

Alternative Education Programme

Full Information Pack for Schools, Parents & Local Authority

Our vision

URBOND's Alternative Education Programme (AEP) exists so that no young person is left without a place to belong and grow. We provide a calm, structured, relationship-led alternative for young people who are struggling in, or excluded from, mainstream education, so they can rebuild confidence, close gaps in learning, and move forward with genuine options for their future.

The programme sits within URBOND's wider Youth Development work in Portsmouth, alongside our Community Integration and Child Education programmes, and draws on the same trusted staff, venues and partnerships young people already know.

How the programme is structured

Every young person moves through the programme at a pace that suits them. The model is built in three stages, each preparing the young person for the next:

Stage 1 — Individual foundation

On starting, each young person is given an individual, tailored timetable. This first stage focuses on rebuilding routine, trust and core skills before any social demands are added. A typical opening pattern includes:

- Literacy, writing and communication
- Numeracy and practical maths through everyday tasks
- Life skills — budgeting, shopping, cooking, independence
- Enterprise and project work suited to the young person's interests
- A specialist subject and dedicated wellbeing time
- An academic focus session (English, maths and social skills)

Stage 2 — Paired learning

From the second term (subject to settled attendance), young people are carefully paired for some sessions. Working in a pair — rather than moving straight to a group — is a deliberate step:

- It introduces social interaction gradually, in the lowest-pressure group setting possible.
- Young people build trust with one other person before being asked to manage several relationships at once.
- Pairing allows staff to closely observe and support communication, turn-taking and shared decision-making.
- It gives young people a peer to model behaviour with and be accountable to, without the anxiety a larger group can bring.
- Shared success — completing a task or project together — builds self-esteem faster than working alone.

Stage 3 — Small group work (3–4 young people)

As confidence grows, young people move into small groups. This stage more closely mirrors a classroom, college or workplace, and brings additional benefits:

- Wider social exposure and practice negotiating, compromising and listening to different views.
- Opportunities to take on informal leadership and responsibility within the group.
- A stronger sense of belonging and shared identity as part of a team.
- Healthy peer challenge and motivation, alongside continued adult support.
- Direct preparation for the group settings young people will meet in further education and employment.

One-to-one support remains available

Regardless of stage, additional one-to-one hours can be purchased where a young person needs more individual time – for example around a particular subject, an anxiety, or additional support needs.

Specialist subjects

Alongside the core programme, young people choose a specialist subject drawn from URBOND's own established youth programmes, for example:

Music	Sport	Cookery	Media	Enterprise & more
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Work experience & progression

Young people of an appropriate age are supported into genuine work experience and employability skills sessions, alongside their core timetable, as part of their progression through the programme.

Other benefits accessing URBOND can have

- A local trip (within a two-hour window) at the end of each half term, this can be a local park, business of interest relating to their specialist subject or work experience etc
- One longer, joint day trip further afield each full term, travelling by minibus.
- The trips are subject to funding, regular attendance, hours and trips can be extended or added over time – beach, forest walk, museum, educational settings etc.
- Young people can also gain access to URBOND's wider regular activity timetable. Whilst families can access URBOND's broader community support: our foodbank, free gym sessions for men and women, Zumba, employment support, and social events. This is delivered via URBOND's pre-existing routes and activities and is not charged to the school or local authority.
- Young people can be put forward for recognition at the Portsmouth Youth Awards, created by URBOND.
- Occasional additional opportunities – such as events and third party offers.

Keeping young people safe

Safeguarding sits at the centre of everything URBOND delivers. Schools, parents and carers, and the Local Authority can be assured that:

- URBOND operates under a dedicated Alternative Education Policy, covering behaviour, attendance, curriculum and quality assurance.
- A named Designated Safeguarding Lead oversees all safeguarding practice across the programme, working directly alongside URBOND's CEO.
- Full safeguarding procedures are in place, including risk assessment, incident reporting and clear escalation routes to statutory services.
- All staff and volunteers working with young people hold an enhanced DBS check; a Letter of Assurance confirming this is available to schools, parents and the Local Authority on request.

- Written parental/carer permissions are obtained before any photography, filming or use of a young person's image on social media.

Reporting and communication

- A personalised timetable is shared before a young person starts.
- Regular attendance updates are shared with schools and families in the simplest way possible.
- A termly written report and a termly catch-up meeting with the school and/or family.
- Clear pathways and levels so progress is visible and celebrated, including an end-of-year recognition ceremony.

Next steps

If you are wishing for your young person to attend please see the below steps, return to our webpage and complete the referral form, we will then be in touch.

Definitions:

AEP – Alternative Education Provision

YP – Young Person

YDM – Youth Development Manager

APS – AP Support

FYSW – Family and Youth Support Worker

CEO – Chief Operating Officer

Education Staff – anyone the main registered educational provider deems required e.g. AP roles, SENCO roles, Safeguarding roles, Tutors etc

No	Task	Explanation	Owner
1.	Referral Form Completed	School, local authority or other person completes the online referral form.	Referee – school, local authority etc.
2.	Referral Form assessed	URBOND staff review Referral Forms to assess support capacity. If agreed, invite to all parties for step 5.	URBOND – APS, YDM, FYSW and CEO. Any other relevant parties within URBOND.
3.	Introduction Meeting	Joint meeting with education staff, YP and family/guardians. (approximately is 30 mins with education staff followed by 30 minutes with YP's and family/guardians). Where possible, hosted at URBOND to familiarise attendees and include a site tour. Discuss potential start dates, times, regular days, YP's interests, risks and URBOND's ethos and delivery style.	URBOND – APS, YDM, FYSW. Education Staff to liaise with parent and YP.
4.	Service Agreement Completed by school	Standard Service Agreement sent to Education Staff for review, amendment, feedback or signing.	Education staff
5.	Timetable, goals and	A brief plan of what is intended in lessons shared with Education Staff and request for their input. Includes an	URBOND – YDM, FYSW. Education Staff.

	lesson plans developed	explanation of URBOND's style of delivering in relation to some educational sessions, some interests, emotional wellbeing, confidence building tasks, skills exploration and rewards of free time.	
10.	Induction	First session (or more if required) is recommended to be delivered with Education Staff and/or parents and guardians to settle young person.	URBOND – YDM, FYSW. Education Staff to liaise with parent and YP.
11.	AP Provision Begins	Following the Induction programme, regular AP lessons begin.	URBOND