SP10 – ADMISSION POLICY & PROCEDURE

RISE Learning Zone.
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1st Issue	Updated policy	Kirsty Sanders	07.2025
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Full Policy Sign Off

Signed 

Printed Kirsty Sander

Position Director

Dated 08.2026

Admissions and Referral Policy

1. Purpose

RISE Learning Zone CIC is an inclusive Alternative Provision provider offering education and personalised support to young people who may be experiencing difficulties accessing or engaging successfully with mainstream education.

RISE works primarily with **schools, local authorities and other appropriate commissioning bodies** to provide alternative education placements for learners who may benefit from a more flexible, personalised and supportive educational environment.

Our provision is designed to help learners re-engage with education, develop confidence and independence, achieve appropriate qualifications and make successful transitions to further education, employment, training or other appropriate destinations.

RISE recognises that learners accessing Alternative Provision may have a wide range of needs and circumstances, including difficulties with attendance, engagement, behaviour, SEND, social and emotional needs, barriers to learning or other circumstances affecting their ability to access mainstream education.

We aim to provide a safe, nurturing and aspirational environment in which learners are supported to make progress.

2. Scope

This policy applies to referrals for learners aged **11–16 years**, normally within Key Stages 3 and 4.

RISE may accept referrals from:

- maintained schools
- academies
- local authorities
- other education providers or commissioning bodies where appropriate
- other organisations where there is an appropriate commissioning arrangement.

For learners of compulsory school age, RISE does not operate as an alternative route for parents/carers to independently enrol a child in education. Placements are normally commissioned or arranged by the appropriate school or local authority.

The School Admissions Code does not govern referrals to non-school AP providers in the same way as it governs admissions to mainstream schools. RISE will nevertheless operate a fair, transparent and objective referral process. (GOV.UK)

3. Our Admissions Principles

RISE aims to ensure that:

- referrals are considered fairly and consistently
- the needs and best interests of the learner remain central
- safeguarding is prioritised
- the provision is suitable for the learner's educational, social, emotional and SEND needs
- reasonable adjustments are considered
- learners and parents/carers are appropriately involved
- referring schools and commissioners provide sufficient information to enable RISE to assess suitability and risk
- learners receive suitable education from the agreed start date
- placements are regularly reviewed

- transitions into and out of RISE are carefully managed
- no learner is refused solely because they have SEND, a disability or a history of challenging behaviour;
- RISE does not accept a placement where it cannot reasonably meet the learner's needs or maintain a safe environment.

4. Learner Profile

RISE provides education for learners who may not currently be engaging successfully with mainstream education and who may benefit from:

- smaller group sizes
- personalised learning
- additional pastoral support
- a flexible curriculum
- vocational and practical learning
- additional support with literacy and numeracy
- support with behaviour and emotional regulation
- increased adult support
- a more relational and nurturing educational environment
- preparation for post-16 education, employment or training.

Learners may present with a range of needs, including:

- persistent or significant attendance difficulties
- disengagement from education
- behavioural difficulties
- SEND
- social, emotional and mental health needs
- difficulties with emotional regulation
- literacy or numeracy difficulties
- difficulties associated with previous educational experiences
- other barriers to accessing mainstream education.

The presence of a particular need does not automatically mean that RISE will or will not be able to offer a placement. Suitability will be considered on an individual basis.

5. Referral Criteria

A learner may be considered for referral where the home school or commissioning body believes that RISE may provide a suitable educational placement.

Referrals may be considered where a learner:

- is not engaging effectively with mainstream education
- is at risk of disengagement or becoming persistently absent
- requires a smaller or more personalised learning environment
- would benefit from vocational or practical learning
- requires additional pastoral or behavioural support
- has SEND or other additional needs that can reasonably be supported within the RISE environment
- requires a flexible approach to learning
- would benefit from an Alternative Provision placement as part of a wider education package.

A referral does not automatically guarantee admission.

RISE will consider whether it can safely and effectively meet the learner's needs within the resources, staffing, environment and curriculum available.

6. Information Required Before Admission

Before a placement begins, RISE will request appropriate information from the referring school or commissioning body.

This should include, where applicable:

- learner's full name and date of birth
- current school and year group
- parent/carer contact details
- attendance information
- educational history
- attainment and assessment information
- current curriculum
- SEND information
- EHC plan where applicable
- individual support plans
- behaviour information
- safeguarding information relevant to the placement
- known risks
- medical information
- allergies
- medication requirements
- previous or current involvement from external agencies
- relevant social care information
- information relating to exclusions or previous AP placements
- details of any risk assessments
- information regarding known triggers and effective strategies
- qualifications already achieved
- current targets and predicted outcomes.

Information must be sufficient to allow RISE to make an informed assessment of the suitability and safety of the proposed placement.

Where information is incomplete, RISE may request additional information before confirming a start date.

7. Safeguarding and Risk Assessment

Safeguarding is a fundamental consideration in every referral.

The referring school or commissioning body must provide relevant safeguarding and risk information before the learner begins their placement.

