

Admissions Policy

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Equality and Inclusion Statement

Apex Specialist Education and all learning centres are committed to equality, inclusion, belonging and respect. This statement applies to every school policy and guides our work across all learning centres.

We promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and work to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, we provide an inclusive education that enables all pupils to participate fully, overcome barriers, develop their potential and achieve positive outcomes.

We recognise diversity as a strength to be respected, celebrated and reflected throughout school life. We strive to ensure everyone feels safe, valued, represented and that they belong. This commitment informs our governance, leadership, safeguarding, curriculum, provision and practice.

Our Commitment:

We are committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Putting our Commitment into Practice:

The Proprietor, Governing Board and Leadership Team will:

- Consider equality implications and the impact of decisions, policies and practice on people with protected characteristics.
- Embed equality, accessibility and inclusion in the development and review of curriculum, provision and policies.
- Identify and seek to reduce or remove barriers to participation, learning, attendance, wellbeing and engagement.
- Promote belonging, positive relationships and high aspirations, particularly for pupils experiencing disadvantage or additional barriers.
- Respond to prejudice-based and discriminatory behaviour, including through safeguarding procedures where relevant.
- Monitor the implementation and impact of equality and inclusion across all learning centres.

Our commitment encompasses the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

All members of our school community share responsibility for upholding equality, inclusion, belonging and respect in their conduct, relationships and implementation of school policies.

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1. Aims

The policy aims to explain referral routes, ensure transparent decisions, support safe placement matching and provide a planned transition into education. It also establishes responsibilities for records, safeguarding information and review.

Healey Learning Centre is an independent special day school for pupils aged 11–16, normally Years 7–11. Apex Specialist Education is its proprietor. Admissions must remain within the school's current Department for Education registration conditions.

2. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

The school will apply the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended, and the applicable independent-school registration framework under the Education and Skills Act 2008. The proprietor will verify permitted premises, age range, capacity and other registration conditions before accepting placements. A pending application to change those conditions does not authorise admissions outside them.

The school will apply relevant Equality Act 2010, safeguarding, pupil-registration and data-protection requirements. It will work with local authorities under the applicable Children and Families Act 2014 arrangements for EHC plans and use the SEND Code of Practice to inform that work.

Maintained-school admission arrangements and statutory admission appeals do not automatically apply to Healey Learning Centre. Its referral process must nevertheless be fair and comply with relevant legislation, published procedures and placement agreements.

The proprietor will verify the school's current approval status when responding to EHC-plan consultations and will not claim powers or duties that depend on approval it does not hold. Local authorities retain responsibility for their statutory EHC-plan decisions.

3. Admissions Principles

Places are considered where the pupil requires a personalised, supportive and structured education consistent with the school's registered provision.

The school will assess whether it can deliver the pupil's required education and support, including provision specified in an EHC plan, with reasonable adjustments and any additional resources that can be agreed. Decisions will consider the safety, welfare and education of the applicant and existing pupils.

Capacity and cohort considerations must be explained in relation to the actual placement. The school will consider practical measures to address concerns rather than relying on a general statement that a pupil is unsuitable.

No placement will be offered beyond approved registration limits or where essential provision cannot be delivered. Reasons will be documented, including adjustments considered and any unresolved requirements.

The pupil's wishes, interests, communication needs and aspirations, and the views of parents and

relevant professionals, will inform assessment and transition planning.

4. Referral based admissions

Healey Learning Centre operates a professional referral process. Referrals are accepted throughout the year from local authorities, schools, academies and other authorised education professionals acting with an identified commissioner.

The school does not operate an open public application scheme. Families may contact the school for information and will be directed to the appropriate referral or EHC-plan route. This does not prevent parents from making representations to their local authority about a preferred placement.

The referral should identify its purpose, the commissioner, the pupil's current registration and education arrangements, and the proposed timetable and start date.

Supporting information should include, where relevant:

- the current EHC plan, consultation papers and recent reviews;
- educational history, attainment, strengths and aspirations;
- attendance, previous support and reasons for seeking a new placement;
- communication, SEND, sensory, health and accessibility needs;
- professional assessments and recommended provision;
- safeguarding information, social-care involvement and relevant risk assessments;
- the pupil's and family's views; and
- proposed transport, funding and review arrangements.

