urgent contact with the Local Authority (PEP for children in care), to agree and put in place a strategy to prevent this from happening.</li> <li>• Suspensions should only be considered in exceptional circumstances and if this becomes necessary the exclusion must be formalised, and the carers and Local Authority informed in writing.</li> <li>• A discussion should take place with the Head of the Virtual School if a suspension exclusion is being considered for a child in care before a decision is made.</li> </ul>
7.	<p><b>SAFEGUARDING</b></p> <p>All organisations commissioned by Gloucestershire Children's Services to deliver services on their behalf, are required to adhere to the Council's safeguarding procedures and are in line with the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP). Further information regarding Safeguarding and Child Protection can be found at: <a href="#">Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) - Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership</a></p> <p>In summary, the school must be able to demonstrate that they comply with the safeguarding standards and requirements as set out the standards schedule. This includes ensuring the safeguarding of children whilst attending offsite alternative provision and includes ensuring that all children placed in the school attend full time and, where relevant are safeguarded from the 6th day of exclusion.</p>
8.	<p><b>REINTEGRATION AND TRANSITION</b></p> <p>The school and the LA will work collaboratively to ensure students and families receive a comprehensive programme of support that enables them to successfully transition back into mainstream or other suitable setting or successfully progress to post 16 routes and settings.</p>

	<p><u>Permanent Exclusions</u></p> <p>The school will implement the Local Authority’s <a href="#">Fair Access Protocol</a> for pupils* who have been permanently excluded. Wherever possible, the objective will be to return the child to a mainstream school at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>There should be clear criteria and agreement between transitioning schools on how and when to assess if the pupil is ready to return to mainstream education. The school will develop an appropriate and carefully managed plan to support the pupil’s successful reintegration back into mainstream school. This should include a summary of the progress made, ongoing needs for successful re-integration and be agreed with the pupil, their parents/ carers, the Local Authority’s Education Inclusion Team, and the destination school beforehand. This should include regular reviews, to ensure the child is settled before reintegration support ceases. The pupil will remain dual registered with the school and the identified school throughout the reintegration process.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p><b>*Permanently excluded child with an Education Health Care Plan</b>  A pupil with an EHCP plan is not eligible for the Fair Access Protocol. In these circumstances the school will work with the EHCP Team to identify suitable transition plans that enable the child with an EHCP who has been permanently excluded to return to a mainstream school or other setting at the earliest opportunity.</p> </div> <p><u>Child in Care Protocol</u></p> <p>A child in care is not eligible for the Fair Access protocol. In these circumstances the school will work with the Virtual schools to identify suitable transition plans that enable the child to return to a mainstream school or other setting at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p><u>Exceptional Circumstances</u></p> <p>A clear and transparent reintegration plan will be developed and agreed at the start of each exceptional circumstances placement and regularly reviewed with the child, their family, their school, and the Local Authority. The Local Authority’s Inclusion Service must be informed of any circumstances in which it is predicted the pupil will not be ready to return to the mainstream school in a timely way</p> <p><u>Tier 2 placements</u></p> <p>A clear and transparent reintegration plan will be developed and agreed at the start of each tier 2 placements and regularly reviewed with the child, their family, and the mainstream school.</p> <p><b><u>Placement End</u></b></p> <p>The school is required to notify <a href="mailto:APSReferrals@gloucestershire.gov.uk">APSReferrals@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a> within 2 school days when a placement ends (end date and reason).</p>
9.	<p><b>INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE, TRANSITIONS PLANNING AND PROGRESSION AT 16</b></p> <p>The school will deliver good quality information, advice, guidance, and support pupils to consider their aspirations and progression options post 16, in line with Gatsby Benchmarks.</p> <p>The school will work with the Local Authority, colleges, training agencies and employers to develop good progression routes at key stage 4 and support smooth transitions into college, training, apprenticeships and employment and work-based placements.</p>

