



ENSE 03

Admissions Policy and Procedure

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1. Purpose and scope

King Edwin School is an independent special school supporting children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and associated special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This policy sets out a fair, transparent, child-centred and safeguarding-led process for considering referrals, consulting on placements, planning admission and reviewing suitability after admission.

The policy applies to all referrals and admissions to King Edwin School, including local-authority commissioned placements and any time-limited assessment or transition arrangements that fall within the school's registered provision. It does not replace a local authority's statutory duties in relation to Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment, EHC plans, annual review, reassessment or placement decisions.

Core principle

Admission decisions will focus on whether King Edwin School can safely and effectively meet the individual child or young person's needs within the school's registered provision, having regard to their EHC plan or other available evidence, the views of the child and parent/carer, safeguarding information, equality duties, the needs and safety of the existing school community, and the resources and adjustments reasonably available.

2. Legal and regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared with regard to the legal and regulatory framework applicable to independent special schools in England. It should be interpreted alongside the most current versions of relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended;
- Department for Education, Independent School Standards Guidance (April 2026);
- Children and Families Act 2014, including the statutory framework for EHC plans and, where applicable, section 41 approved institutions;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, as applicable;
- Equality Act 2010, including the duties not to discriminate and to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE);
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and Working Together to Improve School Attendance, as current;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR; and
- DfE requirements concerning registration and material changes for independent schools.

Where legislation or statutory guidance changes during the life of this policy, the school will follow the current legal requirements and will update this policy as soon as reasonably practicable.

3. School status and admissions authority

The proprietor and admissions authority for King Edwin School is Spark of Genius Northeast. The school will operate within its current Department for Education registration, including its approved age range, capacity, gender of entry, boarding status (if applicable) and categories of special educational needs admissions.

No admission arrangement will be used to implement a material change to the school's registered details without the required prior approval from the Secretary of State. The Principal will ensure that proposed admissions remain consistent with the school's registration and available provision.

4. Admissions principles

King Edwin School is committed to an admissions process that is:

- child-centred, with the welfare and best interests of the child or young person central to decision-making;
- evidence-based and informed by the EHC plan, professional reports, educational history, safeguarding information and direct discussion with the child, family and professionals;
- fair, transparent and free from unlawful discrimination;
- inclusive, with reasonable adjustments considered where a disabled child or young person would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage;
- safeguarding-led, with relevant information obtained and shared in a timely and secure manner;
- collaborative, involving the placing local authority, parents/carers, the child or young person and relevant agencies; and
- planned so that transition is as safe, predictable and positive as possible.

King Edwin School will not refuse admission for a reason that amounts to unlawful discrimination. The school will consider reasonable adjustments on an individual basis. Nothing in this policy requires the school to admit outside its registered provision or to state that it can meet needs where the evidence indicates that it cannot safely or effectively do so.

5. Referral routes and initial information

Referrals are normally received from local authorities seeking specialist provision for a child or young person whose needs cannot appropriately be met in their current setting or for whom King Edwin School is being considered through the EHC plan process. The school may receive referrals from a range of local authorities.

The school will ask the referring/placing authority for sufficient current information to make an informed consultation response. This should normally include, where available and relevant:

- current EHC plan, including appendices and professional advice;

- latest annual review, reassessment information and proposed amendments;
- educational history, attendance information, attainment and progress data;
- current provision, interventions, reasonable adjustments and support strategies;
- behaviour support information and records relevant to safety, including risk assessments and restrictive intervention information where applicable;
- safeguarding and child protection information necessary for safe planning, including involvement of children's social care or other agencies;
- health, medication, therapy and individual healthcare information relevant to school provision;
- communication, sensory, mobility, personal care and accessibility needs;
- transport considerations where relevant;
- the child or young person's views, aspirations and preferences; and
- parent/carer views and any information they wish the school to consider.

A lack of information will not be treated as evidence that a need or risk does not exist. Where information is incomplete, the school will seek clarification from the local authority or relevant professional before reaching a final view where this is necessary to make a safe and lawful decision.

