

Policy Name	Admissions and Assessments Policy
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Contents	
1	Aims
2	Admissions Criteria
3	Referral Pathway
4	Assessments Pathway
5	Trial Placements
6	Admissions Register and Safeguarding Transfer
7	Fair Access Protocols & Looked After Children (LAC)
8	Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Aims

New Avenue School is registered for up to 20 pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and associated complex needs, with a specialist focus on pupils experiencing high levels of anxiety and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

This policy sets out a clear, fair, and legally compliant admissions process that is transparent for Local Authorities, parents/carers, and professional partners. It ensures that admissions and assessments are:

- Consistent with our therapeutic approach, personalised learning model, and EHCP alignment.
- Conducted in the best interests of the pupil, considering both needs and cohort balance.
- Fully compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements.

The policy is guided by:

- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Education (Independent School Standards) 2025, Part 3 (Welfare, health and safety of pupils)
- DfE Fair Access Protocols (FAPs)
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (2006, as amended 2024)

2. Admissions Criteria

New Avenue School admits pupils who have, or are in the process of securing, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), where the primary need is SEMH with high levels of anxiety and/or Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

We also support pupils with associated or co-occurring needs, where anxiety/EBSA is the most significant barrier to education:

- Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- ADHD

- Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Sensory Processing Difficulties
- Trauma-related emotional or social difficulties

Admissions decisions consider:

- The extent to which the school's therapeutic model and phased reintegration approaches can meet the pupil's needs.
- The balance and safety of the cohort, including peer dynamics and safeguarding risks.
- The availability of staffing, expertise, and therapeutic provision to support personalised learning.
- The pupil's EHCP outcomes and whether these can be delivered effectively within the school's provision.
- Safeguarding factors, including risks of absconding, online harm, or vulnerability linked to anxiety/EBSA.

3. Referrals Pathway

Referrals are welcomed from Local Authorities, parents/carers, Virtual Schools, and professionals.

3.1 Initial Enquiries

- All stakeholders are encouraged to visit the school to meet with the Head of Operations and/or Headteacher to discuss suitability.
- Visits provide an opportunity to explain the school's therapeutic model, phased admissions process, and EBSA-sensitive practice.

3.2 Formal Referral

- Upon receipt of a formal Local Authority referral, the Senior Leadership Team will:
 - Review the pupil's EHCP and professional reports.
 - Analyse attendance history and evidence of anxiety/EBSA presentation.
 - Review safeguarding information, including any risks of absconding, online harm, or exploitation.
 - Consider whether the school can meet identified EHCP outcomes.
 - Assess potential impact on the wider pupil cohort.

3.3 Decision-Making

- Admissions decisions are made collectively by the SLT, ensuring evidence-based judgment.
- Where needs cannot be met, the Local Authority and parents/carers will receive a written rationale, with reference to the specific factors.
- Decisions are guided by:
 - KCSIE 2025 (safeguarding duties, particularly for pupils with social workers and LAC/PLAC).
 - Working Together 2023 (multi-agency planning where needs exceed school capacity).
 - The school's duty to ensure the safety, welfare, and effective learning of all pupils.

4. Assessment Pathway

Every admission assessment is designed to determine whether New Avenue School can meet the pupil's educational, therapeutic, and safeguarding needs, with particular focus on anxiety and EBSA presentation.

4.1 Information Gathering

- Review of the EHCP, including outcomes and provision specified.
- Analysis of prior reports (educational psychology, therapy, CAMHS, attendance records).
- Discussions with professionals and previous settings to understand what has and has not supported the pupil.
- Engagement with parents/carers to gather insights into anxiety triggers, coping strategies, and attendance barriers.

4.2 Safeguarding Considerations

- Identification of safeguarding risks, including:
 - Absconding, particularly where anxiety or EBSA is linked to avoidance behaviours.

- Online safety risks, including over-reliance on devices during periods of non-attendance.
- Contextual safeguarding factors, such as risks in the home or community.
- DSL oversight of all safeguarding-related information to ensure compliance with KCSIE 2025.

4.3 Phased and Therapeutic Trial Options

- A standard 2-day trial placement may be adapted for pupils with EBSA, for example:
 - Shorter sessions across multiple days.
 - Gradual introductions to different environments and staff.
 - Supported transitions from home to school.
- Trials are designed to assess not just academic access but the pupil's capacity to re-engage with education in a therapeutic setting.

4.4 Final Review

- Following the trial, the Senior Leadership Team reviews all evidence, including trial feedback, safeguarding information, and professional advice.
- The decision is communicated in writing to the Local Authority and parents/carers.
- Where a place cannot be offered, a rationale will be provided that references both educational provision and safeguarding considerations.

5. Trial Placements

Trial placements are an important part of the admissions process, giving the pupil, family, and school an opportunity to assess suitability in a real setting.

5.1 Risk Assessment

- A written risk assessment is completed before any trial placement.
- This assessment covers:
 - Safeguarding and supervision arrangements.
 - Absconding risks, particularly for pupils with EBSA or high anxiety.
 - Peer group dynamics, to ensure compatibility and safety.
 - Online safety considerations, including personal device use during trial sessions.
- The risk assessment is signed off by the DSL and Headteacher (or delegated senior leader).

