



LEICESTER THERAPEUTIC SCHOOL

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS THROUGH NURTURE AND MINDSET

Referrals and Admissions Policy

Policy Owner	Leicester Therapeutic School
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Linked Policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy Positive Behaviour Policy SEND Information Report Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy Personal Development Policy Attendance Policy
ISS Regulatory Requirements	Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 Part 1 - Quality of Education; Part 3 - Welfare, health and safety; Part 6 - Provision of information; Part 8 - Quality of leadership and management

Safeguarding at Leicester Therapeutic School

At Leicester Therapeutic School, we are committed to providing an environment in which students feel safe and secure to access their education. All stakeholders are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff are encouraged to maintain an "it could happen here" attitude. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access the school and to promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation and bullying. Leicester Therapeutic School is dedicated to creating a strong safeguarding culture in which the safety and well-being of children is a central thread running through all aspects of the school. If a person is concerned about anything they read, witness or hear in relation to the school, they should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher immediately. Safeguarding and the safety and well-being of all pupils are carefully considered throughout all school policies.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) at Leicester Therapeutic School

At Leicester Therapeutic School, we are passionate about providing an inclusive education to children with special educational needs and disabilities. We recognise and celebrate the individuality of our pupils and use personalised approaches so that pupils with SEND feel supported throughout the school day. We strive to provide pupils with appropriate opportunities and experiences, believing that in the right environment, with the right support, pupils can flourish in education. We do this through a SEND-friendly environment, an adapted curriculum and a strong focus on pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The individual SEND profile of every pupil is carefully considered throughout school policy and practice. For more information, please read the school's SEND Information Report.

1. Policy Aims

The purpose of the Leicester Therapeutic School Referrals and Admissions Policy is:

- To set out a fair, open and transparent process for referrals and admissions to the school.
- To ensure that decisions are child-centred and based on whether Leicester Therapeutic School can safely and appropriately meet each pupil's identified needs.
- To ensure that parents/carers, Local Authorities and other professionals have a clear understanding of the school's admissions criteria and referral process.
- To promote the safety, welfare and well-being of prospective pupils and the existing school community, including consideration of reasonable adjustments and the needs of the current cohort.
- To ensure that admissions, transitions and any removal from roll are undertaken lawfully, fairly and without discrimination.

2. Introduction

Leicester Therapeutic School is an independent special school in Leicester City, registered with the Department for Education and inspected by Ofsted. The school is registered for up to 46 pupils. This policy explains how referrals are considered and how placements are agreed with Local Authorities, parents/carers and other professionals. The referral process is underpinned by a child-centred approach: the primary objective is to identify whether Leicester Therapeutic School is the right educational environment for the individual child and whether the school can provide the support set out in their Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. This policy should be read alongside the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, the Equality Act 2010, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

3. Admissions Criteria

Leicester Therapeutic School will consider a referral where the pupil's age, needs and provision required are consistent with the school's registered provision and the criteria below:

Pupils will normally be aged between 5 (Year 1) and 11 (Year 6). The school will not knowingly admit outside its registered age range or registered provision where this would require an unapproved material change.

Pupils will normally have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Their primary areas of need will typically include cognition and learning (usually working at least two years below age-related expectations) alongside social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and/or autism. Pupils will be able to access an adapted National Curriculum at EYFS level or above and will be able to communicate verbally, in line with the school's current registered provision. The school does not use functioning labels for autism; suitability is considered through the individual pupil's needs, strengths, presentation and the provision required.

Leicester Therapeutic School may also consider additional or associated special educational needs, including but not limited to:

- a) Specific learning difficulties, for example dyslexia

- b) Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- c) High anxiety and emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)

Where a pupil's profile differs from the school's typical cohort, careful consideration will be given to the provision specified in the EHCP, the pupil's individual needs and whether reasonable adjustments would enable the school to meet those needs safely and effectively.

In all cases, Leicester Therapeutic School will complete a comprehensive assessment of need. This will consider the pupil's EHCP and supporting information, the school's registered provision and resources, reasonable adjustments, safeguarding and risk information, and the potential impact of the proposed admission on the efficient education and safety of the existing cohort.

