



**First Thought
Independent School**

FIRST THOUGHT CARE SERVICES

Admissions Policy

2024-2025

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FTIS: ADMISSIONS POLICY

Policy Statement

As an Independent School, First Thought Independent School determines its own admission arrangements. We cater for pupils aged 5 – 11. All our pupils have special educational needs and an EHC plan – these needs include:

- Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASC) – Support Level 2 or 3
- Complex Needs

In addition to these special educational needs, we know that pupils may also:

- be non-verbal or have limited speech
- have sensory issues
- have other co-existing conditions
- present challenging behaviour
- have had significant gaps in their education
- have had multiple exclusions from mainstream education
- have suffered various traumas

Based on these needs we expect that the majority of our pupils will be working consistently and over time at or below the earliest reaches of the national curriculum.

Our school is an inclusive school that welcomes children from diverse backgrounds and abilities whom it can effectively support. Pupils are admitted by referral from local authority commissioners.

Entry is subject to an interview, review of the pupil's EHCP, an assessment of needs and the school's capability to support those needs.

Pupils are encouraged to progress through the school at the best of their ability. Reviews of the children's progress will be monitored carefully, and any concerns about this progress will be raised with parents and carers. It is expected that children at First Thought Independent School will conduct themselves with positive application. Should their behaviour be impacting negatively on their own progress, or that of other pupils, then the school will reserve the right to recommend an alternative education. This will be done as a last resort when the school can no longer meet the needs of the pupil – because for those who are at the school as part of their social care placement, losing their place at the school can cause them to lose their placement in the care home. All referrals will be treated on merit and in a sensitive manner.

The Aims of this Policy

- To ensure compliance with the school's purpose
- To outline the criteria that will be used to assess referrals and admit pupils who can benefit from our school's provision
- To identify pupils whose academic and other abilities will enable them to benefit from the opportunities the school has to offer and to contribute to the school community.

Equal Treatment

First Thought Independent School is committed to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality for pupils, staff and others who use our school facilities. All pupils are given every opportunity to achieve the highest standards by:

- taking account of their varied experiences and needs
- offering a broad and balanced curriculum
- having high expectations for all pupils

The school complies with all current legislation concerning discrimination and promotes best practice in equality of treatment. This policy accords with the Equality Act 2010.

Disability

We will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the school's culture, policies, and procedures are made accessible to children with disabilities. When a disability need is made known to us, we will consult with parents and make reasonable adjustments to our admissions procedures to enable a pupil, if he/she is able, to satisfy our admission requirements. Our Accessibility plan outlines how our school intends, over time, to increase accessibility to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information so that all pupils/pupils with a disability can take full advantage of their education and associated opportunities.

Procedures

Consultation and Referral

Consultations are welcomed from Local Authorities. Upon receipt of a consultation, it is triaged by the Head of School and Assistant Head (SENCo & Inclusion). As much information as possible is sought at the point of referral to determine whether the school is an appropriate placement. This helps to establish whether the school can meet the pupil's needs and to identify any barriers to learning, well-being or belonging so that plans can be made to reduce or remove these.

Pre-Admission Assessment

The school's pre-admission assessment process begins with a review of the pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and any supporting documentation provided by the Local Authority, including (where available):

- Educational Psychology report
- Autism diagnosis documentation
- Previous school information
- Speech and Language Therapy report
- Occupational Therapy report
- Behaviour Support report
- Other relevant medical or social care reports

Using this information, the school undertakes an initial desk assessment to evaluate the extent to which it can meet the pupil's learning, communication, sensory, physical and emotional needs.

Parent/Carer Visit

If the referral appears appropriate, parents/carers are invited to visit the school to discuss their child's needs and tour the provision. This visit allows staff to understand the pupil's profile more fully and provides parents/carers with an opportunity to see the learning environment and ask questions about the support available.

Placement and Transition

Following a positive visit, the school liaises with the Local Authority and family to agree next steps. This may include a short taster session or a phased transition prior to full admission. Some pupils may be able to access a full-time timetable immediately, while others may require a transitional plan. Transitional plans are developed collaboratively and reviewed regularly with all stakeholders.