The school will acknowledge referrals, identify missing information and keep the referrer informed. Missing routine paperwork must not cause avoidable delay; missing information essential to a safe start must be resolved or covered by an agreed interim arrangement before attendance begins.

5. Types of Placements

5.1 Alternative Provision Placements

Where a school or local authority commissions alternative provision, the school will review the referral, assess suitability and arrange a visit or assessment where helpful. A written placement agreement will confirm the purpose, intended outcomes, timetable, start date, review arrangements, funding and named contacts.

The agreement will identify registration responsibilities, daily attendance reporting, action when a pupil is absent, safeguarding communication, transport and arrangements for education outside the commissioned sessions. Registration and attendance codes must reflect the actual legal arrangements and must not be assumed from the label "alternative provision".

For a part-time commissioned placement, the commissioner and school will confirm how the pupil's overall education is being secured. Regular reviews will assess progress and next steps, including reintegration or another agreed destination.

5.2 Specialist Placements Through an EHC Plan

When a local authority consults Healey Learning Centre, the SENDCo and relevant specialists will review the EHC plan, reports and proposed provision. The response will explain what the school can deliver, any additional resources needed and any evidenced concerns.

The school will respond within the applicable consultation timescale, normally the 15-day period described in the SEND Code of Practice, and promptly notify the authority if further information is required. Requests for clarification must not be used to defer a response indefinitely.

The school's willingness to offer a place must be established through the relevant local-authority process. A consultation is not itself an admission offer. The local authority decides whether to name the school in an EHC plan, applying the appropriate legal framework.

Where placement is agreed, the school and commissioner will confirm provision, resources, funding, the intended centre and the admission date. The school will not promise support it cannot deliver.

6. Placement Decision Making

The Headteacher oversees admissions decisions, supported by the SENDCo, relevant centre leader and safeguarding team. Specialist clinical or educational advice will be sought where needed. The proprietor oversees registration compliance and the authorisation of resources.

Assessment may include document review, discussions with the pupil and family, professional consultation, a supported visit and an individual risk assessment. Visits will be adapted to the pupil's needs; alternative ways of gathering information will be used where attendance is difficult.

A visit or transition assessment is not an unrecorded trial placement. If education begins, registration, attendance, safeguarding and commissioning responsibilities must already be clear.

The decision record will identify:

- the pupil's needs and proposed outcomes;
- provision and reasonable adjustments required;
- staffing, premises and resources available or agreed;
- risks, protective measures and any unresolved issues;
- the pupil's and family's views;
- centre allocation and transport considerations; and
- the outcome, reasons and person authorising it.

The school may confirm suitability, request specific further information or decline a referral with clear reasons. Where an offer has conditions, these must be objective and explicit, such as agreement of essential provision or funding. There must be no uncertainty about whether a place has been offered or when it starts.

If a place cannot be offered, the referrer will receive a written explanation and information about raising concerns. Another centre within the school will be considered where appropriate and lawful. The school will not guarantee an alternative external placement.

7. Allocation to learning centres

Pupils admitted to Healey Learning Centre join one registered school. Rochdale, Stockport and Altrincham operate under the same school leadership, policies and safeguarding oversight. This organisational structure does not replace any required approval of premises or changes to registration.

The intended centre will be identified before the start date. Allocation will consider pupil needs, provision, accessibility, journey time, transport, peer relationships, safeguarding, available resources and relevant EHC-plan or placement terms.

Parents, pupils and commissioners will be involved in planning. Any later centre change will be considered individually, with reasons, updated risk and support arrangements and a planned transition. Required commissioner agreement or EHC-plan review or amendment must be completed through the appropriate process. The school will not assume that a single registration permits it to disregard agreed placement terms.

Where a pupil accesses more than one centre, staff will confirm the timetable, supervision, travel, attendance recording and daily safeguarding communication. Centre changes must not be used to disguise exclusion or avoid reviewing unmet needs.

