

Aurora Ivy Lane School

Admissions, Referrals, Assessments, and Contracts Policy

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Version Number:	3
Applies to:	Aurora Ivy Lane School
Associated documents:	
Approved by:	Head Teacher
Implementation date:	September 2026
Next review due by:	September 2027
<i>This policy has been reviewed to ensure it promotes safeguarding and does not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups</i>	

1 Policy Introduction

Our school provides educational placements for up to 40 students, aged 11 to 19. In line with our registration with the Department for Education (DfE), all students will hold an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with primary needs typically relating to autistic spectrum disorder and associated learning difficulties. Our school is non-denominational and respects the cultural needs and religious beliefs of all. We can offer places to children who meet the criteria set out below. We currently receive referrals from Local Authorities located within a reasonable travel distance of the school.

Our admissions policy is in place to ensure that there is a process to follow so we can; receive and handle referrals appropriately, complete assessments in a manner that determines the needs of a child and whether they can be met by the school. Once a placement is agreed this policy is to ensure all children benefit from a well-planned, timely and, child-centred transition. Our policy also specifies the contractual and other requirements of professionals during the admissions process.

2 Admissions Criteria

Use the following criteria to select students who are well-suited to the education offered at Ivy Lane School:

- Children aged between 10 and 18 years.
- Children who have an EHCP or are in the process of assessment for an EHCP, where it is evident there is a significant reason to believe the child has a learning disability or complex needs. An EHCP must be in place before admission to the school.
- Children whose needs stem from complex learning difficulties and disabilities including: autistic spectrum conditions, moderate to severe learning difficulties who may also have associated medical and health issues and moderate mental health needs.
- Needs specified within the child's EHCP should be able to be met within the resources, environment, staff skillset, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provided, and curriculum offered by Ivy Lane School.
- Provision of Ivy Lane School is likely to support the child in making positive progress toward the long-term outcomes as specified in their EHCP.

Consider this further guidance on students likely to benefit from a placement at Ivy Lane School.

3 Our Students

Whilst each of our students is unique in their strengths and areas requiring support, we feel students with the following needs are well placed to benefit from our provision:

Learning levels: our highest achieving students will likely leave school achieving levels up to entry-level 3. Our curriculum can also accommodate the needs of students working significantly below age-related expectations requiring an informal/experiential curriculum. Our curriculum is not designed to meet the needs of students requiring level 2 study. Where a student is identified as progressing or working beyond the curriculum, the school will work alongside families and professionals to support a transition to another more suitable school.

Speech, Language and Communication needs: our curriculum and support offered can accommodate a range of additional needs including, where required, the use of augmentative and alternative communication levels.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs: as a provision, we strive to support a range of complex social and behavioural needs which arise from a child's learning disabilities and other complex needs. Consideration is given to ensure these needs can be met in a safe way for both the child themselves and other children accessing the school. Being a provider for primarily children with autistic spectrum disorders and associated learning difficulties, we do not admit children where SEMH is their sole need.

Children who are looked after and children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs: We approach all assessments of potential students in line with our Equality and Diversity policy ensuring that relevant adaptations are put in place where required to aid the process and that decisions are based on the school's ability to meet a child's needs.

4 The Admissions Process

Professionally on receiving a referral we will:

Ensure there are the tools and resources needed to be able to handle the process from start to finish, including relevant persons to complete appropriate tasks e.g. Contracts Manager, the tools to be able to complete an appropriate assessment, and to be able to allow for successful admission to the school.

Ensure all parties that need to be informed of a referral, as well as the process that follows it is contacted and remain updated during the process.

Ensure school leaders make the referrals team aware of a referral being received.

Where an EHCP indicates a child is likely to be a good match for the above criteria a student assessment will be arranged.

In planning an assessment, we will:

Ensure that the referral has been communicated to the parents/carers by the placing authority. The Headteacher will complete the assessment accompanied by a member of the therapeutic services.

5 Conducting the Assessment

Assessments will be completed in a manner that: considers the needs of the child during the assessment e.g. support needs, health needs, other relevant information.

The assessment will be completed in an environment where the child feels safe, will involve multiple people that support the child; e.g. family, carers, current teachers, and will be conducted in a manner to ensure we can confirm if we can or cannot meet the needs of the child and provide them with an appropriate service.

Professional reports and assessments regarding the child will be reviewed, as well as talking to those who are responsible for the care of the child e.g. family, carers, social worker, and other professionals who have been involved including those who have been involved in previously providing education.

We will wherever possible, accommodate parties involved in the assessment e.g. family, carers, social worker, LA, and the child (where appropriate) to have a tour of the school.

Ascertain the child's views, wishes, and feelings concerning education. At every opportunity, seek the child's voice during the assessment and process; this may include providing accessible information on the school, providing child friendly tours and taster activities, and the chance to meet and spend time with potential peers.

Classroom staff will be informed of a potential new student at the school and possibly be involved in the assessment process, including visits, where appropriate.

6. Decision Making

The Headteacher will review assessments and discuss the appropriateness of the placement ensuring that the school can effectively meet the needs and requirements of the EHCP.

Where a placement is to be offered; school leaders will make a record of the decision which will include any training or adaptations that will be required to meet the needs of the student including how these will be achieved. This decision will be recorded on the Admissions assessment.

Where we are unable to offer a placement; there are several points during the referral and assessment process where it may become clear we will be unable to offer a placement. The placing authority, and family/carers where appropriate, should be made aware of this decision in writing at the earliest opportunity. This decision should outline the reasons that a placement cannot be offered at this time.

