Our Rock Academy

Admissions Policy

" A nurturing, ambitious and inclusive school where every child feels known, valued and connected."

Author: Lauren Benson

Approved by: Emmanuel Ajayi

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Resilience, Ownership, Creativity and Kindness

Policy Statement

Our Rock Academy is a specialist independent secondary school for pupils in Years 7 to 11. We are committed to a fair, transparent and inclusive admissions process. This policy sets out how pupils are admitted, how equality of opportunity is promoted and how admission decisions are made in line with the Equality Act 2010, the Independent School Standards, Keeping Children Safe in Education and relevant SEND legislation.

Choosing the right school for your child or young person is an important decision. At Our Rock Academy we believe that visiting the school is an essential part of the admissions process. We warmly welcome prospective parents, carers and young people to visit the school, meet members of our leadership team and see our specialist provision in action.

Visits are arranged by appointment throughout the year and provide an opportunity to discuss your child's individual needs, learn more about our curriculum and therapeutic approach and tour the school. As part of our admissions process, a minimum of two trial days will be arranged as part of the admissions assessment to help determine whether Our Rock Academy is the right placement for the young person.

This Admissions Policy applies to all applications for admission to Our Rock Academy.

Admissions criteria

Our Rock Academy provides specialist education for secondary-aged pupils whose primary needs are associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

To be considered for a place, applicants should normally meet the following criteria:

- Be of secondary school age
- An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), where one has been issued. Applications for pupils without an EHCP will also be considered where sufficient professional information is available to assess whether Our Rock Academy can meet their needs.
- Have needs that can be appropriately met within the Academy's specialist provision, taking into account the needs of the existing pupil cohort.
- Be able to access learning within a small, structured classroom environment with appropriate support.

- Demonstrate that Our Rock Academy is able to provide a safe and suitable placement without adversely affecting the education, wellbeing or safety of other pupils or staff.
- Participate in a minimum of two trial days, with reasonable adjustments to the format where needed, so that the Academy can assess whether it can meet the pupil's needs.
- Parents, carers and professionals are willing to work collaboratively with the Academy, maintaining open communication and supporting agreed strategies to achieve the best outcomes for the young person.

For local authority-funded placements, Our Rock Academy will review the pupil's EHCP and relevant professional reports and respond to the local authority within 15 days of receiving the consultation. The school will arrange the two trial days within the consultation period and consider evidence from those visits alongside the EHCP and professional reports. For privately funded applications, we will request equivalent information to assess whether we can meet the pupil's needs.

For each pupil whose place is wholly or partly funded by a local authority, the proprietor will ensure that an annual account of the income received and expenditure incurred in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority.

Equal opportunities and information sharing

Our Rock Academy is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment where every child and young person is treated with fairness and respect. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and do not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity or marriage or civil partnership, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

To ensure that we make informed decisions about whether we are able to meet a prospective pupil's needs, parents, carers, local authorities and other professionals are expected to provide accurate, complete and up-to-date information during the admissions process. This should include relevant Education, Health and Care Plans, professional assessments, medical information, risk assessments and any other documentation that will assist the Academy in assessing suitability for placement.

If significant information is withheld, inaccurate or misleading or if circumstances change before admission and are not disclosed, Our Rock Academy reserves the right to review or withdraw an offer of a place where it is no longer able to demonstrate that it can meet the pupil's needs safely and effectively. Any such decision will be made by the Headteacher and where appropriate the SENCo

fairly, proportionately and following discussion with parents, carers and where applicable, the relevant local authority.

Reasonable adjustments

Our Rock Academy is committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage and can access the Academy's admissions process and educational provision, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

As a specialist setting, we carefully consider the individual needs of every prospective pupil alongside our staffing, facilities, resources and the needs of the existing pupil cohort. During the admissions process, we work with parents, carers, local authorities and other professionals to identify any reasonable adjustments that may be required to support a child or young person's successful transition and participation in school life.

Where adjustments are requested, these will be considered on an individual basis. If, following a full assessment, the Academy concludes that it is unable to meet a child or young person's needs safely or effectively, even with reasonable adjustments, a place may not be offered. Any decision will be made following careful consideration of all available information and, where appropriate, in consultation with the parents, carers and commissioning local authority.

Parents, carers and professionals are encouraged to share all relevant information at the earliest opportunity, including the pupil’s Education, Health and Care Plan, professional reports, medical information and any recommendations relating to access arrangements or additional support. This enables the Academy to make informed decisions and plan appropriate provision where a placement is agreed.

Where a pupil is privately funded, equivalent professional reports and supporting documentation should be provided to enable the Academy to assess whether it can meet the pupil's needs.

Trial Days and baseline assessments

Prospective pupils will attend a minimum of two trial days as part of the admissions assessment. The school will arrange these promptly so that it can respond to local authority consultations within 15 days. The format of the trial days will be adapted to the pupil’s needs, including any reasonable adjustments.

These visits provide the Academy with an opportunity to understand the pupil's strengths, needs and preferred learning approaches within the school environment, while also allowing the pupil to become familiar with the Academy's routines and expectations.

During the trial days, pupils will complete a range of baseline assessments, including GL Assessments and psychometric assessments where appropriate. Observations will also be carried out by the SENCo and where appropriate, members of the therapeutic team to assess the pupil's learning, communication, social interaction, emotional regulation and support needs. Information gathered during the assessment process, alongside professional reports and consultation documentation, will be used to determine whether Our Rock Academy is able to meet the pupil's needs and provide an appropriate educational placement.

Initial Three-Month Review

During a pupil's first three months at Our Rock Academy, staff will complete a comprehensive assessment period to develop a detailed understanding of the pupil's academic attainment, communication, social, emotional and behavioural needs, strengths and aspirations. Baseline assessments, classroom observations and ongoing monitoring will be used to inform personalised provision and establish an accurate picture of the pupil's needs within the Academy environment.

At the end of this period, the SENCo will coordinate information from teaching staff, therapists (where involved) and other relevant professionals to review the pupil's provision and progress, including the provision in Section F of their EHCP where they have one. This evidence will be used to evaluate progress towards agreed outcomes, identify any adjustments to provision and inform the next review of the pupil's provision and, where applicable, their EHCP annual review.

Where appropriate, parents, carers and the local authority will be invited to discuss the pupil's progress and any changes that may be needed to their provision and, where they have an EHCP, its outcomes. Where the pupil has an EHCP or a local authority-funded placement, the school will share relevant evidence and recommendations with the local authority.

Following the three-month review, parents and carers will continue to work in partnership with the Academy through regular communication, parents' evenings and, where the pupil has an EHCP, the statutory annual review process. Maintaining strong communication helps ensure that each pupil receives consistent support and is able to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Appendix 1: Trial day process visual



Appendix 2: Admissions process chart

