Pathways School

Admissions, Charging and Remissions Policy

Policy Monitoring

Date of last review: November 2024
Reviewed by: Saima Ali Majid, Chair of Governors[1]
Neil Jones, Headteacher

Date of next review: November 2025

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedure.

[1] The Governors of Pathways School are the trustees of Positive Behaviour Support for Learning (registered charity no.1186125)

1. Introduction

Pathways School is an independent co-educational special school. Our school is equipped to support the needs of students aged 11 to 19 with autism who may have additional learning difficulties and who may also exhibit behaviours that challenge families or services.

2. Policy Aim

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity regarding the criteria for admissions for local authorities, parents/carers, and Pathways School's Admissions Panel and to ensure that processes, procedures, and decisions are fair, transparent, and consistent. This policy will outline the criteria for admissions, the admissions process, and the system for appeals.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy is written in the context of and in compliance with:

• SEND Code of Practice (2015)

• School Admissions Code (2014)

• Children and Families Act (2014)

• Equality Act (2010)

4. Links with other school policies and practices

- Fee Income and Payment Policy

5. Admission Criteria

- Students aged between 11-19 years and have a diagnosis of autism;
- Students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), naming Pathways for the child or young person's educational provision. We will also consider students who are in the process of obtaining an EHCP.

Additional Factors

The following factors will further inform whether Pathways School is a suitable placement for the child or young person:

- An appropriate peer group along with academic and social compatibility with the group will be taken into consideration;
- Where available places are not filled, the lack of an autism diagnosis will not preclude admission if the student fits the general profile of the school and the school's pre-admissions assessment indicates the ability to meet needs;
- The number of students in each year group is limited to minimise the impact of graduation on transition into and out of the school;
- If there is a secondary diagnosis, including but not limited to Down Syndrome, Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Mental Health Needs and Genetic

Disorders, consideration will be given as to whether these needs can be met within the staffing structure and expertise at the school. Should additional resource be required then the cost of placement would be adjusted accordingly;

- Consideration will be given as to whether long term medical needs can be accommodated within the staffing and provision model at the school. Medical needs requiring on site nursing care cannot usually be accommodated;
- All those with parental responsibility/Guardianship should be in support of the placement and in agreement with the approaches, values, and ethos of Pathways School. Continued support and partnership of those with parental responsibility/guardianship is essential for the success and viability of any placement. A thorough home-school agreement will be in place;
- The journey time to get to and from school will be a consideration for students. As a rule, travel time should not exceed 75 minutes. Pathways School appreciates that due to the limited nature of SEND provision, that longer journey times may be unavoidable, and so this will not necessarily preclude admission. Each application for admission is considered on an individual basis. In each case, our assessment process is required to evaluate the needs of the child or young person in line with the following factors set out in the SEND Code of Practice, 2015;
- Whether the school is suitable for the child/young person's age, ability, aptitude, and special educational needs;
- Whether attendance of the child or young person at Pathways School would be compatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources.

Pupil Admission Number (PAN): 18

6. Admissions Process

The admissions process can be initiated by either parents/carers or the placing Local Authority. Pathways School encourages parents/carers and professionals to visit the school prior to stating their preference for a placement. This enables families and professionals to consider whether the school may be a suitable placement for the child/young person concerned. We encourage families to visit a range of provisions to support them in their decision-making process. Following a visit and discussion, parents/carers will need to request that their Local Authority apply to, known as 'consult with,' us on their behalf for a place at Pathways School. Alternatively, if a local authority recognises that a child or young person's needs may be best met at Pathways School, then they will make a referral to us directly without families requesting them to do so.

The school will respond to this request within 15 days of receiving the Local Authority consultation. Pathways School's initial response is determined by the documentation received (i.e., EHCP, Annual Review reports, professional reports) and by observing and assessing the child or young person. The assessment process will involve a visit to the child/young person's current educational placement where observations will be

conducted. We will also have a discussion with staff who know the child/young person well and questionnaires may be completed at this stage.

A visit to Pathways School will also be arranged during which time the child/young person will have the opportunity to look around the setting and engage in motivating activities with Pathways School staff and students. During this visit, a senior staff member will meet with parents/carers and complete further information seeking and parental questionnaires.

Where children do not have a current school placement, arrangements will be made to visit the child or young person at home. If any aspect of Pathways School's assessment process is likely to cause distress to a child or young person (for example, if a visit to Pathways School without considerable prior planning may be aversive) then we will endeavour to work with families and placing authorities to complete a thorough assessment process with reasonable adjustments to support the child or young person concerned.

Pathways School staff will always seek to gain the views of the child or young person regarding their future educational provision wherever possible.

If assessment concludes that Pathways School feels able to meet the needs of the child or young person, then a formal offer letter will be sent to parents/carers and the placing Local Authority. The letter will stipulate time requirements for parents to accept the placement and for Local Authorities to agree or decline the placement. The placement will be offered under the terms and conditions of the National Schools Contract. If the Local Authority accept the placement, then Pathways School will be named on the child or young person's EHCP. Pathways School assumes that by being named on an EHCP, the placing Local Authority have agreed funding for the school place. If the Local Authority do not agree to the school place, then parents/carers have the right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

Once a placement and start date has been agreed the process of planning transition and induction into Pathways School will be initiated

7. New Student Transition

When a place has been confirmed and the funding agreed by the local authority, Pathways School will:

- Send out pre-admission information forms to the parent/carer to complete and return. The fully completed forms must be returned at least two weeks in advance of the start date.
- Send out visual supplements e.g., photographs/video of the school, the student's classroom, and teachers.
- Allocate a lead practitioner to be the point of contact for parents/carers during the transition process. The lead practitioner will work with the student, family, existing placement and placing authority to develop a personalised transition plan to ensure that transition into Pathways School is as smooth as possible for the child or young person concerned.

