



Underley Garden

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Reviewed	Sept 2025
Review Date	Sept 2026

Rationale

Underley Garden is a residential school for boys and girls aged 5 to 19; all of our pupils have significant barriers to learning due to their complex learning difficulties and disabilities in the area of autism spectrum disorder, learning difficulties, associated social, emotional and mental health conditions and medical and health issues. All pupils have, or are in the process of getting an Education and Health Care Plan which notes the nature of these difficulties. Such difficulties may have in the past resulted in long absences from school, and/or the individual experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety. Therefore, the school acknowledges that our pupils may, from time to time, exhibit challenging behaviours that vary both in intensity and duration.

The range and nature of both the difficulties and needs our pupils exhibit can be very complex, as does the assessment of these. Thus, it is important that the school seeks to ensure that the admission process accurately identifies the needs of pupils and whether it is possible for the school to meet these both effectively and efficiently.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the school admits, as far as is possible, those pupils whose special educational needs can be met effectively and in doing so ensure progress in all aspects of their development.

Objectives

The objectives of the policy are that:

- All concerned will have a clear understanding of the criteria used in assessing the appropriateness of a placement for individual pupils at The School
- All concerned will have a clear understanding of the processes of judging the appropriateness of that placement
- Parents/carers, each pupil and representatives of Local Authorities (LAs), social service departments and other interested professionals have clear understanding of the opportunities on offer at The School
- Parents/Carers, each pupil and representatives of LA's, social services departments and other interested professionals understand all key aspects of school life at The School and are prepared to play their part in ensuring the success of any placement

Admissions Process

Stage 1

Referrals made to School will normally be made by LAs. A range of detailed information concerning that pupil should accompany these referrals. Where this is not the case, the school will seek access to such information as soon as possible, including information regarding the individual's Education, Health and Social background. Senior staff will analyse all available information on the pupil to assess whether the pupil meets the admission criteria for the school.

The Headteacher and registered managers will assess whether or not the school can meet the pupils needs and if so, arrange for a visit to the school.

Stage 2

The visit will include:

- a tour of the school
- an introduction to key staff
- a discussion with senior staff concerning such issues as the school curriculum and the content of key school policies
- a discussion regarding qualifications and accreditation with senior staff
- An opportunity for each visitor to ask any questions they may have

Visitors will also receive (if they have not already) a copy of the school's statement of purpose in the form of any marketing materials, and key policies (safeguarding, behaviour, curriculum, complaints) can be made available if requested.

Stage 3

If, following these visits, all concerned are agreed that the pupil's needs can be met at the school and that the young person can be adequately managed with the planned resources available and that the pupil and parents/carers are committed to the placement, the school will write to the LA offering a place and arrangements will be made for admission.

Admission Criteria

- The pupil will be aged between 5 and 19 years
- The pupil will have an EHCP
- The plan will specify the special educational needs of the individual pupil
- The pupil may have learning difficulties and/or low attainment that are associated with their ASD and/or behavioural difficulties.
- The pupil may have one or more specific learning difficulties
- The pupil's parents/carers will express a commitment to the placement.
- Where appropriate, the pupil will express a commitment to the placement

The LA will:

- Provide the school with all current advice and information concerning the pupil
- Name the school in Section I of the EHC Plan
- Agree contractual arrangements for transporting the pupil to and from school
- Make or sub-contract to the school any arrangements for transporting the pupil to and from school.

Off-Rolling

Off-rolling is the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without using a permanent exclusion, when the removal is primarily in the best interests of the school, rather than the best interests of the pupil. This includes pressuring a parent to remove their child from the school roll. There is no legal definition of off-rolling, and while it may not always be unlawful, **Underley Garden is committed to never engaging in the off-rolling of pupils.** Where we feel a change of placement is in the best interests of a pupil, we will always discuss this with parents and Local Authorities, and will always go through the Annual or Interim Review process. Please also see the school's Exclusion Policy, which is the other correct, official route we may need to go down.

There are many reasons pupils leave school. They might move house, leave the country, or move to another, closer school when a place becomes available. Of course, none of these things is off-rolling.

- Other pupils might leave to be home educated. Again, where this is a parent's clear choice, without pressure from the school, it is not off-rolling.
- Dual-registering a pupil with another school such as an alternative provider is also not off-rolling. This is because the pupil has not left the roll of their school. The statutory guidance on alternative provision makes it clear that pupils should be dual-registered if they are attending AP.
- 'Managed moves' from one school to another as an alternative to exclusion can sometimes be effective in breaking the cycle of poor pupil behaviour. If these moves are used in pupils' best interests, with the agreement of everyone involved within the statutory guidance, then again, this is not off-rolling.
- Some pupils are permanently excluded. But as long as headteachers have followed the relevant legislation and statutory guidance, this is not off-rolling. Schools must be able to exclude pupils where necessary, and we support schools using exclusions as part of their behaviour policy and as a last resort.