Admissions Policy

Procedure Owner:	Polaris Education
Approved by:	Managing Director
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Version No:	04

All group companies are detailed in the current legal structure.
This policy forms part of the Group Quality Management system ISO 9001.

Introduction

Our schools are mostly mixed Independent Special school providing places for pupils aged 5 to 18 years who may find it difficult to access the curriculum in a mainstream setting due to their special educational needs.

In two schools our registration is for children aged 7- 18 (Easthorpe School and Kirby Moor School).

One school is registered for children aged 5 to 13 (**Becker School**).

One school is registered for children aged 7 to 16 (**Redstone Hall**).

Two of our schools provide education for boys only (**Apple Orchard** and **Kirby Moor School**).

Pupils who attend our schools may experience a range of barriers to education relating to Social, Emotional and/or Mental Health needs. They may also have a diagnosis or presentation associated with Autism, Learning Difficulties, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Conduct Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or a complex combination of needs.

This policy is relevant to all staff, parents/carers, pupils, and local authority representatives who are involved in the admission of a pupil.

The school will work in partnership with local authorities and parents/carers to assess the suitability of pupils for a place at the school. The admissions policy promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils regardless of disability, ethnic background, language, culture, faith, or gender.

The school accepts referrals from Local Authorities (LA). Whilst parents are welcome to visit the school and obtain information about the provision the school cannot proceed with the admissions process without local authority involvement.

Most pupils will have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), be undergoing assessment of their needs, or be identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school is committed to identifying the most appropriate provision for each individual pupil and will be open and transparent with parents and local authorities throughout the admissions process.

Admissions Assessment Process

Prior to making a placement decision, the school will undertake a thorough assessment of the referral information available. This may include consideration of the pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), professional reports, risk assessments, safeguarding information, educational records, and any other relevant documentation. The school may also undertake visits, observations and consultations with the local authority, parents/carers, current educational setting, and professionals involved with the pupil.

The purpose of this process is to determine whether-:
• the school can meet the pupil's identified needs.
• the provision is appropriate for the pupil's age, ability, aptitude, and special educational needs.
• there is an appropriate peer group and learning environment.
• identified risks can be managed safely and effectively.
• the placement is suitable for both the pupil and the existing school community.

Referral and Consultation Process

The school will accept referrals and organise admissions assessments at any point in an academic year. Intake is not restricted to September only.
Once a referral has been received from the Local Authority, the referral information will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team.
If, following consideration of the available information, it appears that the school may be able to meet the pupil's needs, the school will invite parents/carers and other relevant parties to participate in the admissions assessment process.

Where further information is required before a decision can be made, a designated member of staff may undertake observations or visits within the pupil's current educational setting or home environment. If the information provided does not clearly indicate whether the school is able to meet the pupil's needs, a designated member of staff may arrange to observe the pupil in their current educational setting or, where appropriate, within the home environment.

Parents/carers and the pupil will then be invited to visit the school, receive information about the provision and, where appropriate, take part in the admissions assessment process.

Following this process, the Senior Leadership Team will usually be able to make a decision within a few days. The school recognises that families and local authorities may have already experienced lengthy assessment and consultation processes and will therefore aim to communicate the outcome as promptly as possible.

In some cases, however, additional information may be required before a final decision can be reached. Where necessary, the decision-making process may be extended to allow further information to be gathered, including additional school visits, observations, or consultation with relevant professionals.

If school leaders determine that the school can meet the pupil's special educational needs, an offer of a place will be made to the Local Authority (LA). The proposed placement fee will be provided to the LA. Once the LA confirms that the placement will be taken up, the school and LA will make the necessary contractual arrangements, complete the Individual Pupil Account, and agree a proposed start date for admission to the school roll.

The placement fee may reflect the school’s core offer where no additional support is required. However, some pupils may require support beyond the school’s core offer. In such cases, any additional provision and associated costs will be discussed and agreed with the LA prior to the placement being confirmed.

Pre-Placement Assessment

The pre-placement process will typically involve a member of the senior leadership team gathering and reviewing up to date information, including but not but not limited to previous placements; primary and additional SEN; behaviour presentation; academic attainment and progress; religious and cultural needs; parent/carer and Local Authority aspirations and outcomes for the pupil; current multi-agency involvement; and family circumstances relevant to the placement.

Consideration may also be given to behaviour and risk assessments, safeguarding information, attendance and exclusion history, therapeutic needs, health information, and the suitability of the peer group and learning environment.