8. Over-subscription Criteria

The Oversubscription criteria will comply with the School Admissions Code (December 2014) and specifically paragraph 1.7 and 1.8. If the school is oversubscribed, the priority for admission will be given to those children/young people who meet the criteria below:

1. Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children (as defined in paragraph 1.7 of the School Admissions Code.
2. And thereafter, the full, half or step siblings who are twins or children from a multiple birth or existing students, living permanently at the same address.
3. And thereafter, the full, half or step siblings of existing students living permanently at the same address.
4. And thereafter, the qualifying children of staff who have sufficient service under paragraph 1.39a of the School Admissions Code.
5. And thereafter, children of UK service personnel in accordance with paragraph 2.18 of the School Admissions Code.
6. And thereafter, children as defined under paragraph 1.39a of the School Admission Code, who are eligible for student premium.
7. And thereafter, children as defined under paragraph 1.39a of the School Admissions Code, who are eligible for service premium.
8. And thereafter, children who are twins or children from a multiple birth.
9. Lastly, distance from school as defined by time using route planner software from home postcode to school postcode. Where two applications are equally ranked within an individual category, a tie break situation will occur. The tie-break priority will be decided on a combination of the individual category 1 to 9 and category.
10. Where the least distance will have the higher priority. Where the distance between the two children's/young person's home and the school is the same, a random allocation will be used as a tie break. This process will be independently verified.

9. Waiting list

A waiting list will be established if student numbers have reached PAN plus the oversubscription criteria.

Pathways School will maintain a clear, fair, and objective waiting list in ranked order in accordance with the oversubscription criteria above. When a place becomes available the relevant family and Local Authority will be notified.

10. Tribunals

Pathways School can support SEND Tribunal appeals, however, the number of tribunal cases undertaken by the school will be limited at any one time due to the requirement to hold school places open for extended periods of time. It may,

therefore, be possible that the school is unable to support a tribunal appeal at a given time.

11. Emergency Admissions

Due to the need our children and young people have for a planned transition, we do not take emergency admissions. However, we endeavour to work as responsively as possible with Local Authorities and with families to provide a start date as soon as is feasible, considering the needs of the incoming student and their families and balancing this with the needs of the existing students at Pathways School.

12. Appeals

Admissions appeals will be considered by the Pathways School independent Appeals Panel and conducted in accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the School Admissions Code (December 2012). Should a parent or carer be dissatisfied with the decision of the Admissions Panel in relation to offering a place to a child or young person at Pathways School, an appeal may be made in writing to the Positive Behaviour Support for Learning (The proprietor) stating the grounds for appeal.

Appeal Process

1. Appeal to a decision offering a place to a child at Pathways School received.
2. A hearing will be convened within ten working days of receipt of the appeal.
3. Appeals will be heard by an appeal panel comprising two members of the Pathways School Governors and one independent panel member.
4. The hearing will examine in further detail a. The context of the original decision b. Any additional evidence that may support the appeal (parent, LA, medical professional etc.) The appeal panel will then form a final response, after consideration of all supporting evidence. The decision of the appeal panel will be final.
5. The minutes from the appeal hearing will be sent to the parent/carer and local authority within ten working days.

13. Funding, Contracts & Fees

- All places at Pathways School will be offered under the terms and conditions of the National Schools Contract.
- All students attending Pathways School are funded by the Local Authority in which they reside, and it is therefore, essential to have agreement in writing from the placing Local Authority to fund the School Placement.
- Contractually, all students will receive a range of supports. Additional reasonable services will be provided to enable Pathways School to meet additional specific individual needs as specified in the EHCP or agreed by the Local Authority following the school's pre-placement assessment. These services will be confirmed prior to the contract being issued.
- Complex medical procedures that require additional support and training to nonmedical staff will be considered through a joint meeting between senior

School staff and appropriate medical professionals. Should Pathways School feel able to meet a given need, there will be a tiered system for allocating the additional costings required to support high health needs.

- Highly specialist dietary needs can be supported but may require additional funding. Dietetic support must remain the responsibility of the Placing Authority.

14. Charging and Remissions

During the school's day, all activities that are a necessary part of the curriculum will be provided free of charge as this is included within the fee paid for the education placement. This includes any materials, equipment and transport to take children and young people between the school and the activity. There will be no charge for any activity that is an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination or accredited course of study.

Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school's day which entail additional costs, for example visits to a museum. In these circumstances no child or young person will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not contribute. (If insufficient funds are available, it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities).

From time to time we may invite a non-educational organisation to arrange an activity during the school's day. Such organisations may charge the school who may then ask parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution. Again, no child or young person will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not contribute. (If insufficient funds are available, it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities).

Optional activities outside of the school day

We will charge for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school's day, for example a visit to the theatre. Such activities are not part of the curriculum nor are they part of an examination syllabus.

If an activity happens partly inside the school's day and partly outside of it, there will be no charge if most of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school's day. Conversely, if the bigger proportion of time spent falls outside of the normal day, charges may be made. When such activities are arranged, parents/carers will be told how the charges are calculated.

Residential Visits

Charges will be made towards board and lodging, except for children or young people whose parents/carers are in receipt of eligible benefits, however, no child or young person will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not contribute. On such occasions, donations from funders may enable the school to heavily subsidise educational visits and significantly reduce the charge to parents/carers.

15. Notice of Withdrawl

In the event that a student is to be withdrawn from the School, written notice must be provided by the parent(s)/carer(s) or the placing Local Authority. A minimum of one full term's notice, in writing, is required, to be received by the Headteacher on or before the first day of the final term of attendance. Where such notice is not received, fees in lieu of notice will be charged. This period allows the School to plan appropriately for staffing, resources, and transition arrangements for the pupil.