Admissions Policy

Policy Number:	EDU.POL.002	Policy Owner Job Role	Quality Manager
Issue Number:	001	Ratified By	Quality Director
Issue Date:	01.07.26	Service Type:	Schools
		Applicable Services:	Education
Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
Mandatory Policy	No		
Relevant Regulations	Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014: • Part 3 Welfare, Health and Safety • Part 6 Provision of Information		
Note	This policy should not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

Table of Contents

Section	
1	**Supporting Documents**
2	**Introduction**
3	**Aim & Scope**
4	**Abbreviations/Definitions**
5	**Policy Content**
6	**Responsibilities**
7	**Training Requirements**
8	**Equality Impact Statement**
9	**Sources of Information / References**
10	**Version Control (where else is this policy located, ie. Radar)**
11	**Appendices**

1. Supporting Documents

This policy connects to the SEND policy (EDU.POL.022), the Safeguarding Children in Education policy (EDE.POL.002), the Attendance policy (EDU.POL.005), the Risk Assessment policy, the Behaviour policy (EDU.POL.027) and the Data Protection policy.

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

At Acorns School, we provide specialist education for pupils who face significant barriers to learning, many of whom have experienced several previous placements. Admission is an important stage in a pupil's educational journey and can be a stressful experience for pupils and their families.

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We take a sensitive and structured approach that reduces anxiety and supports a smooth transition, and we make every reasonable effort to confirm that we can meet a pupil's assessed needs before they join. This policy sets out how we admit pupils and the standards we hold ourselves to.

3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all prospective pupils and to everyone involved in the admission process at Acorns School, it aims to:

- Provide a clear, fair and supportive framework for admitting pupils.
- Make sure we can meet a pupil's needs before they are admitted.
- Plan transitions carefully so that pupils settle well.
- Meet the school's duties for the admission register and for handling pupil information.
- Make sure admission is free from discrimination and accessible to all.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

- EHCP means an Education, Health and Care plan, the statutory document that sets out a pupil's education, health and care needs
- child looked after means a child who is, or has previously been, in the care of a local authority
- admission register means the school roll, which records every pupil receiving education at the school

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

We offer a pupil a place only when we are confident we can meet their assessed needs and keep them, and everyone around them, safe. We plan each admission around the individual child, making sure the right information reaches the right people in good time. We know that starting a new school can be an unsettling time for a family, so we treat them with care and keep them informed at every stage. All referral information is handled securely and in line with data protection law, and our admissions are fair, accessible and free from discrimination.

5.2 The Admission Process

Referral pathway

Pupils are referred by local authorities, social care or health services. Parents, carers or other interested parties who seek information about admission are directed to their local authority.

Visits and assessment

Prospective pupils and their families/guardians are encouraged to visit the school, meet senior staff and see the facilities. The headteacher requests all relevant documentation, including the EHCP, psychological and specialist reports, previous

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school records and risk assessments, and carries out a thorough assessment of suitability.

Pre-arrival planning

Prior to arrival at school the headteacher brings together all the information about the pupils' routines, preferences and risks. We link with the current placement to support transition, offer familiarisation visits, and provide information in a format the pupil can access. All referral information is confidential and handled in line with data protection law, and information about pupils who are not admitted is securely destroyed after 28 days.

Risk assessment

An initial risk assessment is completed before admission to keep pupils and staff safe. It is a living document, reviewed regularly and shared with relevant staff.

The final decision regarding admission rests with the proprietor, acting through the headteacher, having considered whether the school can meet the pupil's needs, maintain the efficient education of other pupils, and ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community.

The admission and the register

Every pupil admitted is added to the admission register before or at the start of the first session on their agreed starting day. The school notifies the local authority within the time required by the Pupil Registration Regulations, normally five school days of the pupil being added, unless the pupil is joining at the start of the school's most junior year. The admission is recorded on Arbor and on The Link, and previous school files are requested through CPOMS.

Welcome and induction

On arrival, an allocated member of staff gives the pupil a warm welcome. The first days focus on meeting individual needs and supporting adjustment at the pupil's pace, including a tour, introductions to staff and peers, fire and safety procedures, the timetable, and the behaviour and attendance expectations.

The first four weeks

- A portrait photograph is taken for identification and records.
- All pupil details and emergency contacts are completed on Arbor.
- Baseline assessments are completed and recorded in the assessment tracker.
- Individual education and behaviour plans are developed.
- A key worker is allocated, and a pastoral meeting is held.
- Key dates are recorded, including EHCP annual reviews and PEP meetings.
- Any fee variation is notified through The Link.

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5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Admissions, the register and pupil records are maintained on Arbor, with safeguarding records and file requests handled through CPOMS, and referrals and fees recorded on The Link. The headteacher monitors the admission process and reports to the Proprietor and Governors on admissions and on any concerns about meeting needs.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At Acorns School, this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We monitor the impact of this policy on pupils with protected characteristics and adapt our practice to remove disadvantage. Any concern that this policy disadvantages a pupil or group should be raised with the headteacher.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

Pupils are welcomed and supported to settle at their own pace, and their views are sought as part of planning.

