ADMISSIONS POLICY

Considering needs. Working in partnership.
Supporting successful placement.



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

This policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework
and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures and guidance.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

OUR COMMITMENT

At Riverside Bridge School, every policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, every voice matters and every family is respected and supported.

Our policies translate our values into consistent practice. They support high expectations, clear responsibilities, effective partnership and informed decision-making, ensuring that the needs, rights, wellbeing and future outcomes of our pupils remain at the heart of our work.

We work collaboratively, act with integrity and continually reflect upon and improve our practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Our Policy Principles underpin how we work together and guide the decisions and actions we take to support every pupil and their families.



POLICY PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK

Riverside Bridge School policies set out the expectations, responsibilities and approaches that support safe, consistent and high-quality practice across the school. They translate our values, statutory responsibilities and professional expectations into clear guidance for everyday decision-making and practice.

Each policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures, statutory guidance and school frameworks referenced within the document.

Policies apply to the members of the school community identified within each document, including staff, governors, parents and carers, volunteers, contractors and other professionals where relevant. Everyone is expected to understand and apply the requirements appropriate to their role and to seek further guidance where clarification is required.

CURRICULUM DRIVERS



Our Drivers provide a shared golden thread across curriculum, school life, policy and leadership, helping ensure that our decisions and practice remain focused on the experiences and futures we want for every pupil.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy sets out Riverside Bridge School's approach to admissions and consultation for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). It explains the principles, responsibilities and arrangements through which the school contributes professional advice to the statutory placement process and supports successful transition where Riverside Bridge School is named within a pupil's EHCP.

At Riverside Bridge School, we recognise that identifying an appropriate educational placement is a significant decision for children and young people with complex SEND and their families. Every consultation is therefore considered carefully, individually and objectively, with the pupil's identified needs, communication, safety, wellbeing, learning and future outcomes at the centre of professional consideration.

Riverside Bridge School is a specialist setting for pupils aged 4 to 19 with severe, profound and complex learning needs. Our provision is highly personalised and pathway-based, and pupils may require significant adaptations, specialist communication approaches, therapeutic input, health support, individualised staffing and carefully structured environments. A consultation must therefore consider not only whether the school broadly supports pupils with a particular diagnosis or area of need, but whether Riverside Bridge School can deliver the provision required by the individual pupil within an appropriate and sustainable educational environment.

Riverside Bridge School is **not the admissions authority** for pupils with EHCPs. Decisions about whether the school is named in Section I of an EHCP are made by the relevant Local Authority or, where applicable, the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability). The school's responsibility is to provide clear, evidence-informed professional advice when consulted and to work constructively with the statutory decision-making process.

In responding to consultation, the school considers the information available within the EHCP and supporting professional evidence, the provision required to meet the pupil's needs, the suitability of the proposed learning environment, safeguarding and health considerations, and the school's ability to provide the required education safely and effectively. Consideration will also be given to the statutory tests relating to the efficient education of other pupils and the efficient use of resources where applicable.

Consultation responses are not based upon diagnosis alone. Pupils with similar diagnoses can have significantly different communication, cognitive, sensory, physical, medical and developmental profiles. Riverside Bridge School therefore considers each pupil as an individual and seeks further information or professional discussion where the evidence provided is insufficient to reach an informed view.

Families are important partners throughout this process. We aim to communicate respectfully and transparently, provide opportunities for families to understand the school's specialist provision and support constructive dialogue with the Local Authority. A visit to the school or discussion with staff supports understanding of the provision but does not constitute an offer of a place.

Where Riverside Bridge School is named within a final EHCP, the focus moves from consultation to admission and transition. Planning is personalised to the pupil and may involve liaison with families, the current setting, health and therapy professionals, the Local Authority and other agencies so that communication, healthcare, safeguarding, transport, equipment, staffing and transition arrangements are considered before admission.

Our responsibility to pupils, families and the school community

Riverside Bridge School has a responsibility to contribute to the admissions process fairly, professionally and transparently while providing accurate professional advice about the school's capacity to meet individual pupils' needs.

In fulfilling this responsibility, we will:

- consider every consultation individually and objectively;
- base professional advice upon the pupil's identified needs and the evidence available;
- avoid making decisions based solely upon diagnosis or broad categories of SEND;
- consider whether the provision specified within the EHCP can be delivered appropriately;
- work collaboratively with Local Authorities, families, current settings and partner professionals;
- request additional information where this is necessary to reach an informed professional view;
- consider safeguarding, health, communication, learning, sensory, physical and regulation needs;
- provide consultation responses within statutory or Local Authority timescales wherever reasonably practicable;
- distinguish clearly between professional consultation advice and the statutory decision about placement;
- communicate respectfully with families throughout the process;
- support personalised transition where Riverside Bridge School is named as the placement;
- review admissions practice to ensure that it remains lawful, fair, transparent and responsive to the changing profile of the school.

