



Admissions Policy

Communication

In order to realise shared goals and achieve the very best for learners we work collaboratively with parents/carers, schools, academies and other stakeholders. We will communicate the highest standards and expectations at all times.

Happy and Healthy

We have created a safe, secure and happy learning environment in which all learners can thrive. We equip learners with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve well in life. We acknowledge and celebrate their success widely.

Date:	September 2021
Date approved by Management Committee:	16.9.21
Signature of Chair of Management Committee:	
To be reviewed:	September 2021

Introduction.

The Link School is a Local Authority Maintained Pupil Referral Unit, consisting of two sites. Springwell Dene is a KS1/2/3 provision catering for learners from Reception - Y9 and Pallion, a KS4 provision catering for learners in Y10 and Y11.

Springwell Dene has 99 places commissioned by Together for Children.

Pallion has 90 places commissioned by Together for Children.

These places are for permanently excluded learners or learners on the verge of exclusion.

The Link School also operates two assessment Hubs, one for KS2 based at Hudson Road and one for KS3 based at Oxclose. Each hub is commissioned for 12 places.

Any learner referred should be presenting continuing, concerning, challenging behaviour and they will have received substantial interventive actions from within their Mainstream schools, involving and following advice from external agencies.

Aims:

- To provide a clear transparent admissions process that is understood by service users (learners) and service providers (staff).
- Provide information so that schools whose learners require additional support are clear about the availability and the nature of the support.
- To ensure that the base and purchased funding supports the level of learner placement/intervention.
- To enable formulated consideration to be given to each learner's age and their likely reception to positive intervention strategies

Objectives:

- Service users understand the nature of the PRUs business and understand the criteria for placement.
- That there is a clear criterion for deciding which learners should have priority for the limited placements.

Procedures and Practices.

For those learners who are permanently excluded, there is a direct referral from TFC's Inclusion and Access Officer to ensure admission to the Link School by Day 6 of exclusion.

For those learners who are require a 12-week placement, these can be accessed by applying to the Vulnerable Provisions Panel meets every two weeks to consider applicants for admission to the Link School (PRU).

Admission Priorities

- Learners who have been permanently excluded from two or more schools;
- Learners who have been permanently excluded from one school and it is thought that a period of integration into the new school would be beneficial;
- Learners who have been excluded from school on three separate occasions;
- Learners whose behaviour is leading towards exclusion;
- Learners whose behaviour is causing a barrier to their or others learning.
- Cared for children will take priority over all other priority areas including, children on the Child Protection Register.

Vulnerable Learners Panel

The VPP will consist of two panels that consider primary and secondary referrals. Membership of the panels differ in terms of membership reflecting the alternative provisions relating the age range of learners. Both Panels consist of both 'core' and 'other' members. Members from both groups are of statutory and non-statutory services outlined below;

CORE MEMBERS (BOTH SECONDARY AND PRIMARY PANELS)

Together for Children Representatives;

- Inclusions and Access Officer
- Special Educational Needs Strategic Lead
- Early Help Team Manager
- Virtual School Headteacher
- Social Care/Early Help Representative
- Link School Headteacher
- Education Psychologist

ADDITIONAL PRIMARY MEMBERSHIP

School Representatives

- 4 x Headteacher representing each of the locality groups.
- Headteacher from SEMH Specialist Primary provision

ADDITIONAL SECONDARY MEMBERSHIP

- School representatives from North, South, Washington and Coalfields areas of the city.
- Specialist SEMH School representative
- Beacon of Light Representative
- Returners and Young Mums Representative

Members should have a good understanding of compulsory school age education requirements and a good awareness of the needs of vulnerable children and young people and/or be members of the Senior Leadership Team (i.e. schools – Headteachers).

The VPP Panel reflects the diversity of the wider community and it actively works with members and partners to establish inclusive working practices

All panel members will be sent copies of paperwork one week prior to the meeting.

For dual registered learners the Panel will have to determine priority admissions based upon availability of places and the need of the child.

The Inclusion and Access Officer is to communicate with schools the outcome of panel meeting.

Process – Referring Agent

All VPP referees must complete a VPP referral form and attach all relevant information It's important that a written record of previous interventions, including who has led these, for how long and the measured impact, accompanies the referral.

For all learners not permanently excluded there must evidence of external agency involvement supporting the need for a Link School placement. This report does not have to reflect a full psychological assessment. It can be based on an extended consultation with other staff involved with the learner.