8. Pre-admission Arrangements

Before the pupil starts, the school will confirm the offer, centre, timetable, admission date, named key adult and arrangements for communication with the family and commissioner.

Staff will agree an individual transition plan, including communication support, orientation, familiarisation and adjustments. Any exceptional reduced timetable must follow the Attendance Policy, have a clear purpose, review date and planned return to full-time education, and include arrangements for the pupil's safety and education outside attendance hours.

The school will obtain essential emergency contacts, information about parental responsibility and relevant orders, health and medication details, and transport and collection arrangements. Where possible, more than one emergency contact will be held.

The DSL or deputy will seek relevant safeguarding information directly from the previous setting and agencies. The school will request secure transfer of the child protection file within KCSIE timescales, seek essential information before the start where needed, and confirm receipt. Safeguarding records will be held separately with appropriate access controls.

Information will be shared lawfully, securely and proportionately. Consent will not be treated as a prerequisite to necessary lawful safeguarding sharing. The school will apply current information-sharing duties and record significant decisions.

Relevant staff will receive the information and training needed to support the pupil. Individual healthcare, behaviour support and risk-management arrangements will be ready where required. Families will receive accessible information about the school day, attendance, safeguarding contacts, behaviour support and complaints.

Urgent placements remain subject to registration limits and a safe-start assessment. The

Headteacher and DSL will record any interim safeguards and how outstanding information will be obtained. An urgent referral does not justify bypassing essential checks.

9. Post admission review

The key adult and centre team will monitor attendance, engagement, wellbeing and adjustment from the start. The school will review support with the pupil, family and commissioner at the date agreed in the transition or placement plan, and sooner if concerns arise.

Reviews will assess whether promised provision is in place, whether adjustments are effective, progress towards outcomes and any changes to risk or support. EHC-plan review requirements remain the responsibility of the maintaining authority, with the school contributing and undertaking agreed review functions.

Early difficulty does not automatically cancel a place. Staff will review provision, seek additional advice and involve the commissioner. Any proposal to end a placement must follow the relevant policy, contractual and statutory processes; it must not become informal exclusion or unlawful removal from roll.

9.1 Qualification Enrolment and Support to Completion

Admission to the school or acceptance of a commissioned placement does not automatically constitute registration with an awarding organisation or entry for an examination. Qualification enrolment, awarding organisation registration and examination entries are separate processes.

Before a learner begins a qualification programme, the curriculum team will review prior attainment, existing achievements, interests, aspirations, support needs and the time available for completion. The learner's views and, where appropriate, those of their parent, carer and commissioner will inform programme selection. Decisions must be individual, appropriately ambitious and supported by evidence, without blanket assumptions based on disability or SEND.

Daniel Young, Examinations Officer, will confirm that the centre holds the necessary approval for the qualification and relevant assessment arrangements. Proposed approval must not be represented as approval already granted. He will oversee accurate awarding organisation registrations and examination entries within the applicable deadlines, checking learner details, qualification codes, required components and any previous registrations or achievements.

The learner will receive accessible information about their qualification programme, assessment requirements, expected completion dates, available support, academic misconduct rules and complaint and appeal routes. Staff will check understanding and retain appropriate records.

The curriculum team will maintain a programme and assessment plan identifying teaching, assessment opportunities, required components, responsibilities and review points. Janine Taylor, SENCo, will coordinate consideration of access needs, reasonable adjustments and the evidence required for examination access arrangements. Agreed support will be communicated to relevant staff and reviewed for effectiveness.

Progress towards completion will be reviewed alongside attendance, engagement, assessment

evidence and learner wellbeing. Where completion is at risk, staff will identify the barriers, discuss them with the learner and relevant parties, and record an action plan with responsibilities and review dates. Actions may include additional teaching, adapted support, permitted assessment opportunities or an agreed change of programme, subject to qualification rules and commissioning arrangements.

Leaving the school or ending a placement does not automatically withdraw a learner from an awarding organisation registration or examination entry. Staff will review outstanding assessments, completed achievements, certification and any suitable transfer or continuation arrangements. Qualification withdrawals will follow the Examinations and External Assessment Policy, including authorisation, communication, record keeping and applicable review rights.