6. Consultation and suitability assessment

6.1 Consultation panel

On receipt of a referral, the child or young person's documentation will be reviewed by an appropriate consultation panel. This will normally include the Principal, Assistant Principal and other members of the senior leadership or specialist team according to the pupil's age, needs and the part of the school being considered. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), SEN leadership, therapy/clinical staff or other relevant colleagues will be involved where the information indicates that their expertise is required.

6.2 Matters considered

The panel will consider the whole picture rather than a single diagnosis, behaviour or incident. Its consideration will include:

- whether the school's registered provision is appropriate for the child or young person;
- whether the school can deliver the special educational provision described in the EHC plan or otherwise identified through consultation;
- reasonable adjustments that could remove or reduce disability-related disadvantage;
- safeguarding, health and safety, staffing, environmental and specialist support requirements;
- compatibility of the proposed placement with the efficient education and safety of the child and other pupils, considered on the individual evidence and after reasonable adjustments have been explored;
- whether additional information, observation, professional discussion or assessment is required; and
- whether a planned transition can be designed to support successful admission.

6.3 Consultation response

The school will provide the local authority with a clear consultation response within the timescale requested where reasonably practicable. The response will state whether the school considers that it can meet need and will identify any material conditions, information gaps, additional resources, commissioning arrangements or transition requirements that need to be resolved. Where the school does not consider itself suitable, the response will explain the relevant evidence and reasons rather than relying on a generic statement.

7. Visits, pupil and parent/carers involvement

Where the school considers that it may be able to meet need, professionals, parents/carers and the child or young person will normally be invited to visit King Edwin School. The purpose of the visit is to support informed decision-making, enable questions to be answered and help all parties understand the school's environment, curriculum, support model and expectations.

The child or young person's views will be sought in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding, communication profile and needs. Communication aids, additional processing time, familiar adults or other reasonable adjustments will be used where appropriate. The school will also seek and record the views of parents/carers and relevant professionals.

A visit does not itself constitute an offer or guarantee of a placement. Equally, a child's disability-related presentation during a visit will not be treated in isolation from the wider evidence and consideration of reasonable adjustments.

8. Home visits and information gathering

As part of the referral and admission process, a home visit may be undertaken by school staff where this would support assessment, transition or relationship-building. This provides parents/carers with an opportunity to share information about the child or young person and enables staff to explain key school arrangements.

Where relevant, staff may discuss the school's positive behaviour support approach, including Team Teach and the school's policy on restrictive interventions. Any use of reasonable force or restrictive intervention will be governed by law, statutory guidance and school policy; parental discussion or acknowledgement does not replace the school's legal duties or create blanket consent to restrictive intervention.

Medication, health needs and healthcare arrangements will also be discussed where relevant. Required information and authorisations will be obtained in accordance with the school's medication and supporting pupils with medical conditions procedures.

If a home visit is not undertaken, parents/carers will complete the school's induction documentation during the transition/admission process.

9. Multi-agency planning and observation

Before admission, the school may request or convene a multi-agency meeting where the child or young person's needs, safeguarding circumstances, health needs, risk profile or transition arrangements require coordinated planning. Relevant professionals from education, health, social care and other agencies will be invited as appropriate, together with the parent/carer and the child or young person where suitable.

If the child or young person is attending another education setting, a King Edwin School staff member may, with the agreement of the placing authority and current setting, observe them in that environment. The purpose of observation is to understand successful strategies, communication, regulation, learning and support needs; it will not be used as a stand-alone admissions test.

10. Safeguarding before and during admission

Safeguarding is integral to admission and transition. The school will have regard to KCSIE 2026 and its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy throughout the process.

Before the child or young person starts, the school will seek the safeguarding information reasonably required to plan safely. The DSL or deputy will liaise with the previous setting, local authority, social worker and other agencies where appropriate. Where a pupil transfers from another school or college, child protection records should be transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file in accordance with KCSIE and local procedures, with confirmation of receipt where appropriate.

Where there are immediate safeguarding concerns, admission planning will not delay necessary referrals to children's social care, the police or other safeguarding partners. Transition arrangements may include a pupil-specific safeguarding plan, risk assessment, supervision arrangements, transport plan, online safety measures, missing-from-education considerations or other controls according to need.