RISE will consider:

- known safeguarding concerns
- risks to the learner
- risks posed by or to other learners
- exploitation risks
- serious violence or criminal exploitation
- sexual violence or harassment
- bullying or child-on-child abuse
- online risks
- missing education concerns
- medical or mental health considerations
- known behavioural triggers
- previous incidents
- any other information relevant to safe placement.

The RISE Designated Safeguarding Lead will be involved where safeguarding concerns are identified.

RISE may decline, defer or seek further information regarding a placement where it does not have sufficient information to safely assess the associated risks.

This does not mean that safeguarding information should be withheld because of confidentiality concerns. Information will be shared in accordance with safeguarding and information-sharing requirements.

8. SEND and Reasonable Adjustments

RISE is committed to inclusive practice.

Where a learner has SEND or a disability, RISE will consider whether reasonable adjustments, additional support or adaptations can be made to enable the learner to access the provision.

This may include consideration of:

- learning environment
- communication
- sensory needs
- curriculum
- timetable
- staffing
- transitions
- behaviour support
- access arrangements
- medical needs.

Where a learner has an EHC plan, RISE will work with the referring school, local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure that the placement is consistent with the learner's identified needs and provision.

RISE will not use the existence of SEND or disability alone as a reason to refuse a placement.

However, RISE must be satisfied that it can reasonably meet the learner's needs and maintain a safe and effective learning environment.

9. Referral Process

Referrals should normally be initiated by the school or commissioning body.

The process will generally involve:

Stage 1 – Initial Referral

The referring organisation contacts RISE and provides initial information about the learner and the reason for referral.

Stage 2 – Information Gathering

RISE reviews the information provided and identifies any additional information required.

Stage 3 – Suitability Discussion

RISE discusses the proposed placement with the referring school/commissioner and, where appropriate, the learner and parent/carer.

This discussion will consider:

- learner needs
- educational objectives

- attendance
- behaviour
- safeguarding
- SEND
- curriculum
- timetable
- transport
- expected outcomes
- placement duration
- review arrangements.

Stage 4 – Visit / Meeting

Where appropriate, the learner and parent/carer will be invited to visit RISE and meet relevant staff.

This provides an opportunity to:

- understand the provision
- discuss expectations
- identify support needs
- answer questions
- begin building a positive relationship.

Stage 5 – Placement Decision

RISE will confirm whether the proposed placement is suitable and whether a place is available.

Where the placement is accepted, the referring organisation and parent/carer will be informed of the agreed arrangements.

Stage 6 – Start and Induction

A start date will be agreed.

The learner will receive an induction covering:

- RISE expectations
- behaviour
- safeguarding
- attendance
- health and safety
- emergency procedures
- curriculum
- support arrangements
- key staff.

10. Admission and Start Date

A placement is only confirmed once RISE has:

- agreed that the placement is suitable
- confirmed that a place is available
- received sufficient information to assess needs and risk
- agreed the funding/commissioning arrangements
- agreed the start date
- completed the required admission documentation.

The learner's attendance will be monitored from the agreed start date.

Where appropriate, RISE will provide attendance information to the referring school or commissioning body.

11. Roll-On, Roll-Off Admissions

RISE operates a flexible admissions model and may accept referrals throughout the academic year, subject to available places and suitability.

This flexibility reflects the nature of Alternative Provision, where learners may require a placement at different points during the school year.

RISE will seek to ensure that learners joining during the year receive:

- an appropriate induction
- baseline assessment
- curriculum planning
- pastoral support
- appropriate qualifications and learning opportunities
- access to the support necessary to make progress.

Where a learner is expected to remain at RISE for a limited period, the curriculum will be planned to ensure that meaningful progress and achievement can still be made.

12. Allocation of Places

Places will not be allocated solely on a first-come, first-served basis.

RISE will consider:

- suitability of the placement
- learner needs
- safeguarding and risk
- available staffing
- curriculum capacity
- group composition
- available places
- commissioning arrangements
- the urgency of the learner's educational need.

RISE may prioritise a learner where there is an identified urgent need for Alternative Provision.

Where a suitable place is unavailable, RISE will, where possible, inform the referring organisation and may advise when a place is expected to become available.

13. Trial and Review Period

Where appropriate, a placement may begin with an agreed initial review period.

The purpose of this period is not to create an informal exclusion mechanism but to ensure that the placement is working effectively for the learner and RISE.

The review will consider:

- attendance
- engagement
- behaviour
- safeguarding
- progress

- relationships
- curriculum suitability
- SEND needs
- wellbeing
- whether the placement continues to meet the learner's needs.

The length of the review period will depend on the individual circumstances and will be agreed with the learner, parent/carer and referring organisation.

A placement should not be ended solely because a learner experiences difficulties during the initial period. Where concerns arise, RISE will seek to identify appropriate support and work with the referring organisation.

14. Placement Review

Placements will be reviewed regularly with the referring school or commissioning body.

Reviews may consider:

- attendance
- attainment and progress
- qualifications
- behaviour
- wellbeing
- safeguarding
- engagement
- SEND provision
- future educational plans
- whether the placement remains appropriate.