Through these commitments, we aim to ensure that admissions and consultations are managed with professional rigour, respect and a clear focus upon securing appropriate educational provision and successful outcomes for every pupil.

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APPROVED BY:
Governing Board

APPROVED ON:
September 2026

REVIEWED DUE ON:
September 2027

Section 01

SCOPE

Clarifying responsibility. Defining application. Supporting lawful practice.

This policy applies to all consultations received by Riverside Bridge School relating to the admission of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or those undergoing statutory assessment where consultation with the school is appropriate.

The policy explains Riverside Bridge School's role within the statutory admissions process and should be read alongside the relevant legislation, the SEND Code of Practice and the Local Authority's admissions arrangements.

Riverside Bridge School is not the admissions authority. Decisions regarding the placement of pupils with an EHCP are made by the relevant Local Authority, or by the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) where applicable.

The school's role is to provide objective, evidence-based professional advice in response to consultation requests to assist the Local Authority in reaching its statutory decision.

This policy applies equally to consultations from the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and from other Local Authorities where Riverside Bridge School is being considered as a potential placement.

Section 02

LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Understanding duties. Applying guidance. Supporting lawful decisions.

Riverside Bridge School operates within the statutory framework governing the education of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The school's role within the admissions process is undertaken in accordance with current legislation, statutory guidance and Local Authority procedures.

This policy should be read alongside, and implemented in accordance with, the following legislation and guidance:

- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0–25 years (2015);
- Equality Act 2010;
- Education Act 1996;
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- relevant statutory admissions guidance where applicable, issued by the Department for Education and the Local Authority.

Riverside Bridge School recognises the statutory responsibilities of Local Authorities in relation to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and works collaboratively with commissioning authorities to ensure consultation responses are evidence-based, timely and focused on securing the most appropriate educational provision for each child or young person.

Section 03

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clarifying roles. Sharing information. Supporting decisions

Effective admissions rely upon close partnership between families, Local Authorities, professionals and the school. Each organisation has distinct statutory responsibilities within the admissions process.

The Local Authority is responsible for:

- undertaking statutory Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments;
- consulting Riverside Bridge School where appropriate;
- considering the professional advice provided by the school and other agencies;
- determining whether Riverside Bridge School should be named in Section I of the EHCP;
- issuing and maintaining the Education, Health and Care Plan;
- commissioning and funding the agreed educational placement in accordance with statutory requirements.

Riverside Bridge School contributes to the statutory admissions process by providing objective, evidence-based professional advice in response to consultation requests.

The school will:

- review all consultation documentation received from the Local Authority;
- consider whether the school can meet the child's identified special educational needs;
- evaluate whether placement would be compatible with the efficient education of other pupils;
- consider whether placement would represent an efficient use of resources;
- assess the availability of an appropriate class group, staffing and specialist provision;
- undertake observations or discussions with the current setting where appropriate;
- respond to consultations within published timescales wherever reasonably possible;
- support transition planning where the Local Authority names Riverside Bridge School in the final EHCP.

The school does not determine admissions and cannot offer places independently of the statutory EHCP process.

Parents and Carers are central partners throughout the admissions process. Families are encouraged to:

- work collaboratively with the Local Authority and the school;
- share relevant information regarding their child's strengths, needs and aspirations;
- participate in visits and transition activities where Riverside Bridge School becomes the named placement;
- discuss any questions or concerns openly throughout the consultation process;

Partner Professionals

Education, health and social care professionals contribute specialist advice that assists both the Local Authority and Riverside Bridge School in understanding the child's needs and determining the most appropriate educational provision.

Section 04

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL PROVISION

Understanding provision. Matching need. Maintaining sustainability.

Riverside Bridge School is an all-through special school providing education for children and young people aged 4 to 19 years with severe, profound and complex learning needs. The school is part of Partnership Learning and delivers highly specialised provision designed to enable every pupil to achieve their individual potential.

The school supports pupils with a wide range of needs, including those with:

- severe, profound and complex learning difficulties;
- autism and social communication differences;
- speech, language and communication needs;
- sensory processing differences;
- physical disabilities;
- complex medical needs;
- sensory impairments;
- associated emotional and regulation needs.

