

Title	Quality Management Policy
Cross References	Internal: - Corporate Social Responsibility Policy - Safer Recruitment Policy
Date	October 2026

1. Introduction

Apricot Online Ltd provides live online education for children and young people who require education outside, or alongside, mainstream provision. We work with schools, local authorities and other commissioning bodies to deliver short- and long-term programmes, including blended provision, reintegration support and programmes leading to qualifications.

Apricot Online is committed to providing a safe, reliable, responsive and high-quality service. Our Quality Management System provides the organisational framework through which key processes are planned, monitored, reviewed and improved.

This policy complements the Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Policy. The Quality Assurance policy focuses primarily on the quality and impact of educational provision; this Quality Management Policy focuses on the wider organisational systems, controls and processes that support effective service delivery.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Apricot Online:

- understands and responds to commissioner and student requirements;
- maintains clear, consistent and effective operational processes;
- plans staffing, systems and other resources to meet service requirements;
- monitors performance against agreed service levels and contractual expectations;
- identifies and manages organisational risks;
- uses feedback, complaints and performance information to improve services;
- maintains appropriate financial and operational controls;
- supports staff competence, communication and continuous development; and
- records, reviews and follows through improvement actions.

3. Quality Management Principles

Apricot Online's approach to quality management is based on the following principles:

- Customer and student focus - services should meet agreed commissioner requirements while remaining centred on the needs, safety and progress of students.
- Consistency - key processes should be understood, documented where appropriate and applied consistently.
- Accountability - responsibilities for operational delivery, monitoring and improvement should be clear.
- Evidence - decisions should be informed by reliable operational, educational, financial and stakeholder information.
- Risk awareness - foreseeable risks should be identified, assessed and managed proportionately.
- Continuous improvement - feedback, incidents, performance information and review activity should result in learning and improvement.
- Proportionality - systems and controls should be appropriate to the scale and nature of Apricot Online's provision.

4. Key Processes and Process Management

Apricot Online will identify and map key organisational processes where this supports consistency, accountability, training or risk management.

Key processes may include:

- enquiries, referrals and admissions;
- commissioner agreements and placement set-up;
- student onboarding and safeguarding information;
- timetabling and allocation of teaching capacity;
- teaching, reporting and placement review;
- staff recruitment, induction and ongoing training;
- safeguarding and incident management;

- complaints and concerns;
- invoicing and financial controls;
- information governance and data protection;
- IT systems and service continuity; and
- quality assurance and improvement.

Process documentation will be reviewed where significant changes, recurring issues, audit findings or service developments indicate that an update is required.

5. Commissioner Requirements, Service Levels and Reporting

Apricot Online will seek to understand the requirements of each commissioning body and ensure that agreed provision is clearly recorded.

Where Service Level Agreements, contracts, purchase orders, placement plans or other agreed requirements apply, relevant performance will be monitored against those expectations.

Apricot Online will provide agreed reporting to commissioners, which may include weekly updates, half-termly reports, end-of-course reports, attendance and engagement information, progress information and placement-review information.

Significant concerns affecting delivery against agreed requirements will be communicated promptly and appropriate corrective action considered.

6. Resource and Capacity Planning

Apricot Online will plan staffing and operational resources so that it can meet current and reasonably anticipated service requirements.

Resource planning may consider:

- teacher availability and subject capacity;
- student numbers and timetable requirements;
- specialist subject or qualification needs;
- administrative and safeguarding capacity;
- technology, licences and platform capacity;
- training and professional development needs;
- business continuity and staff absence; and
- anticipated changes in commissioner demand.

Where demand exceeds available capacity, Apricot Online will make transparent decisions about what can safely and effectively be delivered rather than compromising quality or safeguarding.

7. Staff Competence, Induction and Development

Apricot Online will recruit staff through appropriate safer recruitment arrangements and will provide induction, role-specific information, training and continuing professional development appropriate to their responsibilities.

Staff performance and development will be supported through supervision, departmental arrangements, quality assurance, professional discussion, training and the Performance Management Policy where applicable.

Good practice, recurring issues and organisational learning will be communicated through appropriate staff meetings, guidance, training and updates.

8. Management Communication and Review

Apricot Online will maintain regular management communication to support planning, oversight and service improvement.

