



Admission Policy

2025/26

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Policies are generated and reviewed with an awareness of the important role of equity and inclusion as a driver for the work of The Open Door Academy, and in relation to students, staff and visitors. We consistently hold these values along with our safeguarding responsibility at the heart of all that we do.

This policy outlines the admissions policy of the provision. The Open Door Academy is an alternative provision.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- To provide a safe alternative education provision for learners who cannot attend mainstream schools in Luton, Central Bedfordshire, & Bedford Borough, to provide a safe, learning environment in which to build self- confidence, provide learning support and promote returning to mainstream education.
- Explain how places at the provision are considered, allocated and funded
- Clarify responsibilities in relation to provision admissions
- Explain how to appeal a decision about a provision placement

Legislation

This policy meets the requirements of the Education (Independent Provision Standards) Regulations 2014 and The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Referrals to The Open Door Academy

The Open Door Academy (TODA) is an Alternative Education Provision (AP) for students with Emotional Based School Avoidance or non-Attendance (EBSA or EBSNA) and/or mental health conditions that prevent their attendance at school.

A student can be referred to TODA at any time during the academic year. Student places are normally commissioned and paid for by referring agencies or schools. We also accept referral from parents of students on Elective Home Education (EHE). Students who are referred to TODA often have diagnosed or undiagnosed Special Educational Needs and associated barriers to learning – including SEMH, Communication Difficulties, ADHD, and ASD. Some students who are referred prefer smaller learning environments and have emotional barriers to accessing mainstream education.

The provision may have the following grounds to refuse offer of a place:

- lack of capacity due to all places being filled.
- inability to meet the student's identified special educational needs.
- being unable to offer suitable educational provision in response to commissioners' stated needs.
- the level of risk to health, safety and wellbeing of other students or adults and/or level of risk to the effective operation of the provision is too high.

Responsibilities

The Open Door Academy (TODA) will have full regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the management of admissions and will ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, any child according to the protected characteristics of the Act. It is the responsibility of the referring agency to ensure the accurate completion of comprehensive referral documentation and relevant risk assessments and provide any further information/documentation as required. The Admissions Officer of TODA should highlight to the referring agency, when necessary, information is missing from referral forms. It is the responsibility of the Head of Provision to ensure that the provision's procedures on referrals and admissions are followed and the criteria used to decide the allocation of provision places are fair, clear, and objective.

Oversubscription criteria

Where a request is received and there is not a suitable place available, the referring agency can request that the student's name is added to a waiting list. The decision to implement a waiting list will rest on the existing cohort of students and the likelihood that a place will become available within 5-10 term days and will be at the discretion of the Head of Provision.

Appeals

As all types of referrals involve case by case scrutiny, team consultation discussions, orientation meetings and discretion from the Head of Provision, the offer (or not) of a place will usually be through mutual agreement during the referral and orientation process. However, in exceptional cases where agreement cannot be reached, the commissioner should write to the Head of Provision outlining reasons supporting the referral with any supporting documentation. The Head of Provision will consider this and reply within 14 days, stating the provision's position. If a place is not granted after the process, the commissioner may make a final appeal and request a review from the Board of Directors.

A final appeal should be put in writing and cases will then be heard by Directors within 14 days of the final appeal being received and final outcomes notified within 5 working days of the hearing.

The Referral Process and Procedures

On receiving an enquiry, the Head of Provision will:

- respond to the commissioner, School or parent within two working days.

On receiving student referral and risk assessment information the Admissions Officer will:

- check that all required information is given on the referral documentation.
- request and consider any other related documents from the person referring e.g., EHCP, last PEP (for LAC), Educational Psychologist reports etc.
- initiate the orientation process - arrange a meeting between the provision and the student, parents/carers and relevant professionals, as appropriate.
- decide on the provision and programme to meet the student's needs (or communicate otherwise within 3 working days).
- communicate the offer of a place, and related placement costs, to the commissioner within 3 working days.

Once the commissioner has confirmed acceptance of the placement, including fees, terms and conditions, the Head of Provision will:

- ensure that an education package, personalised induction process, timetable and start date is agreed by all those involved.

On the first day that it is agreed that the student will attend the provision, the Head of Provision will:

- place the student on the provision intake record.
- place the student on the provision attendance register. If a student does not attend on the agreed date, the Head of Provision should contact the commissioner/School/Parent to inform them of the absence and ascertain the reason to ensure that the child does not go missing in education and there are no safeguarding issues.

Changes to Provision

A student's change in circumstances or change in level of need may require a change to the agreed provision of placement. In such cases, the Head of Provision should liaise with the commissioner/school/parent to agree any changes in provision and costs. In the case of students with an EHCP this may require an Annual Review. Such changes should be confirmed in writing.

The Intake Record

It is a legal requirement for the provision to record the intake of students, naming every student who has been admitted. It is also required that the Head of Provision makes a copy of the electronic intake record monthly. Paper copies should be filed in order and securely. Electronic copies should be kept securely and separately e.g. on a dedicated external hard drive or secure cloud based platform. The intake record should be maintained in alphabetical order and should contain the following information:

- unique number, consecutive to the last student admitted
- full name (including middle names)
- gender
- name and address of parents/carers – if parents/carers do not live together, the person with whom the student normally lives should be indicated
- at least one telephone number at which a parent/carers can be contacted in an emergency
- day, month and year of birth
- school year of student
- day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the provision
- name and address of the school where they are on-roll
- number of learning hours per week
- date the student left the provision
- destination for student on leaving and date of first attendance for any students going on to another provision If an amendment is made on the electronic version, the copy must also be amended.

Every amendment to the intake record must include:

- 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 making the amendment

Students should be placed on the intake record 'from the first day on which the provision has agreed or been notified that the student will attend the provision'. Where a referring agency notifies that a student will live at another address, the following should be recorded in the intake record:

- the full name of the parent/carers with whom the student will live
- the new address
- the date from when it is expected that the student will live at this address

The Head of Provision should highlight any contextual information of a vulnerable child who is missing education, such as safeguarding concerns to the referring agency.

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As students leave the provision, the intake record must be amended to reflect when they left and their destination.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. In between reviews, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the Head of Provision and Directors.