6.2 Staff

Staff prepare for each admission, support induction and the allocation of a key worker, and complete the baseline and pastoral work in the first weeks.

6.3 Leadership

The headteacher leads the admission process, requests and reviews documentation, decides on suitability, and ensures the admission register and notifications are completed correctly.

6.4 Governance

The proprietor and governors provide oversight of admissions and assurance that the process is fair and that needs can be met.

6.5 Parents and carers

Parents and carers share information, take part in planning and visits, and support their child's transition.

6.6 Named leads

Acorns School Marple

Headteacher – Miranda Rathmell, Miranda.rathmell@keyseducation.ac.uk

Admissions Lead – Kerry Bernard, SENCO, Kerry.bernard@keyseducation.ac.uk

Acorns School Ashley

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The Headteacher at Acorns Ashley School is Paula Tankard.

The Admissions Lead is Sarah Booth, SENDCO

We work with the following local authorities:

Stockport LA, Education Commissioner, Tim Bowen
Manchester LA, Education Commissioner, Sean McKendrick
Derbyshire LA, Education Commissione,r Joseph Wilson
Tameside LA, Education Commissioner, Andy Couldrick
Cheshire East LA, Education Commissioner, Helen Wallace

7. Training Requirements

The headteacher ensures all staff cover this policy at induction so the admission process is consistent and supportive.

8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

As an independent special school, Acorns School admits pupils through referral and placement by local authorities and other commissioners rather than through maintained-school admission arrangements. This policy reflects current legislation and guidance, including:

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, which set out the admission register and the duty to notify the local authority when a pupil is added to or removed from it.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which require clear admission arrangements and that the school can meet pupils' needs.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), where a pupil is placed through an Education, Health and Care plan.
- The Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments and not to discriminate in admissions.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR, on handling referral and pupil information.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, on requesting records and safeguarding pupils at the point of admission. The school will obtain safeguarding and child protection records from the previous setting as soon as reasonably practicable

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following admission and will ensure that appropriate safeguarding information is transferred securely.

10. Version Control

This document can also be found on RADAR. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The next review date and version history are recorded in the control table above. The named owner for review at Acorns School is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

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Appendix A: School-Specific Annex

At Acorns School Marple, the following local arrangements apply:

- the named headteacher and admissions lead, with their contact details: Miranda Rathmell – Headteacher and Kerry Bernard, SENCO.

At Acorns School Ashley, the following local arrangements apply:

- the named headteacher and admissions lead, with their contact details: Paula Tankard – Headteacher and Sarah Booth – SENDCO

The local authorities and commissioners the school works with are any of the 10 greater Manchester authorities and commissioners. As well as Cheshire East, Derbyshire, Stockport and any others within travel distance to the school.

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Appendix B: New Pupil Admission Checklist

This checklist is completed for each new pupil.

Step	Action	Done (Y/N)	Notes
1	Referral received and logged on The Link		
2	Relevant documentation requested, including EHCP and reports		
3	Visit arranged with parents, carers and pupil		
4	Observation and assessment completed		
5	Decision on suitability made and communicated		
6	Pre-arrival planning meeting held		
7	Initial risk assessment completed and shared		
8	Admission date agreed and recorded		
9	Referral information securely stored or destroyed as appropriate		
10	Previous school file requested through CPOMS		
11	Pupil entered on Arbor with emergency contacts		
12	Baseline assessments completed and recorded		
13	Individual education and behaviour plans created		
14	Key worker allocated and pastoral meeting scheduled		
15	Key dates logged, including reviews and meetings		
16	Fee rates updated on The Link if applicable		
17	Pupil added to the admission register and local authority notified		

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11.1 Appendix C: Induction Activities Record

Induction activity	Date completed	Notes
Welcome and tour of school		
Introduction to teaching staff		
Introduction to peers		
Fire and safety briefing		
Explanation of timetable		
Review of behaviour policy and code of conduct		
Review of attendance policy		
Provision of school or pupil handbook		
Initial pastoral meeting		

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11.2 Appendix D: Referral Information Request

This template is used to request documentation from a previous school or agency. Square bracket fields are completed at the time of use.

To: [previous school or agency name]. From: Acorns School admissions team. Date: [date].

Please provide the following for the pupil named below to support their admission assessment:

- the latest EHCP (including any reports/recommendations from the last annual review)
- psychological and specialist reports,
- behaviour support plans and risk assessments,
- attendance records for the last 6 years, or for the time the pupil was registered with you.
- relevant medical information,
- and any other information relevant to placement suitability.

Pupil name: [name]. Date of birth: [date of birth]. Previous school or placement: [previous setting].

Please send the information securely through S2S, CPOMS or encrypted email by [deadline]. Admissions lead: [name]. Contact details: [contact].

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11.3 Appendix E: Baseline Assessment Summary

Assessment area	Date completed	Summary of findings	Next steps
Literacy			
Numeracy			
Social and emotional			
Behaviour			
Physical and sensory needs			
Other			

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11.4 Appendix F: Important Dates and Review Schedule

Date	Review or event	Actions required	Responsible staff
	EHCP annual review		
	PEP meeting		
	Behaviour plan review		
	Pastoral meeting		
	Other		

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