Admissions Policy

Reference Number	SO-0230
Version Number	5.5
Latest Revision	October 2025
Policy Owner	Education Directorate
Ratified by Board	November 2024
Next Review	October 2026

Contents

Purpose 2
Scope 2
Policy summary 2
Operational delivery 2
Evaluation of policy 6
Impact assessment 6

Purpose

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 NAS independent special schools (not part of section 41).
- Initial assessments are conducted consistently and in a manner that will ensure needs of an applicant can be effectively met.

Scope

This policy applies to all NAS Independent schools:

- Radlett Lodge School
- Robert Ogden School
- Sybil Elgar School
- Helen Allison School

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.

Operational delivery

Referrals

All prospective pupils must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names a NAS special school to be admitted by the relevant school.

As NAS special schools cater solely for children with Autism / Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis (ASD), our special schools invite referrals for children with an EHCP, or on pathway to be issued one which contains a diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis as the primary diagnosis. Appropriate funding should also be in place through the relevant statutory placing authority for the placement.

Our schools wish for parents to be supportive of a placement, and for parents and the placing authority to therefore agree to the school being the proposed named provider in the EHCP.

Referral Procedure

1. Parents who wish to consider a day placement at an NAS school for their child are encouraged to visit the relevant school in advance of requesting the school on their child's EHCP. Our schools are also able to give parents information regarding the school's assessment and admission process on enquiry to our school.

   Note: our schools will take referrals and organise admissions assessments at any point in an academic year. Intake is not restricted to September only.

2. We encourage all prospective parents to engage in a dialogue with their LA early on if considering a placement at an NAS school. All referrals should be made directly to the relevant school from Local Authorities (LA). Parents who express an interest in a place at one of our special schools are therefore referred to the relevant 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 relevant school's system.

4. The relevant placing LA will send information about the prospective pupil to the relevant school. The school will review the pupil's papers, draft EHCP and supporting documentation and determine the position regarding the proposed placement. The school will also consider:
   - If they are suitable for the young person's age, ability, aptitude or Special Educational Needs (SEN);
   - If the placement at the school is compatible with the efficient use of resources or the efficient education of others.

   If, following scrutiny of the received paperwork, it is likely that the placement may be suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude or SEN and attendance would not be incompatible with the efficient education of others or the efficient use of resources, the school may decide to arrange to meet and observe/assess the prospective pupil. This may be:

   - in their current school (preferred option in most cases);
   - In the home setting (if it is in the home setting then two members of staff will visit as per the Home Visits policy).

5. Where additional information is required and/or the initial assessment is inconclusive, 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.

NB: The National Autistic Society 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.

Admissions

Prior to considering a NAS school as a potential placement, as well as viewing our websites, parents are welcome and encouraged to visit our NAS schools. Parents can be provided with information about the school of interest, however the school cannot proceed with an admission without LA support: as noted above, all prospective pupils must have an EHCP that proposes to name a NAS special school to be admitted.

Admission to a NAS school should be suitable for the young person's age, ability, aptitude or SEN, and not incompatible with the efficient use of resources or the efficient education of others. As such, admission should not, for example, be detrimental to the needs of pupils already on the school's roll (considering, for example, compatibility with peer group and current class dynamics, compatibility with the curriculum and learning environment and pupil safety) and should be suitable in light of the child's SEN, given our schools specialism for children with autism/ASD.

It is essential that admissions are properly planned and where an NAS school is named on an EHCP, allow for a smooth transition from the previous educational establishment or provision.

Any referral to a National Autistic Society school that highlights or includes the need for seclusion or segregation as part of their education package should be referred to the Director of Education before a placement is offered.

Admissions Procedure

1. The relevant school will liaise with the LA regarding the proposed naming of the school in the EHCP. In doing so, the school (under points 4 and 5 of the Referral Procedure), will have due regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years.

2. Where the school is named on the child's EHCP, this will be confirmed in writing with the placing LA, suitability of pupil placement assessed, and a start date will be confirmed with the LA.

3. After this, 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 typically consist of two

members of the senior leadership team meeting with parents / carers to 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
- parents' aspirations for the future

4. Transition plans will be made with the LA, the current school placement and the parent/carer.

5. Prior to admission, the Principal will ensure that the school has the following up to date information:
    - communication profile and / or previous communication reports
    - whether the pupil is looked after and if so the name of the contact person and key personnel in the placing authority
    - name and contact details of the pupil's parents or guardians
    - final EHCP
    - current care, health, educational plans or relevant personal needs if available
    - details of any matter which makes the pupil particularly vulnerable or a danger to themselves and/or others

6. Where parents/carers are considering complementary or supplementary treatments this should be discussed with the Principal in advance of the pupil's start date.

7. 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.)

Note: The parents/carers or LA are responsible for making transport arrangements with the parents 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.

Any admission to an NAS special school, irrespective of whether it is an emergency admission, should be suitable for the young person's age, ability, aptitude or SEN, and not be incompatible with the efficient use of resources or the efficient education of others.

A review meeting is initiated as soon as possible and usually within four weeks after any emergency admission to review the placement.

Admissions Panel

The role of the admissions panel includes:

- Providing advice and support to the relevant school, following a referral from a placing LA for a young person who would like a placement at one of the NAS special schools
- Ensuring that at least two members of the admissions panel are available to take part in the formal consultation process
- Holding a panel review of a placement (i.e. once a child has joined the school), which may be held between 8 and 12 weeks of a pupil joining a NAS special school.

Members of the admissions panel for NAS Schools and Children's Services may include:

- Director, NAS Education and Children's Services
- Safeguarding Lead and Nominated Individual (Chair)
- The lead assessor of the individual
- 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.

Evaluation of policy

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

Impact assessment

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014