The frequency of formal reviews will depend on the learner and commissioning arrangements.

For learners with an EHC plan, relevant statutory review arrangements will also be followed.

15. Placement Breakdown or Ending a Placement

RISE aims to maintain placements wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.

However, a placement may need to be reviewed or ended where:

- RISE is no longer able to meet the learner's needs
- risks cannot reasonably be managed
- the learner's needs have changed significantly
- the placement is no longer educationally appropriate
- agreed commissioning arrangements end
- the referring school or local authority determines that another placement is more appropriate
- there is serious behaviour or safeguarding risk that cannot be safely managed within the provision.

RISE will not use informal or unofficial exclusion arrangements as a substitute for any statutory suspension or exclusion process that may apply to the referring school.

Where RISE believes a placement cannot safely continue, the matter will be discussed with the referring school/commissioning body and an appropriate transition plan agreed.

The referring school or local authority remains responsible for fulfilling its statutory duties regarding the learner's education where applicable.

16. Transition and Leaving RISE

RISE recognises that successful transition is an important part of Alternative Provision.

When a learner leaves RISE, we will provide appropriate information to the next educational provider or referring school, subject to lawful information-sharing arrangements.

This may include:

- attendance
- qualifications achieved
- curriculum completed
- progress information
- assessment information
- behaviour and pastoral information where appropriate
- relevant support strategies
- individual learning plans
- transition recommendations.

RISE will aim to minimise disruption to the learner's education.

17. Attendance

Learners are expected to attend RISE in accordance with their agreed timetable.

RISE will monitor attendance and share attendance information with the referring school or commissioning body as agreed.

Where a learner does not attend, RISE will follow its attendance procedures and notify the relevant school/commissioner where appropriate.

Persistent or unexplained absence may result in a review of the placement and, where appropriate, consideration of safeguarding or welfare concerns.

Schools and local authorities retain their statutory responsibilities concerning children missing education and school attendance where applicable. (GOV.UK)

18. Funding and Commissioning

Before a placement begins, RISE and the referring organisation will agree:

- placement start date
- number of sessions/days
- placement duration where known
- funding arrangements
- invoicing arrangements
- curriculum and qualifications
- responsibilities of each organisation
- review arrangements.

A learner will not normally begin a placement until the commissioning arrangements have been confirmed.

19. Parent and Learner Involvement

RISE believes that successful placements are built around positive relationships with learners and their families.

Learners and parents/carers will be given appropriate information about:

- the RISE environment
- curriculum
- expectations
- behaviour
- attendance
- safeguarding
- support available
- placement arrangements
- how concerns can be raised.

Learners will be encouraged to contribute to decisions about their education wherever appropriate to their age and understanding.

20. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

RISE will process personal information in accordance with its Data Protection and Information Sharing policies and applicable data protection legislation.

Information will be shared where there is a lawful basis to do so.

Where safeguarding concerns exist, information may be shared without consent where this is necessary and lawful to protect a child or another person.

RISE will work collaboratively with schools, local authorities and other professionals to ensure that relevant information is available to support safe and effective placements.

21. Equalities

RISE is committed to equality, inclusion and non-discrimination.

Admissions decisions will not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

RISE will consider reasonable adjustments for disabled learners and learners with SEND.

The organisation will monitor its admissions arrangements to ensure they remain fair, transparent and inclusive.

22. Complaints

Any concerns regarding the admissions or referral process should initially be raised with the Senior Leadership Team.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the RISE Complaints Policy should be followed.

A refusal or ending of a placement will not prevent a parent/carer or referring organisation from raising a complaint about the process.

23. Roles and Responsibilities

RISE Learning Zone CIC

RISE is responsible for:

- assessing the suitability of placements
- providing safe and appropriate education
- implementing appropriate safeguarding arrangements
- monitoring attendance and progress

- providing appropriate curriculum and support
- communicating with parents/carers and commissioners
- reviewing placements
- supporting transitions.

Referring School / Commissioner

The referring organisation is responsible for:

- making an appropriate referral
- providing accurate and complete information
- sharing relevant safeguarding, SEND, medical and risk information
- maintaining appropriate oversight of the learner's education where required
- working collaboratively with RISE
- attending placement reviews
- supporting transition
- fulfilling any statutory duties that remain with the school or local authority.

Parent/Carer

Parents/carers are expected to:

- provide accurate information
- support regular attendance
- communicate concerns
- work collaboratively with RISE
- support agreed strategies
- attend meetings where appropriate.

Learner

Learners are expected to:

- attend regularly
- engage with learning
- follow reasonable instructions
- treat others respectfully
- follow RISE's behaviour expectations
- contribute to their own progress and development.

24. Monitoring and Review

The Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of the Admissions and Referral Policy.

This will include consideration of:

- number and type of referrals
- referral outcomes
- admission timescales
- learner characteristics and needs
- safeguarding information
- attendance
- placement stability
- placement breakdowns
- learner progress

- qualifications achieved
- transitions
- feedback from learners, parents/carers and commissioners.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or RISE's provision changes.