



## Admissions Policy

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An academy within:



“Learning together, to be the best we can be”

## 1. Context

- 1.1. Discovery Academy is a special school with 80 planned places for children aged 5 – 16, specialising in provision for special education needs with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), with related Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH). We currently have 90 children on roll from September 2023 which is over the planned places for our school.

Key stage	Number of pupils for 2022-23
KS2 (7-11yrs)	40
KS3 (11-14yrs)	40
KS4 (14 -16 yrs)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>

- 1.2. Prior to naming the school on a child's EHCP, a Local Authority must fully consult with the school in line with its statutory obligations.
- 1.3 Places at Discovery are funded in line with the High Needs Block Operational Guidance. Where children have additional needs, this will be defined by the school and agreed by the commissioning Local Authority.

## 2. Admission Criteria and Arrangements

- 2.1. Places will usually be taken up at the start of the school year, though by agreement with the Headteacher, places can be accessed at any time of the year. Admissions are generally only agreed if an EHCP has been completed and the needs of the child have been clearly defined in line with the school's designation.
- 2.2. In exceptional circumstances, and in line with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015), the school may consider assessment placements in order to support a Statutory Assessment.
- 2.3. Consideration will always need to be given to the numbers in - and profile of - each year group.

## 3. Referral Routes

- 3.1. Parents/carers who wish to consider a place at the school for their child should contact their Local Authority SEND Assessment Team for guidance on relevant procedures

- 3.2. All EHCPs should incorporate clear and accurate description of needs together with appropriate funding to meet those needs. However, when this does not occur the school will negotiate, with the commissioning Local Authority, for the appropriate level of bespoke funding for the placement to be viable and sustainable. A formal review of the EHCP will be requested if needed.

## 4. Admission Eligibility Criteria

- 4.1. The school is suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude, disability and assessed special educational needs;
- 4.2. The child has an EHCP indicating a diagnosis of ASD with related Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH);
- 4.3. Parents and/or the child have expressed a preference for the school or in cases of dispute, the local authority has agreed with the school to name it in the EHCP;
- 4.4. The child's placement in the school is compatible with the efficient education of others and the efficient use of resources
- 4.5. The commissioning local authority provides top-up funding in line with the assessed needs of the child's educational, behavioural (including any additional supervisory requirements), medical and care needs and is relative to the cost to the school for delivering a support package which enables at least good provision to be in place, where this is more than the defined top-up rate outlined in this admissions policy.

## 5. Admissions Criteria/Priorities for when Placements are Limited

- 5.1. The placement allows for efficient use of school resources;
- 5.2. The placement is appropriate for the designation of the school;
- 5.3. An EHCP is in place which fully assesses the child and quantifies required provision.

## 6. Appeal Arrangements

- 6.1. The SEND Code of Practice entitles parents to appeal to the SEN and Disability Tribunal if their home LA refuses to name their school of choice in the EHCP or the named school refuses to offer a place.
- 6.2. Discovery Academy, as part of Nexus Multi Academy Trust, will always ensure that parents and the commissioning Local Authority are kept informed when the school is considering refusing an admission. The school will be clear with both parents and the Local Authority about the reasons underpinning a potential refusal which, by law, must relate directly to the suitability of the placement for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person, or to concerns that the placement would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources
- 6.3. Where a parent is unhappy that the school is considering refusing admission, the school, Trust and Local Authority will consider any reasonable steps that could be taken to address identified concerns before a final decision is made. Parents must be informed that if they wish to appeal, the grounds for an appeal must be set out in writing.

## 7. Funding of Places

- 7.1. Local Authorities commission and fund places for pupils at the school based upon identified needs established through a Multi-Agency Statutory Assessment that are costed and recorded in an EHCP.
- 7.2. The Education & Skills Funding Agency provides some core funding for an agreed number of planned places but it is commissioning Local Authorities that are responsible for ensuring that funding is appropriately matched to needs identified in EHCPs.