



Referrals and Admissions Policy

The Lodestar Academy

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This policy will be reviewed annually.

The academy reserves the right to amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Policy Owner:	Beth Woodward (Headteacher)
Queries to:	Beth Woodward (Headteacher)
Date created:	September 2023
Date of last review:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027

1. What is This Policy About?

We believe that all secondary-aged pupils in Torbay should have an equal opportunity to benefit from the specialist provisions provided by The Lodestar Academy.

This Referrals and Admissions Policy aims to describe the robust and clear processes in place, relating to:

- The number of places available at the academy
- Admissions criteria
- Oversubscription criteria
- Referrals
- Pupil registration and information sharing
- Procedures following an offer of a place (including induction)
- Arrangements for transition/reintegration to mainstream settings
- Objections and complaints procedure

2. Who Does This Policy Apply to?

Headteacher, commissioners, local governing bodies, staff, parents, external partners, and local authorities.

3. Policy Requirements

1. Overview

The academy will specialise in working with young people aged 11-16 who are at risk of, or have been permanently excluded from, mainstream education. We accept, on admission, once assessed, low to moderate needs. Higher needs students may be accepted provided that there is specialist support available.

Our success for the academy is simply defined as the level of progression each young person makes in terms of changes to their behaviour, their academic ability, their ability to engage in the community and eventually live independent lives through employment and further education.

We aim to have leavers who are confident, happy young people with high levels of self-esteem, a clear picture of their future and the wherewithal in terms of skills, abilities and personal characteristics to achieve that future.

Our aim is to re-integrate students back to mainstream up to the end of Key Stage 3 and transition to Education, Employment or Training (EET) for Key Stage 4. We aim for all students to sustain their destination for a period of at least 6 months post transition.

Admission to the academy will be through the referral process outlined in this policy. Referrals can be made at any time throughout the year.

Number of places available

The Lodestar Academy will provide education for up to 55 full time (25 hours of education per week, per place) equivalent students aged 11-16. Places will be offered for a minimum of 1 term and a maximum of 2 academic years (unless agreed otherwise with the commissioners).

Pupils/Students supported by the school admissions criteria:

The academy will specialise in providing places for:

- Those excluded or at risk of exclusion
- Those students with mild to moderate social, emotional and mental health concerns
- Those requiring mild to moderate behaviour support
- Those with medical conditions preventing them from attending mainstream schools

Higher needs students will also be considered, subject to the appropriate levels of funding being in place to meet individual need.

Evidence to support the referral will be sought via the referral application form.

Equal Opportunities

The Academy is committed to equal opportunities and admits pupils/students across the full spectrum of academic abilities. All pupils/ students have equal access to the curriculum.

Based on admissions criteria, the academy will deliver an education that:

- Meets individual requirements (therefore is based on assessed needs);
- Prioritises academic attainment, with a specific emphasis on behaviour interventions and therapeutic support; and which,
- Focuses on multiple progression pathways – including reintegration back into mainstream as a priority up to key stage 3, and employability, enterprise and further education for key stage 4.

2. Referral/Admission arrangements

To acquire a place at the academy a young person must be referred by the local authority or an educational establishment (commissioners). Commissioners will use the attached referral form to refer to the academy.

Offers

When accepting a referral, the academy will write to the commissioner to formally accept the referral, including: financial requirements, the support to be offered, a start date within 6 days of receiving a referral and a date by which the offer should be accepted and the address to which to respond.

Procedure following an offer

When offer letters are sent, if the commissioner fails to accept the place by the date set out in the letter, it will be assumed that the commissioner no longer requires the place and the offer will be withdrawn.

3. Oversubscription criteria

If the Academy has more referrals than places (oversubscribed), priority will then be given to referrals in the following order:

- Referrals from a local authority
- Looked-after children and previously looked-after children
- Students who live closest to the academy (as measured in a direct line from the front door of the student's home to the main gate of the school). Tie breaks will prioritise those students who live furthest from the nearest alternative AP or PRU school (in line with Torbay Council policy).

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4. Pupil registration and information sharing.

Where students are on the roll of another school and attend for a short period of time (fixed-period exclusions/a school educating a child off-site/reason of illness/any other reason) the student will be dual registered at their current school and this Academy.

Where students are not on the roll of another school (permanent exclusions/any other reason) they will be registered at the Academy. We will work with the commissioner, the student and their carers, and others as appropriate, to identify the best school for reintegration.

5. Referral

The Referral Application Form should be completed by the local authority or referring school. This can be accessed and submitted via the academy website. The academy will acknowledge within 24 hours and, subject to meeting the admissions criteria and having a successful enrolment, we will notify acceptance within 6 days.

6. Induction process

On day one, the young person will be shown around the school facilities by a senior member of staff. Over the first two weeks, the young person will also be supported through assessment and development of the Individual Education Plan IEP by their advocate to ensure they settle into the environment and timetabling. At the end of their first week, their advocate will review progress and unlock any ongoing issues that have surfaced in school during the week.