Induction and Baseline Assessment

During the initial induction period (typically the first two weeks), staff complete a series of informal and structured assessments to establish baseline academic, communication and behavioural information. This understanding informs each pupil's individual profile, learning plan and support strategies. The Assistant Head (SENCo & Inclusion) maintains ongoing liaison with parents, previous schools and other professionals to ensure a smooth and well-supported transition.

Responsibility for Admissions

The Head of School is responsible for admissions and the operation of this policy. The selection criteria and interview procedure are determined and reviewed from time to time. Documents supporting each application for admission, together with selection and interview notes are retained by the schools until an applicant is no longer of school age, whether the applicant is offered a place.

Pupils from non-EU countries

It is the responsibility of the parents and/or carers to obtain the necessary child pupil visa for their child to be able to study in the UK.

Duties of the School Selection Process

The conditions for admission are that:

- The pupil is of the appropriate age.
- The pupils primary need (stated on their EHC plan) is one of the three the school is prepared to support.
- The pupil enjoys satisfactory general health and if they have any medical conditions, the school is in a position to support them
- The pupils previous school reports attitudes and conduct that the school is prepared to support.
- A positive interview.

Admission will not be affected by belonging to any of the relevant protected characteristics specified by the Equality Act (2010).

The Offer of a Place

Referring bodies are informed in writing whether a place is being offered after the parent/carers visit to the school. The school will inform the local authority if it is established that the will not be able to meet need.

Siblings

First Thought Independent School will consider admitting siblings of current pupils, so long as any special circumstances (such as learning difficulties or special needs) can be catered for at the school.

Disclosures

Parents/carers must disclose, as soon as possible, any known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties. Where relevant they will be asked to complete the relevant documentation if they require medication which needs to be administered during the school day.

Admissions Register

According to the requirements of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 First Thought Independent School keeps an admissions' register for pupils. The register has the following information:

- full name.
- name the pupil uses at school.
- sex.
- address.
- the full name and address of each of the pupil's parents.
- which of the pupil's parents, if any, the pupil normally lives with and at least one telephone number by which each such parent can be contacted in an emergency. The Department's advice is that where reasonably practicable, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person for each pupil.
- day, month and year of birth.
- day, month and year of the pupil's starting day at the school.
- name and address of the last school the pupil attended, if any.

We will enter a pupil on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which we have agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

We will notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register providing them with all the information on our admissions register. This will be done for pupils joining the school at non-standard transition points. Since most of our pupils are referred to us by our local authority, this will only be done for pupils who have been referred by local authorities other than our own and any other sources.

When amendments to the admissions register are made, the following details will be recorded:

- the original entry.
- the amended entry.
- the reason for the amendment.
- the date on which the amendment was made.
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Where a parent of a pupil informs the school that the pupil will live at another address, whether in addition to or instead of the address at which the pupil currently lives, we will ensure that the admission register contains:

- the address.
- the full name of each parent the pupil will normally live with.
- the date when the pupil will start normally living there.

Where a person with control of a pupil's attendance has told the school that the pupil is or will be attending another school, we will ensure that the admission register contains:

- the name of the other school.
- the date when the pupil began or will begin attending that school.

This also applies where the school itself is requiring the pupil to attend another school, for example to receive education intended to improve their behaviour (off site direction).

Deleting a pupil from the admissions register - We will inform the local authority within 5 days of any intended deletion from the admissions register. Pupils can only be removed from the register for the reasons outlined in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 – see appendix 1

When we notify the local authority that a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, as set out in regulation 13(4) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, we will provide the local authority with the following information about the pupil from the admission register:

- full name.
- address.
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with.
- at least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency.
- if applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there.
- if applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school.
- the reason set out in regulation 9(1) or (3) under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register.

We understand that we cannot retrospectively delete a pupil's name from the admission register or attendance register. The admission register and attendance register must be an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. A pupil's attendance must be recorded up until the date that the pupil's name is deleted from the admission register.

We will keep the register electronically and back it up every month either electronically or by printing out a hard copy.