4. The Referral & Admissions Process

Admission to Leicester Therapeutic School will be through the referral process outlined in this policy:

- All formal referrals must be received directly from the Local Authority.
- Referrals may be received at any time throughout the academic year, subject to available capacity and the school's registered provision.

The Leicester Therapeutic School referral team consists of:

- The Headteacher
- The Director of Education

Phase 1:

Upon receipt of referral paperwork from the Local Authority, the referral team will:

- Review the EHCP and all referral documentation against the school's admissions criteria, ensuring that sufficient information has been provided to understand the pupil's needs, provision and outcomes.
- Complete an initial assessment of need to identify whether the pupil's special educational provision appears capable of being delivered safely and effectively at Leicester Therapeutic School.
- Where appropriate, and in line with data protection and safeguarding requirements, liaise with the pupil's current educational setting and relevant professionals to gain further information about the pupil's presentation, current provision, attendance, risks and successful strategies.
- Respond to the Local Authority with the outcome of the initial consideration and any further information required.
- Provide the Local Authority with a clear written consultation response where the school considers that it is unable to meet need, setting out the reasons and the evidence relied upon.
- Where the school considers that it may be able to meet need, provide the Local Authority with a written response confirming that the referral can progress to Phase 2.

Phase 2:

Upon receiving permission to proceed with assessment from the Local Authority, a member of the referral team will:

- Liaise with parents/carers and invite the pupil to attend an initial assessment visit, making reasonable adjustments to the visit where required.
- Provide parents/carers with information about Leicester Therapeutic School, including a social story where appropriate, and issue any documents that need to be completed and returned at least 48 hours before the initial visit. If essential documentation is not returned, the visit may be rescheduled.
- Welcome the pupil for their initial visit and undertake proportionate observations and assessments to understand how the pupil may access the environment, curriculum and support available. The visit is not a pass/fail test.
- Gather structured feedback from relevant Leicester Therapeutic School staff who have observed or supported the pupil during the assessment process.
- Review the referral documentation, professional information, observations, internal feedback and reasonable adjustments to determine whether the pupil's special educational needs can be met at Leicester Therapeutic School.
- Provide the Local Authority with a written consultation response if the school considers that it is unable to meet need. The Local Authority remains responsible for its statutory decision-making and for communicating its decision to parents/carers.
- Where the school considers that it can meet need, provide the Local Authority with a written response confirming that the referral can progress to Phase 3.

Phase 3 - Placement Offer:

Where Leicester Therapeutic School considers that it can meet the pupil's needs, the Headteacher will provide the Local Authority with a formal placement response or offer, subject to the applicable statutory framework and agreement of commissioning and funding arrangements. Where Leicester Therapeutic School is approved under section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and is named in a final EHC plan, the school will comply with the statutory duty to admit.

The Referral Team will:

- Liaise with the SEN caseworker and commissioning team as appropriate.
- Liaise with relevant professionals working with the pupil and family so that information required for a safe placement and transition is shared appropriately.
- Liaise with and support parents/carers while the final placement, funding, EHC plan and agreed start date are confirmed.

Phase 4 - Transition:

Once the placement and start date have been confirmed, the pupil's name will be entered on the school's admission register on the appropriate starting day in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The Leicester Therapeutic School referral team will:

- Work with parents/carers, the Local Authority and relevant professionals to agree a child-centred transition plan aimed at reducing anxiety and providing the right support for a successful start.

- Ensure parents/carers receive relevant school information and policies, have opportunities to ask questions, and that essential safeguarding, medical, risk, transport and support information is available to staff before the pupil starts wherever possible.

Phase 5 - Placement Review:

Where the school, parents/carers or Local Authority have concerns about the suitability of a placement after it has started, the school may hold a placement review, normally within the first 3-6 months or sooner if required. The purpose of the review is to consider progress, provision, reasonable adjustments, additional support and any emerging needs. A placement review does not itself end a placement. Where there are significant concerns, the school will request or contribute to an early or emergency review of the EHC plan and will follow the lawful process described in the section on unexpected transitions.