We provide clear direction as to mealtimes, use of mobile phones, dress code and other day-to-day policies that will guide a young person through their time at the academy.

Ongoing support will be provided at the appropriate level based on the social skills of the young person and their ability to integrate.

7. Transition/ reintegration back to mainstream:

Each plan is differentiated to meet individual pupil need.

Regular and structured assessment involving the young person, parents/carers and other professionals is key to this process to ensure that the young person is ready to return to a mainstream setting. Key stages within this process are:

- Assessment school placement agreement and initial timelines
- Pupil agreement
- Parent/carer agreement
- Weekly review
- Phased transition timetable

Planning for transition begins in the term before, with short visits to the new school with their advocate. This helps the young person to gain confidence, get to know the school environment and build resilience in lessons. Transition speed is led by the young person and the transfer school.

During the transition phase, consistent and effective monitoring from the designated advocate ensures appropriate support, which is gradually reduced based on engagement and the young person gaining confidence within the new setting. Follow up meetings with school, referrer and parent/carer will take place at least once a month to feedback on progress.

8. Refusal:

The academy will only refuse a place on the following grounds:

1. The academy is full and therefore there are no available places
2. There is insufficient funding available to fund a place for the young person's needs.
3. The young person's needs are not provided for by the academy.

Should the academy be unable to accept a referral this will be communicated in writing to the commissioner in the first instance. This will be done within 6 days of receiving

the referral. The Academy may also make recommendations as alternative schools or academies that could support.

9. **Objections and complaints procedure**

Appeals

Should a commissioner or parent wish to appeal a decision not to accept a referral, appeals must be made in writing to:

**Torbay Independent Appeals Panel
c/o Governance Support
Town Hall
Castle Circus
Torquay
TQ1 3DR**

Alternatively you can email your appeal form and supporting evidence to:

governance.support@torbay.gov.uk.

A letter of acknowledgement will be sent within five working days upon receipt of your appeal form.

Further details of the appeals process can be found online at:

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/admissions/admissions-appeals/>

10. **Complaints**

Any objections to this policy or its application should be raised with the academy through its normal complaints process.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, you are able to complain to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) at: academy.questions@education.gsi.gov.uk

4. Related policies

The policy links to the following policies and documents:

- Equal Opportunities Statement
- Education Plan
- Academies Financial Handbook

5. Appendices

Annex 1: Equality Impact Assessment

1. Summary

This EIA is for:	Referrals and Admissions Policy
EIA completed by:	Steven Hulme (Headteacher)
Date of assessment:	September 2023
Assessment approved by:	LGB

The academy is committed to always: avoiding the potential for unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and, foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying whether or not strategies, projects, services, guidance, practices or policies have an adverse or positive impact on a particular group of people or equality group. Whilst currently only public bodies are legally required to complete EIA's under the Equality Act 2010, Catch22 has adopted the process in line with its commitment to continually improve our equality performance.

Policy owners are required to complete or review the assessment indicating whether the policy has a positive, neutral or negative impact for people who it applies to and who share one or more of the 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Definitions are based on the Equality & Human Rights (EHRC) guidance.

Objectives and intended outcomes

This EIA has been completed in order to ensure that the implications and potential impact, positive and negative, of this policy have been fully considered and addressed, whether or not people share a protected characteristic.

2. Potential Impacts, positive and negative

Equality Area	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Please give details including any mitigation for negative impacts
Age Does this policy impact on any particular age groups or people of a certain age?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of age. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of their age.
Disability Does this policy impact on people who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of any disability. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of any disability.
Gender reassignment (transsexual, transgender, trans) Does this policy impact on people who are transitioning from one gender to another (at any stage)	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of their gender at any given time. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of their gender.
Marriage and civil partnership Does this policy impact on people who are legally married or in a civil partnership?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of marital status. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of their marital status.
Pregnancy and maternity (in work this is linked to maternity leave, non-work this is for 26 weeks after giving birth) Does this policy impact on people who are pregnant or in their maternity period	☐	☒	☐	It is not considered that the policy positive or negatively impacts on pregnant women or on staff on maternity or paternity leave.

following the birth of their child?				
Race Does this policy impact on people as defined by their race, colour and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of their race, origin, colour or nationality. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively in these respects.
Religion and belief Does this policy impact on people who practice a particular religion or none, or who hold particular religious or philosophical belief or none?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of religion or beliefs. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively in these respects.
Sex Does this policy impact on people because they are male or female?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of their sex. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of their sex.
Sexual orientation Does this policy impact on people who are sexually attracted towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all staff and pupils regardless of their sexual orientation. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of their sexual orientation.

3. More information/notes

Please add any links to key documents or websites to evidence or give further detail on any impacts identified.

