



Referrals and Admissions Policy

Policy Owner	Light Years School
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Linked Policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy Positive Behaviour Policy SEND Information Report Ofsted Framework 2019 Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy Personal Development Policy
ISS Regulatory Requirements	Part 1 – Quality of Education Paragraph 1 – 2 (2)(b), 2(2)(h), 3(c)

Safeguarding at Light Years School

At Light Years 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 school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, and bullying. Light Years School are dedicated to creating a strong safeguarding culture, and that the safety and well-being of children is the central thread that embeds itself through all aspects of the school. If a person is concerned about anything they read, witness, or hear with regards to the school, they should contact the school's designated safeguarding lead immediately or Headteacher. Safeguarding, and the safety and well-being of all pupils at Light Years School is carefully considered and a central theme through all school policies.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) at Light Years School

At Light Years School, we are passionate about providing an inclusive education to children with special educational needs. We recognise and celebrate the individuality of our pupils and use personalised approaches, allowing pupils with SEND to feel supported during the school day. We strive to provide pupils with the same opportunities and experiences that pupils would have received at a mainstream school, believing passionately that in the right environment, with the right support, pupils will flourish in education. We do this by focusing on providing a SEND friendly environment, an adapted curriculum, and a strong focus on developing pupils' personal, social, and emotional development. The special educational needs and disabilities of all pupils at Light Years School is carefully considered and a central theme in through all school policies. For more information, please read the school's SEND Information Report.

Policy Aims

The purpose of Light Years School Referral and Admission Policy is:

- To set out the process for referring students to the school so that the process will be fair, open, and transparent.
- To provide a structured, stable environment with the aim of ensuring that the individual needs of each student are met.
- To ensure that all professionals and stakeholders have a clear understanding of the admissions criteria and referral process at Light Years School.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of the school community and prospective pupils.
- To ensure the school adheres to a fair and just admissions process.

Introduction

Light Years School is situated in Fareham and is adjacent to an existing primary school. Due to its location, it is imperative that perspective pupils and their parents have a good understanding of the admissions process. Placing a child in a special school environment can be a complex and challenging prospect so it is the job of this policy to ensure all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the process. Underpinning the referral process is a core ethos of placing the child at the centre of all decision making. The primary objective will always be placing the child in the right education environment for them, ensuring they receive the right support at the right time. Light Years School is registered by Ofsted and the DfE for up to **40** children.

Admissions Criteria

Light Years School will proceed with the admissions process should a child meet the following:

Pupils will be aged between 7 (Year 3) and 11 (Year 6).

Pupils will have an Education, Health, and Care plan (EHCP) and will typically have a primary diagnosis of autism. All pupils will be able to access the national curriculum at Year 1 or above and will be able to communicate verbally. Within the wide autism spectrum, the type of autism we cater for is sometimes referred to as 'high functioning autism'. For more information, please visit the [NHS website](#).

Light Years School will consider other special educational needs such as, but not limited to:

- a) Speech, language, and communication difficulties
- b) Specific learning difficulties, for example Dyslexia
- c) Social, emotional, and mental health difficulties
- d) High anxiety and children who may have emotional base school avoidance (EBSA)

Where pupils do not have a primary diagnosis of autism, careful consideration will be given to whether the school can meet the needs as set out in the pupil's EHCP.

In all circumstances, Light Years School will complete a comprehensive assessment of need, outlined below to ensure they can meet the child's special educational needs in full and consider any impact that any new admission may have on the existing cohort of pupils

The Referral & Admissions Process

Admission to Light Years School will be through the Referral Process outlined in this policy:

- All referrals must be received directly from the Local Authority.
- Referrals can be received at any time throughout the academic year.

