# Horizons Specialist Academy Trust

# Admissions Policy

**Reviewed and Adopted by Board of Trustees: 7 July 2026**

**Date of Next Review: Summer 2027**

**Responsible Officer: Principal, Hollis Academy**

## Introduction

Horizons Specialist Academy Trust is a specialist multi-academy trust with eight academies and a sixth form attached to one of the academies. These academies support over 1000 children and young people with a range of special needs. The eight academies are;

- Abbey Hill Academy and Sixth Form, a special school for young people with a range of learning needs, autism and complex needs.

- Archway Academy is a pupil referral unit, which caters for young people aged 11-16 who have been or are at risk of permanent exclusion from Redcar and Cleveland mainstream schools. The primary needs of pupils at Archway are social, emotional and mental health.

- Green Gates Academy, a primary school for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMHD), including some diagnosed conditions such as ASD and ADHD.

- Hollis Academy, a secondary school for young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMHD), including some diagnosed conditions such as ASD and ADHD. Hollis also has two stand-alone classes of ASD students.

- Mo Mowlam Academy, an all-through school for young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMHD), including some diagnosed conditions such as ASD and ADHD.

- The Meadows Academy, a secondary school for young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMHD), including some diagnosed conditions such as ASD and ADHD.

- Westlands Academy, a secondary school for young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMHD), including some diagnosed conditions such as ASD and ADHD.

- The Woodlands Academy**,** a special school for young people aged between 2-16 years old with a wide range of additional needs, including autism and complex needs.

This policy is relevant to all Trustees, staff, parents, carers, pupils, students and Local Authority representatives who are involved in the admission of a pupil or student to one of the above academies.

The Trust aims to ensure that pupils and students are admitted to each academy on the basis that the provision will be suitable to the age, aptitude, ability and needs of the individual pupil or student.

The procedures outlined in this policy are intended to allow the Trust the fullest discussion and assessment of individual pupils and students where a request for a place has been received.

The Trust will work in partnership with Local Authorities, parents and carers to assess the suitability of pupils and students for a place within one of the academies.

## Equal Opportunities

The admissions policy will promote equally the rights of all pupils and students regardless of disability, ethnic background, language, culture, faith and gender.

## Equality Impact Assessment

The Trust has considered the impact of this Admissions Policy in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Admissions decisions are based on the individual needs of pupils and students and the suitability of provision, and are made in partnership with Local Authorities and families. The Trust is committed to ensuring fair, transparent and inclusive admissions processes that do not disadvantage any individual or group. This policy will be applied consistently and in accordance with the Trust's Equality & Diversity Policy.

## Admission Criteria

All admissions of pupils and students admitted to one of our academies will have been at the request of a Local Authority to ensure that admission is appropriate to age, aptitude and ability and is seen as efficient and effective use of resources. Parents and carers are welcome to visit any of the academies and can be provided with information about the academy but we cannot proceed with an admission without Local Authority support.

## Admissions Process

We encourage all parents and carers to seek information on the academy that they feel would meet the needs of their child or young person prior to admission.

Once request documentation for a place has been received from a Local Authority, it will be considered by the Principal of the Academy. If a request has been made to more than one academy within the Trust then further discussion takes place at the Trust's Executive Team meeting, which take place on a fortnightly basis.

The following people constitute the panel within the academy; the Principal of the Academy, Senior Leadership Team in the Academy and the SENCO or equivalent.

Prior to the request being considered by the academy, the parent and carers and the pupil or student may be invited to the academy for a pre admission interview and a tour of the academy. It may also be appropriate for the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team to visit the pupil or student in their current school or academy to gain further insight into their special educational needs and to talk to staff. Information from such contact which is relevant to the decision-making process may be considered by the academy panel.

Applications for places at Archway will originate from a number of sources:

- Direct from local authorities – permanently excluded students or those at risk of permanent exclusion from schools may be referred under section 10 of the Education Act 1996 – The Local Authority have decided that this will be referred to the Redcar and Cleveland Fair Access Panel.
- Mainstream schools and academies may refer permanently excluded students (section 19 of the Education Act 1996), students at risk of permanent exclusion or students who they feel would benefit from their education being directed to the academy (section 29 of the Education Act 2002) –Headteachers in Redcar and Cleveland agreed to discharge their duty of this to the Fair Access Process (FAP) which includes triage by the inclusion team. When a commissioner/school wishes to refer a student to the academy, the FAP Referral Form must be completed in full and sent to the inclusion team.

Applications for places at The Woodlands:

- Following a consultation the Local Authority will take responsibility for progressing any placement, and will make contact with the parent/carer as appropriate.

**Acceptance**

If after consideration of the request documentation including levels of funding from the Local Authority and any additional relevant information the Panel concludes that the student would be suitable for admission to a Trust academy, an offer of a place, confirmation as to the level of funding and start date will be sent to the Local Authority seeking a place and to the parent and carer.
Prior to admission the parent and carer will be asked to complete an admission pack and it is important that where possible, this is completed prior to admission. This may include a visit to the school to meet key staff.

The Local Authority will be informed by the Panel if it considers that a placement would not be appropriate.

**Two Week Assessment Placement**

In exceptional cases where the Panel has concerns about the suitability of a placement, it may at its discretion and in agreement with parents and carers, agree for the pupil or student to have a two-week assessment placement at the academy as an alternative to rejecting the request, after which the request will be reconsidered at the next Panel meeting and a final decision on admission reached. This is not available at Woodlands Academy.

Students transferring from other schools and academies to the Abbey Hill Sixth Form rather than progressing from year 11 at Abbey Hill Academy will complete a similar two- week assessment placement during which time information will be gathered and assessments undertaken, after which the request for placement will be considered at the next Panel meeting and a decision on admission reached.

## Six-Week Interim Review

If the Academy or Sixth Form has concerns during the first 6 weeks of a pupil's or student's attendance that the placement may not be appropriate an interim review will be held and an alternative provision considered.

This does not apply to Archway Academy.

## Department for Education Statutory Guidance 'Children Missing Education' September 2016 (the Guidance)

The Trust wishes to highlight that its academies will take steps to ensure that they adhere to responsibilities placed on schools under the Guidance. One particular duty (point 16) is that schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.