Transition Arrangements

Once a place is agreed, an individual transition plan will be developed. Where appropriate, the pupil will attend part of the admissions assessment process and will have the opportunity to talk about themselves, their interests, and their educational experiences.

The pupil will then be accompanied by an experienced member of the staff and may, for example, join a class, tour the school, or spend time in the playground. This enables the school to begin assessing how the pupil responds to the environment, routines, and peers' group.

Whilst this is the preferred approach, the admissions and transition process may be adapted to meet individual needs. For example, where it is considered that a visit to the school would cause undue distress or anxiety, the pupil may instead be observed within their current educational setting.

It is important that a pupil's first experience of the school is positive and successful. The school will therefore adopt a flexible and individualised approach to transition and admissions arrangements where appropriate.

Where appropriate, a member of the Senior Leadership Team may liaise with, visit or meet with the pupil's current or previous educational setting to gather relevant information. This may include:

- whether the pupil is looked after and, if so, the details of the relevant contact person and key personnel within the placing authority.
- the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), Statement of Special Educational Needs, or other relevant records.
- current care, health, and education plans, together with any identified support needs.
- details of any factors that may make the pupil particularly vulnerable or present risks to themselves or others.
- attendance information.

• details of any fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
• details of the Lead Professional or other key professionals involved with the pupil.
• educational attainment and assessment information and
• any other information relevant to the assessment of the placement.

Consultation Outcomes

Following consultation, there may be occasions where the school advises that it is unable to meet a pupil's needs and therefore should not be named in the final EHCP. This may include circumstances where:

• the provision is not suitable for the pupil's age, ability, aptitude, or special educational needs.
• there is not an appropriate peer group or learning environment in which the pupil's needs can be met safely and effectively.
• admission would be incompatible with the efficient education of other pupils.
• the provision required would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources; or
• identified risks cannot be safely managed within the school's available staffing, resources, and therapeutic provision.

In these circumstances, the school will provide feedback to the local authority to support the identification of a more appropriate placement.

Class Placement and Transport

The school must also be satisfied that the parent/ carers of the child support the proposed placement. Parent/carers or the LA are responsible for making transport arrangements and will inform the school accordingly.

The Senior Leadership Team will work with the Team around the Child to determine the most appropriate class placement for the pupil. However, the final decision will rest with the Headteacher. This decision will take account of the pupil's individual needs and the needs of other pupils within the class. Consideration will include the pupil's age, developmental stage, learning profile, social and emotional needs, risk profile, and compatibility with existing peer groups.

Transition arrangements will be planned in partnership with the Local Authority, the pupil's current educational setting, and the parent/carer. Consideration will be given to any strategies or arrangements that may support a successful transition for the pupil and minimise disruption for the existing class group. Pupils may be invited to attend one or more transition visits. These visits will be planned in consultation with parents/carers and tailored to meet individual needs.

Post-Admission Assessment and Review

Prior to admission, the Headteacher will ensure that all relevant information has been obtained and considered. A baseline assessment will commence following admission to the school. The time required to complete this assessment will vary according to individual need, but it will ordinarily be completed within two months.

Information provided by parents/carers, teacher observations and assessments undertaken by appropriate professionals will contribute to this process. Individual Learning Plans will subsequently be developed and discussed with parents/carers prior to implementation.

All pupils with an EHCP will participate in statutory annual reviews in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice. An early review may be requested where:

- a pupil's needs have changed significantly.
- new professional advice indicates that a different level or type of provision may be required.
- the suitability of the placement is in question or
- the school believes it may no longer be able to meet the pupil's needs safely and effectively.

The school recognises that many pupils entering the provision will already have been subject to an EHCP review and consultation process prior to admission. Where appropriate, review arrangements will take account of previous review activity and placement decisions and will be undertaken in partnership with the local authority.

Appeals and Communication

Although parents/carers may express a preference for a particular school, the Local Authority may not agree to the placement requested. In such circumstances, parents/carers have the right to appeal. All decisions relating to the proposed placement of an individual pupil will be treated confidentially.

The school is committed to maintaining open and regular communication with parents/carers, advocates, and other relevant professionals, recognising, and respecting the individual needs of each pupil. The school will collaborate with the Local Authority and other relevant agencies to ensure that information is shared appropriately and that all parties are kept informed throughout the admissions and transition process

Review Dates

Date:	Version:	Summary of Changes Made:
August 2025	03	Routine Review
September 2026	04	Policy strengthened and updated to provide greater clarity on requirements and expectations.