	<p><u>Partnership working with schools and other agencies</u></p> <p>The school is expected to fully participate in partnership and multi-agency working both at a strategic and operational level.</p> <p>The school will support children, young people, and their families through a wider approach to access and secure additional support and services where this is needed to achieve good outcomes and help them to receive a seamless service. The provider will have good links with other key services including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other Alternative Education Providers</li> <li>Children's Social Care</li> <li>The Education Inclusion Service</li> <li>The Virtual School</li> <li>The EHCP Casework Team</li> <li>School Improvement Service (Education Outcomes and Intervention)</li> <li>GCC's Early Help and Targeted Support Service</li> <li>Colleges and work placements/apprentice providers</li> <li>The Educational Psychology service</li> <li>CAMHS</li> <li>School Nurse Service</li> <li>Targeted youth support, including youth offending teams, substance misuse services and sexual health services</li> <li>Other local voluntary sector children and young people's organisations</li> </ol> <p>The service will promote and support the maintenance and continuation of children and young people's relationships with friendship and peer groups, their mainstream schools, and local communities, as appropriate to the young person.</p>
10.	<p><b>PARTICIPATION:</b></p> <p><u>Parent / Carer engagement</u></p> <p>The importance of parental and / or carer engagement and the home learning environment in children and young people's education will be recognised and supported by the provider.</p> <p>The school will meet the legal requirements to report to parents and a clear process will be in place to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents/carers are actively encouraged to be involved in the education/support plan discussions and progress reviews.</li> <li>Parents/carers are made to feel welcome on-site and appropriate opportunities are available for them to visit provision.</li> <li>Parents are aware of their legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance at the AP.</li> <li>As a minimum, contact with parents/carers should be made at the beginning of the placement and at least 3 times per academic year; for instance, through parents' evenings. For short placements parents/carers should be contacted at least at the beginning and end of the placement.</li> <li>Annual or placement end reports should be provided to parents.</li> </ul> <p><u>Participation and involvement of children and young people</u></p> <p>The involvement of children, young people and families in the design, delivery and review of the provision and their own Individual Learning Package should be encouraged and supported and the provider is expected to comply with Gloucestershire County Council's protocols.</p>
11.	<p><b>DATA SHARING</b></p>

	Personal Information must be processed in line with the Specific Information Sharing Agreement (SISA) as appended in this document.
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>CONTRACT MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT:</b></p> <p>The Altus School will also have in place systems to collect and share information to enable the service to be performance managed and drive continuous improvement.</p> <p>The school and local authority will meet termly to review performance as part of the contract management process.</p> <p><b>Any significant changes to the provision, including temporary changes or change of location must be discussed and agreed with the Local Authority commissioner as part of this specification.</b></p>
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>SIGNED AGREEMENT</b></p> <p>Head Teacher Name:</p> <p>Head Teacher Signature:</p> <p>Date of signing:</p>

## APPENDIX

<p><u>GSISA</u> to be updated when all finalised and agreed</p>  <p>gispa-v5-schedule-1-schedule-1-specifi</p>	<p><u>Glossary of Terms</u></p>  <p>TAC-AP Glossary 1.3.pdf</p>
<p><u>Referral Guidance</u></p>  <p>APS Referrals</p>  <p>Entry to APS Flow Process Document VChart 2023 v1.1.pdf</p>	<p><u>Jadu Process Flow Charts</u></p>  <p>APS Referral Notifications - Match</p>  <p>PEX Referring Notifications</p>  <p>Commissioned Referring Notifications</p>
<p><u>Links to useful DfE Pages</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance">Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (gloucestershire.gov.uk)</a></li> <li><a href="https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101111/suspension-and-permanent-exclusion-guidance">Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a></li> </ul>	
<p><u>Links to useful GCC Pages</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/exclusions">Exclusions - Schoolsnet (gloucestershire.gov.uk)</a></li> <li><a href="https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/attendance">Attendance - Schoolsnet (gloucestershire.gov.uk)</a></li> <li><a href="https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/elective-home-education">Elective home education - Schoolsnet (gloucestershire.gov.uk)</a></li> <li><a href="#">GCC Child Employment</a></li> <li><a href="#">GCC Child Performance</a></li> <li><a href="#">Team Around Locality Clusters   Glosfamilies Directory</a></li> <li><a href="#">Intervention Circle</a></li> <li><a href="https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/children-missing-education">Children Missing Education (CME) - Schoolsnet (gloucestershire.gov.uk)</a></li> </ul>	