

Meeting with DE & EA Special School Summer Scheme Provision

Monday 19 January 2026

Attendees:

Clar McKenna (EA)

[REDACTED]

Deirdre Ward (DE)

[REDACTED]

Apologies:

None

No.	Description	Action
1.	Welcome & Introductions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DW welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the current situation with Special School Summer Schemes and issues raised.	
2.	Challenges	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Challenges were discussed and these included staffing, the perception that provision in the summer schemes is the same as term time; and funding.	
3.	Risk	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It was highlighted that the risk is currently too high in delivering the summer schemes.	
4.	Risk Mitigation	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It was noted that there was a need to mitigate against the risks to provide assurance that the summer schemes can operate in a safe environment however as schools need to know within the next few weeks what the position is for summer 2026 it would not be possible to mitigate against those in that short a time frame.	
5	School Term Time	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Schools are already stretched providing statutory term time education.	
6	Benefits of Special School Summer Provision	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It was recognised that Special School Summer Scheme provision offers many positive benefits to many children and their families.	
7	Legacy School Summer Schemes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">An inequity between the 21 Special Schools who delivery legacy summer schemes and the 19 other Special Schools was raised.	

8	Joint Decision	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was joint agreement on the recommended position for summer 2026 but all were made aware that the decision lies with the DE Minister. 	
9	Workforce Safety	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue of health, safety and safeguarding of children and young people and workforce safety for those involved in summer schemes would be key in the decision made. 	
10	Community & Voluntary Sector	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was suggested that there may be an opportunity for the Community & Voluntary sector to form consortia to deliver provision in local areas to meet needs. 	
11	Councils	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider using the Council template of working with Children & Young People. 	
12	Future Working Group	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An opportunity may be available to organise a working group to develop a new model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> █ to check DoH and DfC officials who may sit on a working group.
13	Co-design	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In developing a new model ensure co-design including the voice of young people and parents/guardians. 	
14	Communications	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In any communications to Special Schools there is a need to be clear that a better model is being developed and that the new model would support the wellbeing of the young people, promote confidence, prepare the young people for life and provide play and recreation opportunities. All agreed that there would be no deviation from the agreed communications between DE & EA. 	
15	Agreement	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the agreement discussed today doesn't go any further than those in the room. 	