This may include:

- weekly or regular senior/operational management meetings;
- monthly or regular subject-specific meetings led by Department Heads;
- placement and commissioner review meetings;
- safeguarding meetings and case discussions where appropriate;
- quality and improvement reviews; and
- additional meetings in response to operational risks or significant change.

Meetings should be purposeful and proportionate. Significant actions should have clear ownership and be followed through.

9. Feedback, Complaints and Customer Experience

Apricot Online will seek feedback from commissioners, parents/carers, students and other relevant stakeholders and will use that feedback to inform service improvement.

Complaints and concerns will be managed in accordance with the relevant Apricot Online policy. Themes, repeated concerns and learning points will be reviewed so that appropriate corrective or preventative action can be taken.

Positive feedback may also be used to identify effective practice that can be shared or embedded more widely.

10. Risk Management and Internal Review

Apricot Online will identify and manage material risks to safe, lawful and effective service delivery. Risk management will be proportionate to the nature of the risk and may include formal risk assessments, risk registers, audits, management review or specific action plans.

Key processes and controls will be reviewed periodically and when significant incidents, changes or concerns arise.

Risk and audit activity may consider safeguarding, staffing, finance, data protection, technology, service continuity, health and safety, regulatory requirements and commissioner obligations.

11. Financial Management and Sustainability

Apricot Online recognises that sound financial management is an important part of sustainable quality.

Appropriate financial controls will be maintained in relation to invoicing, expenditure, authorisation, financial reporting and management oversight.

Operational and financial decisions should support the organisation's ability to provide safe and effective services while maintaining appropriate value and sustainability.

Financial considerations will not override safeguarding requirements or justify delivery that Apricot Online does not have the capacity or resources to provide safely and effectively.

12. Information, Data and Systems

Apricot Online relies on accurate information and secure, reliable systems to manage its provision.

The organisation will maintain appropriate arrangements for:

- data protection and confidentiality;
- accurate student, staff and commissioner records;
- secure access to systems and information;
- appropriate backup and recovery arrangements;
- reporting and responding to data breaches;
- system and platform reliability; and
- business continuity where systems or services are disrupted.

Operational information used for decision-making should be accurate, relevant and available to those who reasonably require it.

13. Equality, Inclusion and Accessibility

Apricot Online is committed to equality of opportunity and to providing services and employment practices that are fair, inclusive and lawful.

Quality management processes will consider whether policies, systems or service arrangements create avoidable barriers for students, families, staff or commissioners and whether reasonable adjustments or other improvements are required.

14. Environmental and Social Responsibility

Apricot Online will seek to minimise the environmental impact of its activities where reasonably practicable and will consider wider social responsibility within its organisational decision-making.

The organisation's online delivery model may reduce some travel and premises-related impacts, but Apricot Online will continue to consider responsible use of resources, technology, purchasing and waste in accordance with its Corporate Social Responsibility arrangements.

15. Corrective Action and Continuous Improvement

Where a quality, operational or compliance issue is identified, Apricot Online will consider the cause, the immediate action required and whether wider corrective or preventative action is necessary.

Actions may arise from:

- quality assurance findings;
- complaints or stakeholder feedback;
- safeguarding reviews;
- incidents or near misses;
- risk assessments or audits;
- performance against service requirements;
- staff feedback;
- technical or operational failures; and
- changes in legislation, guidance or commissioner expectations.

Significant improvement actions should identify an owner, a timescale and a method for confirming that the action has been completed and has had the intended effect.

16. Responsibilities

Managing Director

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for the effectiveness of Apricot Online's quality management arrangements and for ensuring that appropriate organisational resources and oversight are in place.

Operations Director

The Operations Director supports the coordination, implementation and review of operational quality systems, policies, commissioner processes, risk controls and improvement activity.

Department Heads and Managers

Department Heads and managers are responsible for the quality of the processes and services within their areas of responsibility, for escalating concerns and for implementing agreed improvement actions.

All Staff

Quality is a shared responsibility. All staff are expected to follow agreed processes, maintain appropriate records, identify and report problems, contribute to improvement and take responsibility for the quality of the work within their direct control.

17. Review

This policy and the effectiveness of Apricot Online's Quality Management System will be reviewed annually and sooner where significant organisational, legal, contractual or operational changes make this necessary.

Authorised by: Jodie Phillips, Operations Director

Date: October 2026

Review Date: October 2027