Provision is delivered through a multidisciplinary approach that combines high-quality teaching with therapeutic support, personalised learning and preparation for adulthood. The curriculum is organised through the school's specialist pathways, ensuring that teaching, communication approaches and therapeutic support are matched to each pupil's stage of development and individual profile.

The school benefits from specialist teaching staff, therapists, healthcare professionals and support staff who work collaboratively with families and external agencies to provide an integrated approach to education, health and care. As a specialist setting, Riverside Bridge School carefully considers every consultation individually to ensure that, where placement is agreed by the Local Authority, the school can provide an appropriate, safe and sustainable educational experience for both the individual pupil and the wider school community.

Section 05

ADMISSION PRINCIPLES

Considering individually. Advising objectively. Acting transparently.

Every consultation received by Riverside Bridge School is considered individually, fairly and objectively.

The school is committed to providing professional advice that is evidence-based, transparent and centred upon the individual needs of the child or young person.

In responding to consultations, the school is guided by the following principles:

- the child's needs remain central to all professional consideration;
- decisions are informed by available evidence and specialist professional advice;
- the school works collaboratively with families, Local Authorities and partner agencies;
- every consultation is considered on its individual merits;
- inclusion is balanced with the school's responsibility to provide safe, effective education for all pupils;
- professional advice reflects the school's ability to deliver the provision specified within the EHCP;
- consideration is given to the efficient education of other pupils and the efficient use of resources in accordance with statutory legislation;
- transition planning should support children and families to experience a positive start where placement is agreed.

These principles underpin every consultation response provided by Riverside Bridge School and ensure that professional advice is consistent, transparent and aligned with statutory responsibilities.

Section 06

REFERRALS AND CONSULTATIONS

Gathering evidence. Understanding need. Informing consideration.

Children and young people are considered for placement at Riverside Bridge School through the statutory Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment and consultation process. The school does not accept direct applications for admission.
Consultations are normally received from the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD) or another Local Authority where Riverside Bridge School is being considered as a potential placement. Each consultation is accompanied by the relevant Education, Health and Care documentation and supporting professional reports.

The school expects to receive sufficient information to enable an informed professional response. This may include:

- the draft or final Education, Health and Care Plan;
- professional advice and assessments;
- educational reports;
- therapy reports;
- medical information;
- positive support, regulation and risk information where appropriate;
- current attainment and progress information;
- any other documentation relevant to the child's identified needs.

Where information is incomplete or insufficient to reach an informed professional view, the school may request additional information from the consulting Local Authority before providing its response.

Where appropriate, Riverside Bridge School may arrange discussions with the child's current setting or undertake an observation visit to further understand the child's strengths, needs and educational presentation. This forms part of the school's professional consultation process and does not indicate that a placement has been agreed.

Section 07

CONSULTATION AND PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATION

Reviewing evidence. Applying professional judgement. Responding clearly.

Riverside Bridge School contributes to the statutory admissions process by providing an objective, evidence-based professional response to consultation requests received from Local Authorities.

Every consultation is considered individually, recognising that no two children or young people present with identical strengths, needs or educational profiles.

Receiving the consultation

Upon receipt of a consultation request, the school will review the documentation provided by the Local Authority. This will normally include the Education, Health and Care Plan (or draft plan), professional reports and any supporting evidence relevant to the child's identified needs.

Where information is insufficient to enable an informed professional response, the school may request additional documentation or clarification from the consulting Local Authority before completing its response.

Professional consideration

Consultation responses are informed through careful consideration of the available evidence and, where appropriate, discussion with the child's current educational setting or observation of the child within their existing environment.

In preparing a professional response, the school may consider:

- the child's identified special educational needs;
- the provision specified, or expected to be specified, within the Education, Health and Care Plan;
- communication, learning, physical, sensory, medical and therapeutic needs;
- emotional regulation, positive support requirements and identified risks;

- the suitability and capacity of the available learning environment, including the needs, developmental profile and safe education of the existing pupil cohort;
- the age and developmental profile of the existing cohort;
- staffing levels, specialist expertise and available resources;
- the school's ability to deliver the provision required;
- health, safety and safeguarding considerations;
- compatibility with the efficient education of other pupils;
- the efficient use of resources, in accordance with statutory legislation.

Each consultation is considered on its individual merits, taking account of the evidence available at the time of consultation.

Consultation response

Following professional consideration, Riverside Bridge School will provide a written response to the consulting Local Authority within the published consultation timescales wherever reasonably possible.

The school's response will provide professional advice regarding its ability to meet the child's identified needs within its specialist provision. This advice is intended to support the Local Authority's statutory decision-making and does not constitute an offer of a school place.