5. Working with Parents

Leicester Therapeutic School works closely with parents and carers throughout the referral and admissions process. Parents/carers are welcome to visit the school and can arrange a tour through the school office or Headteacher. A visit is exploratory and does not constitute an offer of a place. Parents/carers who wish Leicester Therapeutic School to be considered should discuss this with their Local Authority SEND case officer. The school will communicate accessibly, consider reasonable adjustments and ensure that a pupil is not treated less favourably because of disability.

6. Local Authority Admissions Process

Parents/carers are welcome to arrange tours and visits to the school; however, standalone parent referrals and visits do not form part of the formal Local Authority placement process. The Local Authority is responsible for EHC plan decision-making and consultation. Under section 39 of the Children and Families Act 2014, where the statutory parental preference provisions apply, the Local Authority must name the requested school unless it is unsuitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs, or the child's attendance would be incompatible with the efficient education of others or the efficient use of resources. Where an institution approved under section 41 is named in a final EHC plan, section 43 creates a duty to admit. In other circumstances involving an independent school, placement must be agreed through the appropriate commissioning and contractual arrangements.

7. Taking a Pupil Off Roll at the End of Year 6 – Expected Transitions

Leicester Therapeutic School will work collaboratively with parents/carers, the pupil and the Local Authority to plan a suitable transition at the end of Year 6. Transition planning will be informed by the pupil's EHC plan review process and will aim to ensure that a suitable secondary placement and appropriate support are identified in good time. The school will provide information and transition support to the receiving setting as appropriate.

8. Taking a Pupil Off Roll During Year 1 to Year 6 – Unexpected Transitions

If there are significant concerns about a pupil's placement before the end of Year 6, Leicester Therapeutic School will work with parents/carers and the Local Authority and will normally request an early or emergency

review of the EHC plan. The school and other stakeholders will consider reasonable adjustments, additional provision, changes to the support package and, where necessary, alternative placement options. The pupil will remain supported through a planned transition and will not be removed from the admission register simply because concerns have been raised or a placement review has taken place.

Where, following review and consideration of reasonable adjustments, Leicester Therapeutic School believes that it can no longer safely and appropriately meet a pupil's special educational needs, the school may issue notice under the relevant placement or commissioning agreement and ask the Local Authority to identify an alternative arrangement. Any contractual notice does not itself amend the EHC plan or authorise removal from the school roll. At the centre of any such decision will be the child's best interests, safety, educational entitlement and the evidence available. The following timescales may be used as planning guidance following an emergency annual review:

- a) High Priority: normally within 4-6 weeks of the Emergency Annual Review
- b) Medium Priority: normally within 6-10 weeks of the Emergency Annual Review
- c) Low Priority: normally 10 weeks or longer after the Emergency Annual Review

Definitions:

High Priority: The pupil's needs can no longer be met safely within the current placement and significant interim arrangements are required while the Local Authority identifies a suitable alternative. Any temporary or reduced timetable must be exceptional, time limited, agreed with the appropriate parties and reviewed regularly in accordance with the school's attendance procedures.

Medium Priority: The pupil's needs have changed significantly and the current placement is becoming unsuitable, but risks can be managed while the school and Local Authority explore additional support, a revised package or an alternative educational setting.

Low Priority: The school, parent/carer or Local Authority has identified a longer-term concern about the suitability of the placement or educational environment, and there is sufficient time for planned review, support and transition arrangements.

In all scenarios, the pupil's best interests, rights, safety and continued access to suitable education will remain central to decision-making.

When considering whether the school can meet need, Leicester Therapeutic School will have regard to the statutory considerations in section 39 of the Children and Families Act 2014 where applicable:

- The school or institution would be unsuitable for the pupil's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs.
- The pupil's attendance would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for others.
- The pupil's attendance would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

The school will also consider its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the duty not to discriminate and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Decisions will be based on individual evidence rather than diagnosis alone.

A pupil of compulsory school age will only be removed from the admission register where a lawful ground for deletion exists under regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Where a pupil is registered at a special school under arrangements made by a Local Authority, the school will obtain the Local

Authority's consent to deletion where regulation 9(2) requires it, unless one of the specified statutory exceptions applies.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and ratified by the Governing Body. It will also be reviewed sooner where there is a significant change to legislation, statutory guidance, the school's registered provision or the admissions and commissioning process.