

Admissions Policy SO-0004

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1. Purpose of this document

This policy aims to ensure that:

- there are planned and robust systems in place to support an efficient and consistent approach to referrals and admissions to the Helen Allision School (the “**School**”);
- initial assessments are conducted consistently and in a manner that will ensure the needs of an applicant can be effectively met.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all applications for admission to the School, an independent special school which provides education for children and young people with a diagnosis of Autism /Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis as the primary diagnosis.

3. Policy summary

Each management system included in this policy forms part of a systematic and planned approach to ensure that the admissions processes are thorough and lead to pupils' needs being clearly identified and the appropriate placement being made.

The following sections of this policy document set out broad statements and procedures for each element covered within this policy.

4. Operational delivery

Referrals

As the School caters solely for children with Autism / Autistic spectrum diagnosis (ASD), we welcome applications from children with a diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis as the primary diagnosis. It is our normal expectation that children will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names the School, in order to secure a placement.

We wish for parents to be supportive of a placement at the School, and for parents and the placing authority to therefore agree to the School being the proposed named provider in their child's EHCP. Where the School is named on the child's EHCP, we expect appropriate funding to be in place through the relevant placing Local Authority ('LA') for the placement.

Applications for admission to the School are not restricted to September only; we therefore accept referrals at any point in the academic year.

Admissions Procedure

1. Parents who wish to consider a day placement at the School for their child are encouraged to visit the School in advance of requesting the School on their child's EHCP.
2. We encourage all prospective parents to engage in a dialogue with their LA early on if considering a placement at the School. All referrals should be made directly to the School from LA's. Parents who express an interest in a place at the School are therefore referred to the placing LA.
3. All referrals from the placing LA, where the School is proposed to be named on the child's EHCP, are logged on the School's system.
4. The placing LA will send information about the prospective pupil to the School. The School will review the pupil's papers, draft EHCP and supporting documentation and determine the position regarding the proposed placement. The School must be satisfied that we are suitable to the child and their needs, bearing in mind the School's specialism and after taking account of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
5. In order to make a decision on suitability the school will meet with the pupil, their parents and members of the team at their current placement in order to collect detailed information on the child. Where additional information is required in order to reach a decision on admission, further information may be sought from the parents/carers, the LA or other professionals involved in the child's life to assist the School in reaching an informed view. This may also include, for example, visit(s) to the child's current school or a visit in the home setting.
6. Where the School is named on the child's EHCP, this will be confirmed in writing with the placing LA and a start date will be confirmed with the LA.

7. It is essential that admissions are properly planned and where the School is named on an EHCP, allow for a smooth transition from the previous educational establishment or provision. As such, the School will send out an admissions pack, which will include, for example, information about the School for both parents and pupil (such as daily routines and expectations) and pre-admission questionnaires. This will be provided in a suitable format for the pupil and personal guidance and support can be provided as appropriate. The parents / carers and, if appropriate, the pupil will be invited to an admission meeting. The admissions meeting will involve members of the Transdisciplinary team and will typically consist of clinical and educational staff. This meeting with parents / carers will obtain up to date information, including but not exclusive to the following areas:
 - previous placement experiences / previous provision perceptions;
 - communication needs;
 - behaviours and attitudes of the pupil;
 - academic ability based on previous provision's assessment and our own if deemed useful by the School;
 - life skills / self-help skills;
 - religious and cultural needs; and
 - parents' aspirations for the future.
8. Transition plans will be made with the LA, the current school placement and the parent/carer.
9. Prior to admission, the Principal will ensure that the School has the following up to date information:
 - a) communication profile and / or previous communication reports;
 - b) whether the pupil is looked after and if so the name of the contact person and key personnel in the placing authority;
 - c) name and contact details of the pupil's parents or guardians;
 - d) Final EHCP;
 - e) current care, health, educational plans or relevant personal needs if available; and
 - f) details of any matter which makes the pupil particularly vulnerable or a danger to themselves and/or others.
10. Where parents/carers are considering complementary or supplementary treatments this should be discussed with the Principal in advance of the pupil's start date. (See the NAS Supplementary Treatments Guidance policy – SO-0175.)
11. A baseline assessment will commence as soon as a pupil starts School, which forms part of the pre-admissions documentation that the School receives from the pupils' predecessor placement (where applicable.)

NB 1: NAS reserves the right to recoup reasonable costs incurred for travel and assessment. All decisions relating to the proposed placement of any individual are kept confidential and processed in accordance with NAS' data protection obligations. There will be open communication with the parents/carers concerned, which acknowledges and respects the needs of each user.

NB 2: The parents/carers or LA are responsible for making transport arrangements for their child and will inform the School accordingly.

Emergency admissions

These are extremely rare and should only take place following consultation with the Director of Education and Children's Services.

Where a child is admitted following an emergency review, a review meeting is initiated as soon as possible and usually within four weeks after admission to review the placement.

Admissions Panel

The admissions panel is only used in specific cases where the school would like to seek further advice. The role of the admissions panel includes:

- providing advice and support to the School, following a referral from a placing LA for a young person who would like a placement at the School;
- ensuring that at least two members of the admissions panel are available to take part in the formal consultation process; and
- holding a panel review of a placement (i.e. once a child has joined the School). This may be in order to support the school's own baseline meeting at 12 weeks so may take place prior to this.

Members of the admissions panel may include:

- the Director of Education and Children's Services
- member of the Local Governing Body
- the Safeguarding Lead and Nominated Individual (Chair);
- the lead assessor of the individual;
- an expert guest (area manager/principal/other within the NAS who has expert knowledge around the areas of risk presented)

NB - The Chair of the panel may ask additional experts or NAS managers onto a panel at any time to support the process of admissions.

5. Evaluation of policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis for its effectiveness and to ensure it takes account of current legislation.

6. Impact assessment

In considering the revisions to this policy, close attention has been paid to enabling access to it and the associated procedures, reflecting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.