We will keep records for 6 years.

Appendix 1

9 (1) - The proprietor of a school must ensure that the name of a pupil of compulsory school age is deleted from the school's admission register when:

(a) the pupil has been registered at another school, unless—

- (i) a school attendance order naming the school is in force in relation to the pupil.
- (ii) the pupil is a mobile child, and the school is their main school; or
- (iii) the proprietor has agreed with a person with control of the pupil's attendance at the other school, or is such a person and has decided that the pupil should be registered at more than one school.

(b) the pupil was admitted to the school for nursery education and—

- (i) they have completed such education and would, if they continued attending the school, be transferred to a reception, or more senior, class at the school; but
- (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again.

(c) the pupil is also registered as a pupil at one or more other schools and—

- (i) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again.
- (ii) the proprietor of each other school where the pupil is registered has consented to the deletion.
- (iii) there is no school attendance order naming the school in force in relation to the pupil; and
- (iv) the pupil is not a mobile child or, if they are, the school is not their main school.

(d) a school attendance order relating to the pupil and formerly naming the school has been amended by the relevant local authority to substitute the name of the school with that of another school;

(e) a school attendance order relating to the pupil and naming the school has been revoked by the relevant local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the pupil to receive suitable education otherwise than at school;

(f) a parent of the pupil has told the proprietor in writing that the pupil will no longer attend the school after a certain day and will receive education otherwise than at school and—

- (i) that day has passed; and

- (ii) there is no school attendance order naming the school in force in relation to the pupil.

(g) the pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school and—

- (i) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again; and
- (ii) the pupil is not a boarder.

(h) pupil has been given leave of absence and—

- (i) the pupil has not attended the school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period of leave.
- (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and
- (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances but—
 - (aa) they have not succeeded; or
 - (bb) they have succeeded, and they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps they could take (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.

(i) the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for at least twenty school days and—

- (i) none of the circumstances mentioned in Table 2 in [regulation 10\(3\)](#) or in any row of Table 3 in [regulation 10\(4\)](#) other than the final three rows applied to the pupil at any point during that period;
- (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and
- (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances but—
 - (aa) they have not succeeded; or
 - (bb) they have succeeded, and they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any

reasonable steps they could take (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.

(j) the pupil is detained under a sentence of detention and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school after they cease to be detained under that sentence;

(k) the pupil has died;
(l) the pupil will be over compulsory school age by the next time the school meets and — <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again; or (ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements to be transferred to the school's sixth form.
(m) the pupil is a boarder at the school and — <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the school is a school maintained by a local authority or is an Academy. (ii) charges for the pupil's board and lodging are payable by a parent of the pupil; and (iii) those charges remain unpaid by the parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.
(n) the pupil has ceased to be a pupil at the school and the school is not — <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a school maintained by a local authority; or (ii) an Academy; or
(o) the pupil has been permanently excluded from the school.

9 (2) (2) If a registered pupil at a special school is of compulsory school age and became a registered pupil at that school under arrangements made by a local authority, **the proprietor of that school must ensure that the pupil's name is not deleted from the school's admission register unless —**

(a) paragraph <u>(1)(d)</u> , <u>(e)</u> , <u>(k)</u> or <u>(o)</u> applies;
(b) the local authority who made those arrangements have given their consent to the deletion; or
(c) the local authority who made those arrangements have refused their consent, but the Secretary of State has directed that the pupil's name be deleted.

9(3) **The proprietor of a school must ensure that the name of a pupil who is not of compulsory school age is deleted from the admission register when —**

(a) the pupil is not a boarder, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that they will attend the school again;
(b) the pupil is a boarder and has ceased to be a pupil at the school;

(c) the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for at least twenty school days and—

- (i) the pupil was not absent with leave at any point during that period.
- (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and
- (iii) the proprietor has made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances but—
 - (aa) has not succeeded; or
 - (bb) has succeeded and has no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again.

(d) the pupil has died; or

(e) the pupil has been permanently excluded from the school.

For definition of terms and clarification see paragraphs 9(4) and 9(5) of the regulations here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/made> Or in chapter 7 of [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