Where a placement is offered and agreed upon by the placing authority we will:

- Remain in contact with all bodies involved whilst contracts are being agreed upon.
- Plan and coordinate a bespoke transition for the child during their admission to the school; this involves planning with staff at the school, family/carers, current school (if applicable), social worker, and other persons involved. Before and during the transition, the likes of risk assessments, health questionnaires, and other relevant documentation should be completed for the child's files.
- Classroom staff and therapeutic services staff will be involved in the transition of the child to the school; a transition plan will be created with the input of staff.

Where a placement has been agreed we will follow the following good practice guidance checklist:

- Have all relevant people been informed about the (potential) admission?
- Has the EHCP and other relevant information been collected and made available to all professionals involved?
- Do relevant staff have all the information they require to support the child and their family effectively during the transition and initial days in school?
- Have existing students been prepared for the new admission as far in advance as possible?
- Pre-admission visits – ensure the child and, if appropriate, their family are invited to at least one pre-admission visit.

7 Contract

This contract will outline the type, duration, and cost of the placement that is being offered including any outcomes to be achieved by the school.

The contract must be signed and agreed upon by all parties before admission.

The contract is reviewed on an annual basis alongside the progress monitoring of the student.

8 Admission and Pre-admission Visits

Before admission, it is often helpful for their new student, the family, and other associated professionals to visit the site. Where this occurs, the following should be planned for:

- Staff availability is vital. The Headteacher will ensure that a member of staff is nominated to introduce the child to the school, staff, and current students. A sensitive, caring approach at these times is crucial to the development of good relationships.
- Admission can be a very anxious time for a child and their family; they will be made to feel welcome and be offered refreshments. Ensure to make the classrooms warm, clean, and tidy.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that privacy for a child and their family is upheld.
- The child should have some understanding, appropriate to their age and level of development, of the aims of the placement and the future plans for them. Every effort should be made to communicate with the child to assess their wishes and feelings about the placement, their future, and any other significant matters.
- Information will need to be given (i.e. school calendar, uniform information, educational visits, and data consents) but do not assume these are understood or remembered. It will need to be repeated later. Give information in manageable amounts.
- Try to find out what the child's interests are, what they like to do and enjoy.
- All relevant documentation and information forwarded to the school before admission should be checked. An individual file will be opened to contain this and any other information. Risk assessment and behaviour management plans from previous schools should be forwarded to Ivy Lane School.
- Show the child and their family around the school, pointing out key rooms and ensure the child is made aware of the Fire Exit routes and fire drills.
- Ensure any medication is accurately recorded and stored correctly (also see Medication Policy).
- Work with all parties to develop the initial support plan – this should include an initial PBS, communication plan, and risk assessment and management plan. It will also include any practical support required by the student concerning any health needs or personal care.
- Ensure safeguarding and learner records have been transferred from the previous education – ideally these will be in place before admission, but they must have been transferred within 1 calendar week of the school place commencing. Where records aren't transferred within this timescale the headteacher will escalate with the relevant senior leadership team of the previous provision.

9 Trial Placements

Where Ivy Lane School has identified aspects of potential suitability for a student to attend the school but professionals and/or family feel the assessment will need to continue into the first months at the school a trial placement may be offered.

Exact arrangements will be child specific but will typically involve:

- Child to start placement at Ivy Lane School on an individualised transition plan as per any other placement.
- Initial academic and therapeutic assessments to be completed in an agreed timescale.
- A review will be arranged 3-4 months into the placement. At this review, the placement will either continue as planned or a 28-day notice period would be given alongside support with transitional planning.

The exact circumstances for the use of trial placements may vary. However, common examples may include:

- Where a child has been out of school for a prolonged period and their readiness for school is yet to be established.
- Where a child's exact needs are still being assessed.
- Where an assessment has shown aspects of need to be difficult to define and/or there are contradictions between presentation depending on location or circumstances.
- Where this will be the first time a child has experienced a provision, cohort and/or curriculum similar to Ivy Lane School.

Trial placements will only be considered where all parties agree that this approach is in the child's best interests to undertake this type of placement.

10 Review of Placement

Reviews of the student's placement will be completed throughout their time at the school through the use of Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings and EHCP reviews

Throughout their time at the school, each student will be reviewed regularly, and in line with the EHCP review process time scales to ensure their needs are being met and that the placement is still appropriate – this can be crucial during the early stages of the student being with the school, the transition should be reviewed to ensure it was effective and so lessons can be learned if necessary.

11 Complaints and Disputes

Complaints policy, this should be brought to the attention of interested parties during the pre-admission stage. Should a complaint wish to be made during any stage of the process, this policy should be used.

12 Monitoring and Compliance

The Headteacher will be involved throughout the process from start to end and will ensure all steps are completed throughout. Local Authorities will be communicated with throughout the process.

The Quality Team within the organisation will complete audits and reviews of the school which will include the admissions and assessment process to ensure standards remain high and to ensure all processes are followed.

13 Related Legislation and Guidance

The wants and rights of a child need to be respected at all times, however, some children may lack the capacity to understand the impact of some decisions that will affect them; for those at the school aged 16+, the Mental Capacity Act (2005) a Mental Capacity Assessment and a Best Interests Decision may need to be completed to make a decision on their behalf when they cannot do this themselves. Taking into consideration the Mental Capacity Act (2005), the Mental Capacity Act 2005 – Capacity and Consent policy

We will comply with the relevant requirement for schools as outlined within the SEND Code of Practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

We have designed our referral, assessment, and admissions process in line with key guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and Working together to safeguard Children 2018.

14 Training Consideration

All those within their roles involved in the full process will have been trained and have suitable experience to be able to complete tasks associated with their role.