

Admissions

POLICY STATEMENT

- Oakwood Specialist College provides education for young people aged 16 – 25 years with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This policy provides a summary of the College's admissions processes to ensure that all stakeholders understand this process and the activities therein.
- The policy outlines the needs that can be met safely at Oakwood Specialist College according to the specialisms, expertise, and environments we provide. Whilst it does not serve as an exhaustive list, recognising that each Learner is an individual with their own specific needs, it details the kinds of needs that the college would not be able to support safely.

Document Control

Policy Code:	OSC 1	Policy Owner:	Abbie Heard
Version:	26.09_1.05	Policy Author(s):	Abbie Heard Esther Williams
Date ratified:	September 2026		
Review Frequency:	Annual		
Next review date:	September 2027	Ratifying Committee:	PRG

Document History (last 3 versions)

Date of Issue	Version No.	Person(s) responsible for change	Nature of Change
September 2026	V1.04	Abbie Heard	Annual Review
August 2025	V1.03	Abbie Heard	Annual Review and KCSIE update
August 2024	V1.02	Abbie Heard	KCSIE updates
March 2024	V1.01	Abbie Heard	New policy

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1. Scope

1.1 Who do we support?

- 1.1.1 Oakwood Specialist College provides team member expertise and specialist facilities to meet the needs of Learners with a range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), particularly those associated with developmental delay and difficulties in the areas of communication and emotional regulation.
- 1.1.2 Learners may have an identified condition such as Autism, Down's Syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Attachment Disorder or a complex profile with conditions that co-exist with one or more special educational need or mental health difficulties.
- 1.1.3 The College is unlikely to be able to offer a place to an applicant whose needs could not be catered for within the facilities available or whose condition or behaviour would pose an unacceptable threat to the welfare, health and safety of the College's Learners or team members. Such needs would be identified within our initial assessment process.
- 1.1.4 Examples may include those with profound and complex physical needs, serious eating disorders, those with a history of serious substance or drug misuse, harmful sexualised behaviours, or those with a known history of serious violence towards others.

2. Admissions Process

2.1 Stage 1: The Consultation Process

- 2.1.1 Oakwood Specialist College will consider all consultations for a placement that are received from a local authority. In most cases, consultations will be expected, and the young person will be known to the college. The young person and or their parent/carer may have visited a college campus or discussed a potential placement with the Head of Admissions. Often the college will already have lots of information about the young person and their needs and aspirations, may have met them at the college or in their previous setting, or attended transition reviews. This enables the college to respond to the consultation outlining what the college can offer. This is known as the 'consultation response'.
- 2.1.2 Occasionally, consultations are received for placements for young people that are not known to the college. In this case, the College will initially review the information within the EHCP to assess suitability against the criteria outlined in section 2. The Head of Admissions or a member of the campus management team may communicate with the Learners previous setting, parents/carers, and other stakeholders to gain further information.
- 2.1.3 The Head of Admissions will consider the needs highlighted in the EHCP and in other supporting documentation and propose whether the college could meet the Learner's needs effectively and safely. The Head of Admissions will then liaise with the campus management team of the relevant campus to agree suitability before providing a consultation response.

2.2 Stage 2: Assessment Process Prior to Consultation Response

- 2.2.1 All Learners will require an assessment as part of the admission process to enable the college to better understand their specific needs and how/if they can be met. The assessments vary in formality and activity depending on whether the young person is known to the college prior to receipt of the consultation.
- 2.2.2 Where parents/carers or other representatives engage directly with the college prior to the consultation being received an assessment may include an onsite visit, a taster day, or a visit to see them in their current setting or at home.
- 2.2.3 Where a consultation is received for a Learner not known to the college, or where the EHCP and supporting information identifies a need to be explored further a more formal assessment may be required.
- 2.2.4 Additional assessment information may also be requested from the Learner's previous educational setting such as:
- Current care, health, educational plans, or relevant personal needs if available.
 - Details of any on-going safeguarding or behavioural concerns which makes the Learner particularly vulnerable or may potentially impact on the safety of other Learners.
 - Achievements
 - Most recent annual review

- Current/most recent Therapeutic Management Plans and risk assessment(s)
- Any additional professional reports (e.g., psychology, speech and language, psychiatry, paediatrics, occupational therapy, YOT, CAMHS etc.)
- Attendance information.
- Exclusion/suspension history.
- Current support plans.
- Relevant health care plans

2.2.5 We understand that there may be situations where we need to adjust this process on an individual basis. For example, if, a parent or carer, feels that a visit to the college would cause too much anxiety, then the young person could be observed in their own current setting on another occasion, where they would feel more at ease. It is essential for parents/carers and the young person that this first experience with the college is positive and successful and therefore the processes are flexible and respond to differing needs where required.