11. Equality, disability and reasonable adjustments

King Edwin School will comply with the Equality Act 2010 in its admissions arrangements. No child or young person will be treated less favourably in the admissions process because of a protected characteristic in circumstances prohibited by law.

For disabled children and young people, the school will consider reasonable adjustments to policies, practices, communication, staffing arrangements, equipment, auxiliary aids and the physical or sensory environment where these are required to avoid substantial disadvantage. The assessment of reasonableness will be individual and evidence-based.

The school will not use a diagnosis, disability, communication difference, behaviour arising from disability, care status, previous exclusion or safeguarding history as an automatic bar to admission. Such information may, however, be relevant to an individual assessment of whether needs can be safely and effectively met and what provision or adjustments would be required.

12. EHC plans and placement decisions

All pupils admitted to King Edwin School are expected to have an EHC plan. Where the school is consulted about being named in an EHC plan, it will respond to the local authority in accordance with the applicable statutory process. The local authority remains responsible for statutory EHC needs assessment, plan maintenance, review, amendment and placement decisions.

King Edwin School is not an approved institution under section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

The school will not represent an internal assessment placement or internal review as a substitute for a statutory EHC needs assessment, reassessment or annual review.

13. Placement confirmation, funding and transport

A place will normally be treated as confirmed only when the placing authority has completed the relevant placement/commissioning process, the school has confirmed that it can admit within its registered provision, funding and any additional resource arrangements have been agreed, and an agreed start date and transition plan are in place.

The placing authority is responsible for determining and arranging home-to-school transport where it has a statutory or discretionary duty to do so. King Edwin School will cooperate with transport planning and share relevant safety information on a need-to-know basis. Transport arrangements should be confirmed to the school and parent/carer before admission wherever possible.

14. Assessment and transition placements

In some circumstances, a local authority may request a time-limited assessment or transition placement. Such arrangements will only be accepted where they are lawful, fall within the school's registered provision and are supported by clear written commissioning arrangements.

Before an assessment placement begins, the school and placing authority should agree its purpose, expected duration, funding, information to be gathered, review points, safeguarding and risk arrangements, and how the outcome will feed into any statutory EHC process. The school will provide an evidence-based report within the agreed timescale.

Where appropriate, a pupil admitted to King Edwin School may undergo an initial assessment period, normally up to ten school weeks, to refine the school's understanding of learning, communication, regulation, health, social and support needs. This is an educational baseline and transition review; it does not disapply or replace statutory review arrangements.

15. Transition and induction

Transition will be personalised according to the child or young person's needs. It may include:

- one or more introductory visits, with duration increased gradually where appropriate;

- a transition booklet, photographs, visual timetable, social story or virtual information;
- identified key adults and opportunities to build relationships before the start date;
- information exchange with the previous setting and professionals;
- baseline assessment and communication/sensory planning;
- medication and healthcare arrangements;
- behaviour support, regulation and risk planning;
- personal care or accessibility arrangements;
- transport familiarisation where required; and
- planned contact with parents/carers during the early weeks of placement.

The school will avoid unnecessary delay once a placement has been agreed, while ensuring that essential safeguarding, health and safety arrangements are in place before attendance begins.

16. Initial review and ongoing suitability

During the early weeks of placement, staff will monitor attendance, engagement, learning, regulation, relationships, safeguarding, health and the effectiveness of agreed provision and reasonable adjustments. Where required, an interim review may be convened at or around the end of the initial ten-week assessment period. If the placement is progressing as expected and no significant new needs have emerged, a separate interim meeting may not be necessary.

If material information emerges after admission that was not available during consultation, or if the pupil's needs change significantly, the school will not automatically terminate the placement. The Principal will ensure that the evidence is reviewed promptly with the placing local authority, parent/carer, child or young person and relevant professionals. The school will consider further assessment, reasonable adjustments, additional provision, risk controls, funding/resource changes and whether an early or emergency EHC plan review is required.

Where, after this process, the school considers that it can no longer safely or effectively meet need, it will set out its concerns and evidence to the local authority and participate in the statutory review and placement-planning process. Any ending of placement will be managed lawfully, safely and in accordance with the EHC plan framework, commissioning agreement and safeguarding duties. The school will support an orderly transition and transfer of records to the next provision.