Detailed qualification registration, entry, withdrawal, assessment, recognition of prior learning, internal quality assurance and certification arrangements are contained in the Examinations and External Assessment Policy and the Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Strategy. Challenges to qualification decisions follow the Internal Appeals Procedure.

10. Admission and attendance registers

The school will maintain accurate electronic registers under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Pupils will be entered on the admission register from the beginning of the first day on which attendance is agreed or required. Registration will not be delayed until a trial or settling-in period has ended.

Administration will record all required particulars, including legal name, date of birth, sex as required by the regulations, address, relevant parent and emergency-contact information, admission date and previous school details. Pupil identifiers and additional relevant information will be recorded where available, with statutory fields distinguished from preferred-name and other support records.

The Headteacher will ensure required new-pupil returns are made to the local authority within five days of admission, subject to the regulations' normal-transition exceptions. The school will also supply information required by applicable local-authority requests.

If a pupil does not arrive on the agreed first day, staff will promptly establish the reason with the family and referrer and take safeguarding or children-missing-education action where needed. Attendance will be recorded from the agreed start, using the correct codes. Register corrections will retain the required audit trail.

11. Removal from the admission register

A pupil's name will be deleted only when the applicable statutory ground and all its conditions are met. Broad descriptions such as non-attendance, medical reasons or parental withdrawal do not, by themselves, authorise deletion.

The Headteacher will authorise deletion after checking the evidence and any required local-authority consent. For a compulsory-school-age pupil placed at a special school by a local authority, the additional consent requirements and statutory exceptions must be checked. A

request to home educate will be referred to the placing authority where its consent is required. Where absence-related grounds require joint enquiries with the local authority, these must be completed before deletion. Staff must not assume that prolonged absence or missing contact details end the school's responsibilities.

Required deletion returns will be made no later than deletion. The school will record the ground, date, destination where known and notifications. Safeguarding and educational information will be transferred securely; an unknown destination will prompt liaison with the local authority's children-missing-education service.

Funding disputes, placement-review discussions or a proposed centre move do not themselves justify removing a pupil from roll.

12. Concerns and complaints

Parents, pupils and referrers may ask the Headteacher to explain or reconsider an admissions decision, including where new information or adjustments could change the assessment. The school will provide an accessible response and keep a record.

Unresolved concerns about the school's process may be raised through its published Complaints Policy. Referring organisations may also use their contractual dispute arrangements. A person involved in the original decision will not determine an independent review of their own handling of the matter.

Concerns about a local authority's EHC-plan decision must be addressed through that authority's statutory process, including applicable mediation and appeal rights. The school's complaints procedure does not replace those routes or pause external time limits. Applicable disability-discrimination rights are also unaffected.

13. Responsibilities and monitoring

The proprietor and Governing Board will oversee fair admissions and compliance with registration conditions. The Headteacher will ensure decisions and reasons are recorded consistently across centres. The SENCO will coordinate assessment of provision, the DSL will oversee safeguarding information and risk, and administration will maintain registers and required returns.

Leaders will monitor referrals, offers, declines, reasons, transition experiences, placement breakdown and patterns affecting pupil groups or centres. Findings will inform staffing, resources and improvements. Records will be retained securely under the school's retention arrangements and applicable legal requirements.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if legislation, guidance, registration conditions or school arrangements change. The proprietor will approve revisions and ensure that staff and referring bodies can access the current version.

14. References

The following current sources inform this policy. Approval and review dates are recorded through

the school's policy-control arrangements.

- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Education Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 and April 2026 guidance
- Equality Act 2010 advice for schools
- Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years
- School Attendance Pupil Registration England Regulations 2024
- Working together to improve school attendance
- Children missing education statutory guidance 2025
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Information Sharing Duty statutory guidance September 2026
- Prevent duty guidance England and Wales 2023
- Ofsted independent school inspection guidance effective September 2026 under the education inspection framework

Related school policies: Safeguarding and Child Protection; SEND; Equality and Diversity; Attendance; Behaviour and Positive Behaviour Support; Suspension and Permanent Exclusion; Complaints; Data Protection. Applicable local safeguarding procedures and individual commissioning agreements also inform implementation.