The decision regarding whether Riverside Bridge School is named within Section I of an Education, Health and Care Plan remains the responsibility of the Local Authority or, where applicable, the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

Section 08

TRANSITION ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Planning carefully. Building familiarity. Supporting a positive start.

Where Riverside Bridge School is named within a child's final Education, Health and Care Plan, the school will work collaboratively with the family, Local Authority, current setting and partner professionals to plan a successful transition.

Our transition process is designed to ensure that children and young people experience a positive, well-planned introduction to school, recognising that careful preparation supports emotional wellbeing, communication, engagement and successful learning.

Transition arrangements may include:

- liaison with the current educational setting;
- observation visits where appropriate;
- meetings with parents, carers and relevant professionals;
- home visits where appropriate;
- transition visits to Riverside Bridge School;
- sharing of communication profiles, healthcare plans, risk assessments and therapeutic information;
- preparation of personalised resources, communication systems and specialist equipment;
- transport planning with the Local Authority;
- phased or individualised transition arrangements where these are considered to be in the child's best interests.

Parents and carers will receive a comprehensive new starter information pack containing key information about school routines, transport arrangements, uniform, communication systems, consent forms, medical information and other documentation required before admission.

A start date will be agreed following confirmation of placement by the Local Authority and completion of the essential planning required to support a safe and appropriate admission. Outstanding administrative documentation will be followed up proportionately and should not create unnecessary barriers to admission.

Section 09

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Reviewing practice. Learning from outcomes. Strengthening consistency.

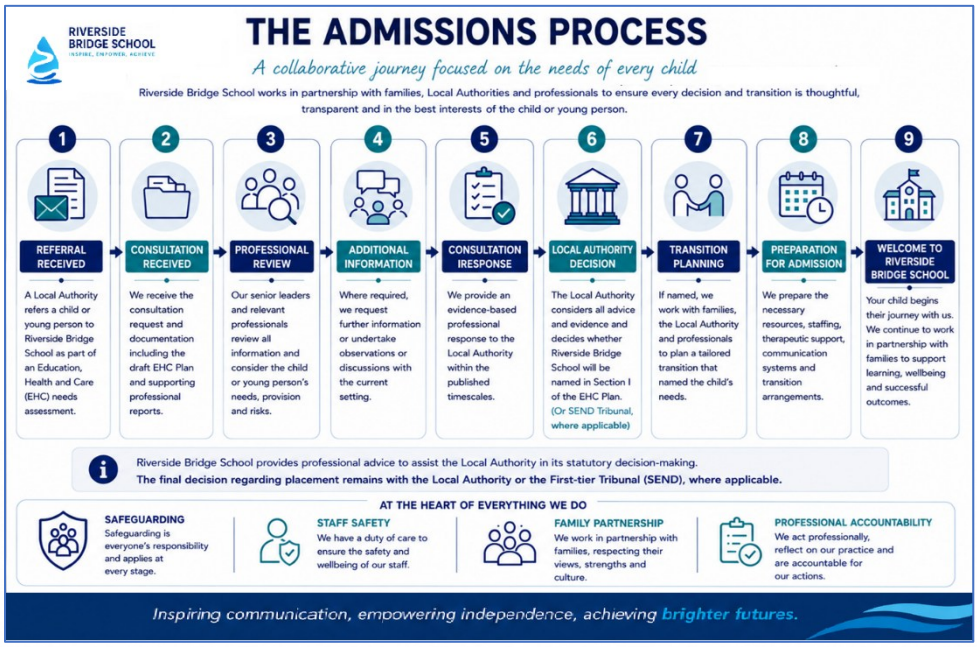
The Governing Board is responsible for approving this policy and monitoring its implementation to ensure that Riverside Bridge School continues to fulfil its responsibilities within the statutory admissions process.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that consultation responses are evidence-based, professionally informed and completed in accordance with statutory guidance, Local Authority procedures and Trust requirements.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored through:

- quality assurance of consultation responses;
- review of admissions and transition arrangements;
- feedback from families and Local Authorities, where appropriate;
- analysis of consultation outcomes;
- monitoring of tribunal outcomes and associated learning;
- regular review of statutory guidance and Local Authority procedures.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance, Trust requirements or operational practice require amendment.



Section 09

RELATED POLICIES & FRAMEWORKS

Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

This policy should be read alongside the following documents:

- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Positive Support Policy
- Medical Needs, Medication and Allergy Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Home-School Communication Policy
- Parent Partnership Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Preparing for Adulthood Policy