17. Attendance and children missing education

Once admitted, pupils will be entered on the admission register in accordance with the legal requirements applicable to independent schools. Attendance will be monitored from the first expected day. Unexplained absence, non-attendance during transition and concerns that a child may be missing education will be addressed promptly under the school's Attendance and Children Missing Education procedures, with safeguarding action taken where required.

The school will make the required notifications to the local authority when pupils are added to or removed from the admission register in circumstances prescribed by law and will cooperate with the placing authority to avoid children becoming lost from education during placement changes.

18. Data protection, confidentiality and record keeping

Information obtained through referral and admission will be processed lawfully, fairly, securely and only for legitimate educational, safeguarding, health, commissioning and statutory purposes. Access will be limited to staff and professionals who need the information to carry out their role.

The school will keep a clear record of consultation information, decision-making, reasons for its response, agreed adjustments/resources, transition planning and significant communications. Safeguarding records will be managed separately and in accordance with KCSIE, the school's safeguarding policy and records retention arrangements.

19. Complaints and concerns about the process

Parents/carers who are concerned about the way King Edwin School has conducted its own admissions or transition process should raise the matter with the Principal in the first instance and may use the school's Complaints Policy where appropriate. The school complaints process cannot determine or overturn decisions that are legally the responsibility of a local authority, tribunal or other statutory body.

Where a concern relates to an EHC plan, local-authority placement decision, statutory timescale or SEND disagreement, the local authority should provide information about the relevant disagreement resolution, mediation and appeal routes.

20. Roles and responsibilities

20.1 Proprietor

Spark of Genius Northeast will ensure that the school operates within its registration, meets applicable Independent School Standards, has appropriate admissions governance and reviews this policy at least annually or following significant legal/regulatory change.

20.2 Principal

The Principal is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy, oversight of consultation decisions, ensuring appropriate professional involvement, confirming that placements fall within registered provision and escalating material concerns to the proprietor and placing authority.

20.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will advise on safeguarding information, transfer of child protection records, multi-agency liaison and any pupil-specific safeguarding or transition plan required before or after admission.

20.4 Staff involved in consultation and transition

Staff will consider evidence objectively, maintain confidentiality, record decisions appropriately, seek the child and family's views and ensure that agreed adjustments and transition arrangements are communicated to relevant colleagues.

21. Related school policies

This policy should be read alongside current versions of the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Single Equality / Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Accessibility Plan;
- Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy, including restrictive intervention arrangements;
- Attendance and Children Missing Education procedures;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions / Medication Policy;
- Data Protection and Records Management policies;
- Complaints Policy; and
- Health and Safety and relevant risk assessment procedures.

22. Monitoring and review

The Principal will monitor the operation of this policy and report significant admissions, placement or compliance issues to the proprietor. The policy will be formally reviewed at least annually and sooner where there is a change to legislation, statutory guidance, the Independent School Standards, the school's registered provision or commissioning arrangements.

23. Admissions procedure: summary flow

Step	Stage	Key action
1	Referral received	Local authority supplies EHC plan and relevant education, safeguarding, health and professional information.
2	Initial screening	School checks registration, age/SEND fit, information sufficiency and immediate safeguarding considerations.
3	Consultation panel	Principal/Assistant Principal and relevant specialists assess whether needs can be met and what adjustments/resources are required.
4	Further information	School seeks clarification, professional discussion, observation, home visit or multi-agency meeting where needed.
5	Child/family involvement	Pupil and parents/carers visit where appropriate; views, communication needs and transition priorities are recorded.
6	Consultation response	School provides the local authority with a reasoned response, including any required provision, resources or transition conditions.
7	Placement confirmation	Local authority completes placement/commissioning arrangements; funding, transport and start date are agreed.
8	Safeguarding transfer	DSL ensures essential safeguarding information and records are obtained/transferred securely before or promptly after admission.
9	Transition and admission	Personalised induction begins; pupil is placed on the admission register from the appropriate date.
10	Early review	School monitors the placement and completes initial assessment/interim review where required; statutory EHC review routes are used for significant concerns.