5.2 EBSA-Sensitive Practice

- For pupils with high anxiety or EBSA, trial placements may be phased and flexible, for example:
 - Short sessions with gradual increase in time spent at school.
 - Supported arrivals with parents/carers or trusted adults.
 - A gradual introduction to peers and staff.
- The purpose of the trial is to assess the pupil's capacity to tolerate and re-engage with school routines, not to test full-time attendance.

5.3 Monitoring

- A named staff member monitors the trial, observing academic engagement, emotional regulation, social interaction, and safeguarding indicators.
- Daily check-ins with the pupil and parents/carers are recorded.
- Any emerging safeguarding or EBSA risks are reported immediately to the DSL.

5.4 Decision-Making

- Following the trial, the Senior Leadership Team reviews evidence, including staff observations, safeguarding considerations, and parent/carer feedback.
- Decisions are made transparently, with written confirmation provided to the Local Authority and parents/carers.
- Where a place is not offered, the rationale will reference both educational provision and safeguarding/EBSA considerations.

6. Admissions Register and Safeguarding Transfer

6.1 Admissions Register

- The school maintains an Admissions Register in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (as amended 2024).
- All pupils admitted are placed on the register from their first agreed day of attendance, whether full-time or phased (e.g. EBSA reintegration).
- Any pupil removed from roll is reported to the Local Authority within 5 days, including the reason for removal and the pupil's onward destination, where known.
- Pupils on phased timetables are still recorded on roll, with attendance codes reflecting transition arrangements.

6.2 Safeguarding Records Transfer

- In line with KCSIE 2025, safeguarding records must be transferred securely:
 - Within 5 school days for in-year transfers.
 - Within 10 school days for new admissions at standard transition points.
- Transfers are carried out securely, with confirmation of receipt requested from the receiving school or provision.
- Where records are not received, the DSL will escalate with the previous setting and Local Authority until resolved.

6.3 EBSA and Vulnerable Pupils

- For pupils admitted with high anxiety, EBSA, or other safeguarding vulnerabilities, safeguarding records are reviewed on arrival by the DSL.
- Risk assessments and Individual Support Plans (ISPs) are updated immediately to reflect safeguarding history and attendance patterns.
- If records indicate previous non-attendance or absconding, additional controls are put in place (e.g. daily check-ins, parent/carers communication, phased start risk assessment).

7. Fair Access Protocols & Looked After Children (LAC)

7.1 Fair Access Protocols

- New Avenue School works in partnership with Local Authorities to support Fair Access Protocols (FAPs), ensuring that unplaced pupils with SEMH and related needs are given priority consideration.
- Referrals made under FAP are subject to the same assessment and safeguarding processes as standard admissions, with particular focus on:
 - Cohort balance and safeguarding risks.
 - The pupil's attendance history and EBSA presentation.
 - Suitability of therapeutic provision and phased reintegration options.
- Decisions are made transparently and shared with the Local Authority and parents/carers.

7.2 Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

- In line with statutory guidance, Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are given priority in admissions.
- The school works closely with:
 - Virtual Schools to coordinate education plans and ensure EHCP outcomes are aligned.
 - Social care teams and carers to ensure safeguarding arrangements are fully understood and in place from the start of placement.
 - The DSL to review and update safeguarding risk assessments before the pupil's first day on roll.

7.3 Safeguarding Duties

- Admissions decisions for LAC/PLAC pupils are overseen by the DSL to ensure safeguarding risks are identified and mitigated.
- Where a pupil has EBSA or high-anxiety needs, the school will implement additional transitional support, such as phased starts or increased key adult availability.
- Risk assessments and ISPs are reviewed termly with input from Virtual Schools and social care.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 Oversight

- The **Headteacher** and **Head of Operations** has overall responsibility for monitoring admissions and assessments.
- The **DSL** monitors safeguarding and EBSA-related risks within the admissions process.
- The **governing board** receives termly reports on:
 - Referrals and admissions decisions.
 - Pupil profiles, including levels of anxiety and EBSA presentation.
 - Safeguarding record transfers and compliance with statutory timescales.
 - Cohort balance and capacity planning.

8.2 Evaluation

- The effectiveness of admissions and assessment processes is evaluated through:
 - Evidence of successful reintegration for EBSA pupils.
 - Feedback from pupils, parents/carers, and referring Local Authorities.
 - Analysis of attendance and safeguarding data during pupils' first term.
 - Quality of communication and partnership working with professionals.
- Findings are reported to governors and used to refine future admissions practice.

8.3 Continuous Improvement

- Admissions procedures are reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory requirements change (e.g. updates to KCSIE, ISS, or Working Together).
- Lessons learned from individual cases are incorporated into future practice.
- Governor scrutiny ensures that decisions remain transparent, equitable, and aligned to the school's therapeutic, EBSA-focused provision.

Updates

Dates	Comments
17.02.25	FAP Added; Transfer of Safeguarding updated
01.07.25	Interim update: minor adjustments to referral language; added EBSA reference
16.09.25	Full policy review: updated Sections 1–8 to align with ISS 2025, KCSIE 2025, Working Together 2023, and Pupil Registration Regulations (2006, amended 2024). Admissions criteria revised to reflect EBSA/high-anxiety focus (PDA removed). Strengthened referral, assessment, and trial processes with DSL oversight and safeguarding risk assessments. Added statutory safeguarding record transfer timelines and governor oversight of admissions decisions.