2.2.6 The college will not make a placement offer or admit any Learner unless they have met with them as part of the assessment process and validated that their current presentation/needs meets the information shared/received from engagement with families and external agencies/providers.

2.3 Stage 3: Responding To the Consultation

2.3.1 The Head of Admissions will determine through discussion with the relevant campus management team whether the college is able to meet the young person's needs.

2.3.2 If the placement suitability is agreed, the Head of Admissions will respond to the consultation providing the details of how the young person's needs will be met, and the details of costings associated with the placement.

2.3.3 At this stage, the college must wait for confirmation from the local authority that the placement has been agreed before proceeding.

2.4 Stage 4: Transition

2.4.1 Where a placement is confirmed in advance of the academic year commencing, Learners may be invited into college for transition visits through the summer term. Transition visits may vary in length and structure depending on the needs of the Learner.

2.4.2 Where a placement is agreed after the summer term has finished, individual transition plans may be made with the Learner to visit during the holidays or for a reduced attendance pattern in the first few weeks of term.

2.4.3 In some cases, a more gradual and individualised transition plan may be required. This could include reduced attendance patterns, off-site activities and home visits. These are time limited and are arranged on an individual basis. In most cases we find that Learner's transition confidently into the new environment at the start of a new term.

- 2.4.4 The College gathers and maintains admission records and Learner information and will ensure that all relevant documentation (contracts, permissions, medical information, and consent etc.) have been signed by the appropriate parent/carer/local authority representative prior to admission of the young person. It is expected that contractual arrangements between the setting and the placing authority are approved before the admission of any young person.
- 2.4.5 An individual risk assessment and therapeutic management plan will be created prior to admission. All these documents will be reviewed regularly once the young person arrives. Initial baseline assessments start as soon as a Learner starts college. The length of time required to complete this assessment will vary, but it is usually completed within 6 weeks. Parental/Carer information, teacher observation and assessments carried out by appropriate professionals will contribute to this process.
- 2.4.6 The Learner's study programme overview (SPO) will then be created and shared with the young person and parents/carers. This is reviewed termly and supported by regular progress reports which inform adaptations to the SPO throughout the Learner's journey.
- 2.4.7 Annual reviews are conducted every year as required by the SEND Code of Practice.
- 2.4.8 The parent/carer or Local Authority is responsible for making transport arrangements and will inform the college accordingly.

3. Additional Information

3.1 Oversubscription Criteria

3.1.1 The college works closely with the Local Authorities to manage admissions and applications. Where the college has vacancies and can meet need, a placement will be offered.

3.1.2 Where there are more applicants than vacancies, places will be prioritised according to the admissions criteria and Learners may be placed on a waiting list when no places are available. The college will set out a clear rationale for why there are no Learner placements available and that to support further admissions above the agreed capacity would place the service at risk of operating beyond the capacity and resources required to safely meet learner needs.

3.2 Appeals

3.2.1 When a decision is made that the college cannot meet the needs of a young person, feedback will be provided within the consultation response to the Local Authority.

3.2.2 If the Local Authority decides not to name the college in a young person's EHCP, the parents/carers may wish to appeal the decision and should refer directly to their Local Authority to inform them of their intent to appeal the decision.

3.2.3 This process also applies to Learners whose referral is subject to the SEN tribunal process. The college, if requested to do so by an advocate or solicitor, will endeavour to provide all assessments and reports prior to the tribunal hearing.

3.3 Communication and Confidentiality

3.3.1 All decisions regarding the placement at the college are confidential. The Local Authority will be kept up to date and there will be regular communication with parents, carers, and advocates.

4. **Legislative Framework**

4.1.1 This policy has been drawn up based on law and guidance, namely:

- Equality Act, 2010
- Children Act, 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- The Disability Equality Duty, 2006
- Human Rights Act, 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE 2026
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years, DfE January 2015
- Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked- after children, DfE, Feb 2018
- Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents, and carers 2024
- Working together to safeguard children 2026