Light Years School referral team consists of:

- The Headteacher/SENCO
- The Assistant Headteacher
- The Inclusion Manager

Phase 1:

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

- Review all paperwork received against the school's essential criteria, ensuring referrals include all relevant information.
- Complete an initial assessment of need, to identify if the child's educational health care needs can be met at Light Years School.
- Respond to the Local Authority, informing them of the decisions reached following the initial assessment.
- Provide the Local Authority with a written response in respect of any referrals where it has been assessed that Light Years School is unable to meet need.
- Provide the Local Authority with a written response in respect of any referrals where it has been assessed, at phase 1, that Light Years School may be able to meet need - Inform the Local Authority that the process will move to phase 2.

Phase 2:

Upon receiving permission to proceed with assessment from the Local Authority the referral team will:

- Liaise directly with parents/carers, inviting their child to attend an initial 1-hour visit.

- Liaise directly with the child's current educational setting to gain any background information to further support an understanding of the child's presenting needs prior to their initial visit.
- Provide parents/carers with information about Light Years School, including a social story to support their child and issue documents that will need to be completed and returned by parents/carers at least 48 hours before their child is due to attend their initial visit. **(In the event that documents are not returned, the initial visit will be rescheduled).**
- Welcome the child for their initial visit and undertake further assessments and observations.
- Distribute feedback evaluation forms to staff members at Light Years School to gain additional information as part of the further assessment process.
- Review the referral, internal feedback evaluation forms and assessments, to identify if the child's educational health care needs can be met at Light Years School.
- Provide the Local Authority with a written response in respect of any referrals where it has been assessed that Light Years School is unable to meet need. **(Please note, it is the responsibility of the Local Authority to feedback back to parents and carers, where it is decided that Light Years School is unable to meet the child's educational health care needs).**
- Provide the Local Authority with a written response in respect of any referrals where it has been assessed, at phase 2, that Light Years School may be able to meet need - Inform the Local Authority that the process will move to phase 3.

Phase 3:

Light Years School Referral Team will:

- Liaise directly with the child's parents/carers to gain consent to visit their child in the child's current school.
- Liaise directly with the child's current educational setting to schedule a visit to observe the child in their current school.
- Visit and observe the child in their current setting.
- Meet with the SENCO or a member of the senior leadership team from the child's current setting to obtain all relevant information regarding the child's educational journey to date, including any relevant medical and safeguarding background history.
- Liaise directly with parents/carers, inviting their child to attend a 'Getting to know you' session (half-day session)
- Invite parents/carers to attend a 45-minute meeting with a member of Light Years Schools referral team. The meeting will be conducted on site during their child's 'Getting to know you' session.
- Provide parents/carers with additional information about Light Years School, including a social story to reflect the timetable to support their child.

- Issue documents to parents to ensure that no changes have taken place since the child's initial visit. These documents will need to be completed and returned by parents/carers at least 48 hours before their child is due to attend their 'Getting to know you' session. **(In the event that documents are not returned, the 'Getting to know you' session will be rescheduled).**
- Welcome the child for their 'Getting to know you' session and undertake further assessments and observations.
- Welcome parents/carers and complete an introduction meeting to gain further information and understanding.
- Distribute 'Getting to know you' feedback evaluation forms to staff members at Light Years School to gain additional information as part of the final assessment process.
- Review the referral, 'Getting to know you' feedback evaluation forms, and final assessments to identify if the child's educational health care needs can be met at Light Years School.
- Provide the Local Authority with a written response in respect of any referrals where it has been assessed that Light Years School is unable to meet need. **(Please note, it is the responsibility of the Local Authority to feedback back to parents and carers, where it is decided that Light Years School is unable to meet the child's educational health care needs).**
- Repeat phase 3 where further assessments are needed to support a decision.
- Provide the Local Authority with a written response in respect of any referrals where it has been assessed, at phase 3, that Light Years School may be able to meet need - Inform the Local Authority that the process will move to phase 4.

Phase 4 – Placement Offer:

Where Light Years School agree that they could meet the needs of the child's educational health care needs, the Headteacher will send a formal offer letter to the Local Authority.

The Referral Team will:

- liaise with the SEN case worker.
- Liaise with any professionals working alongside the family to keep them informed of the process.
- Liaise with, and support parents/carers, until Light Years School is named on the child's EHCP, and a start date is agreed.