- Dual placements and outreach. The rationale behind any dual placement is that the Link School should be adding value to what the mainstream school can offer and vice versa. The effectiveness of partnership is important and thus schools need to be working with the Link School to establish effective learning strategies that meet the needs of the learners.
- Where it is appropriate for the learner the Mainstream school has the responsibility of starting and maintaining the EHCP, ensuring that the family has been referred to Early Help, CIN or CP as appropriate and where necessary, a package of parental support, such as Triple P parenting classes, has been put in place.
- All other Learners must be on the register of mainstream provision. 12 week placements will be offered with a clear agreed exit point through regular review meetings at The Link School.

Permanently Excluded Learners

Learners who have been permanently excluded - admission of these learners does not have to go via VPP as its imperative that these learners are re-entered into a learning environment at the earliest possibility, by Day 6. However, if they have an EHCP they should not come to The Link School and the appropriate setting must be found through the SEND panel, started through an immediate review of the EHCP by the referring/excluding school.

The Link School will receive a learner passport from the excluding school outlining the reasons for the permanent exclusion and a synopsis of the actions taken. Once the learner passport is received, the learner can be inducted into the Link School.

Pupil Discipline Committee's (PDCs) must meet within 15 days of the permanent exclusion. The Link School will be informed the outcome of all PDC's.

Integration of learners

If the learner who has been referred has had no formal education over a significant period of time, the panel may recommend introducing the learners gradually through a part time timetable. In this situation the arrangements need to be rigorous, well monitored and aspirational, aiming to get the learner into the provision fulltime as quickly as possible.

The same applies to a learner with extreme behaviours.

Induction meetings

All agreed placements will have a pre-admission induction meeting. If the learner is dual registered, a representative from the Senior Leadership Team (a person able to make decisions on behalf of the Headteacher) of the referring school will attend the meeting alongside all other relevant parties, such as involved agencies.

The signing of the paperwork agreement to The Link School (PRU) protocols and procedures, with timescales, should not exceed 12 weeks.

- Protocol has been established for LAC learners regarding legal guardianship and responsibility.

Reviews

At the induction meeting a key member of staff from The Link School (PRU) will be identified. This person will be the conduit through which all correspondences and initial contact is made. This member of staff will hold regular meetings with their learner, parents/carers and other stakeholders to ensure that we fully understand the wishes and views of all involved.

All learners will have a week 5 and week 11 review from the date of admission. If a school has been named for a learner who has been excluded then a representative from the Senior Leadership Team of that school should attend the review meetings.

Assessment Hubs

Children may be referred to the assessment hubs, if they meet the following criteria:

1. The learner experiences **frequent and persistent** difficulties with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties which will **significantly** affect curriculum access.
2. Learners must be demonstrating behaviours identified in Range 3 - 4 of the SEMH element of SEND Ranges.
 - Incidences of non-compliant and uncooperative behaviour e.g. refusal to work, disrupting the learning of others.

- Difficulties self-regulating e.g. frequent emotional or aggressive outbursts, sexualised language, anxiety, mood swings, unpredictable behaviour, which affect relationships.
 - Significant self-esteem issues affecting relationships and behaviour patterns ('acting in' or 'acting out')
 - Low levels of resilience when faced with adversity
 - Behaviour causing a barrier to learning, e.g. learner disengaging, may destroy own / others' work, use work avoidance strategies, concentration very limited
 - Difficulty socialising with peers and adults e.g. lack of empathy, victim or perpetrator of bullying
 - May show low mood or refuse to communicate for periods of time
 - Risk of isolation or becoming socially vulnerable
3. The minimum assessment period in the provision is two weeks, with a maximum of 8 weeks.
 4. Within the assessment provision staff including teaching staff, educational psychologist, behaviour support and mental health worker will carry out initial interventions. The outcomes of which will be provided to schools in report format that will recommend the most suitable ongoing educational pathway.
 5. All schools and academies allocated an assessment will need to enter into an agreed contract with the appropriate providers identified within this protocol, which will clarify the roles and responsibilities of each setting.
 6. An exit review at the end of the assessment period will be used to develop, in conjunction with the home school, a support plan which will be used to support integration into the most suitable educational placement or reintegration back into mainstream provision.
 7. The Hub will provide a reintegration programme for a period of 2 – 4 weeks for those learners that are returning to mainstream provision or into alternative suitable education.
 8. Considering the Schools Admission Code, Schools must be mindful that the parent/carer has the right to request a mainstream placement at any time.

In Year Fair Access

Some learners may not be attend the Link School and may be referred directly through the In Year Fair Access Protocols for consideration of education in another mainstream school/academy. The Head Teacher attends this panel to represent the views of the Link School.

Monitoring and Evaluation.

The Management Committee will review admissions and integration meetings each term as part of the Management Committee meetings.