Phase 5 – Transition:

Once the placement has been agreed between all parties, the child will be placed on roll at the school.

Light Years School referral team will:

- Contact parents/carers to discuss a child-centred transition plan aimed at reducing anxiety and providing the right support for a successful transition to the school.
- Ensure parents and carers are provided with a copy of all relevant school policies and will ensure that they are given every opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

Phase 6 – Review:

In some circumstances, the school, parents, or carers may raise concerns about the suitability of the placement after the placement has started. In this case, the school will hold an internal review within 3-6 months of a start date, where all aspects of the child's placement will be reviewed. The outcome of which may be to continue or discontinue the pupil's placement if all parties agree this is in the child's best interest. Please read the section '*Taking a Pupil Off Roll During year 3 – 6 – Unexpected Transitions*' for more information.

Working with Parents

Light Years School works closely with all parents to ensure their child is placed in the most suitable environment. We welcome parent visits to the school, and these can be arranged by contacting the school office or Headteacher. However, after this process, we request that parents approach their Local Authority SEND case officer to explore Light Years School further. Light Years School works closely with the Local Authority and will not proceed with any assessment until permission has been granted by the Local Authority.

Local Authority Admissions Process

Parents are welcome to arrange tours and visits of the school. However, standalone parent referrals and visits do not form part of the Local Authority admissions process. The school will work with the Local Authority and wait for referral documentation to be sent to the school before the initial assessment can commence. If the assessment process is successful, the Local Authority can name Light Years School on the child's EHCP.

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

Light Years School will work in collaboration with parents and the Local Authority to secure a suitable education placement at the end of Year 6. We will work together to ensure a smooth transition from Light Years school and beyond. The school will work alongside SEN Caseworkers to ensure a suitable secondary placement is secured.

Taking a Pupil Off Roll During Year 3 to Year 6 – Unexpected Transitions

In the unlikely event of a pupil being taken off roll before their year 6 transition date or as part of a 3-6 month review meeting, this will be done in conjunction with parents and the Local Authority. This will follow an emergency annual review, where the school and other stakeholders will explore all reasonable adjustments, one of which may be an alternative placement to be considered. Light Years School will work closely with the Local Authority to ensure the child's transition to a new educational placement is successful during this process.

Light Years School may serve notice on a child's placement should they feel that they can no longer meet their special educational needs or if the child's needs change to the point where it is no longer in their best interest to attend. At the core of every decision of this nature will be the school's mantra of 'what is in the child's best interest'. A decision to serve notice on a placement should be done within the following guided timescales:

- a) High Priority: Within a 4–6-week period of the Emergency Annual Review
- b) Medium Priority: Within a 6 – 10-week period of the Emergency Annual Review
- c) Low Priority: 10 weeks or longer period of the Emergency Annual Review

Definitions:

High Priority: This scenario is likely to be in the circumstance where a child's needs can no longer be met safely in school but without the need for an immediate permanent exclusion. This is likely to involve a bespoke timetable during the 4–6-week period to support the safety and well-being of all children whilst working alongside the local authority to identify an alternative educational setting.

Medium Priority: This scenario is likely to be in the circumstance where a child's needs have changed significantly or presenting differently to the extent where the school can no longer meet their special educational needs but not immediately. In this circumstance, the school will make every effort to work in collaboration with the local authority to seek an alternative educational setting or support package.

Low Priority: This scenario is likely to be in the circumstance where the school, parent or local authority identify a longer-term issue with the educational environment or placement that would result in a child's special educational needs no longer being met in full.

In all scenarios, the child's best interest will be at the centre of the decision-making process.

Light Years School will always work within the legal framework of the following reasons why our school can no longer meet need.

- The child's SEND needs are not appropriate or no longer appropriate for the profile of the school.
- The attendance of the child is incompatible or no longer compatible with the efficient education of others.
- The attendance of the child is incompatible or no longer compatible with the efficient use of resources.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Headteacher and ratified by the Chair of Governors to ensure it is a true reflection of current admissions process.