The Parkside School
learn grow thrive

Admissions Policy

Approved by:	Mrs C Ellis-Gage Head Teacher	**Date:** April 2025
Signed:		
Next review :	April 2026 Mrs C Ellis – Gage Head Teacher	

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1. Introduction

Norfolk County Council Children's Services (NCCCS) is the 'admissions authority' to Maintained Complex Needs Schools. The criteria for admissions to special schools relates to the criteria for an 'Education Health and Care Plan' as identified in the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years' 2014.and Part 3 of the 'Children and Families Act' 2014. This document should be read in conjunction with the Norfolk County Council document 'Admissions to Special Schools' Guidance for Schools and Officers July 2012.

Parkside is currently designated as a Complex Needs School for 174 pupils aged 7 - 19 (mixed).
Where the word parent is used in this document it refers to anyone taking on the responsibility for parenting.

2. Aims

The school works closely with representatives of Children's Services to ensure that pupils are appropriately placed and their needs can be met. We aim to be as flexible as possible in meeting the individual learning needs of children rather than being rigid in terms of criteria.

3. The Admissions Process

State funded special schools provide special educational needs (SEN) support for children and young people. Children and young people who attend a special school need SEN support over and above what is available in a mainstream school.

All pupils who attend a special school will have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. (Most children with an EHC Plan attend their local mainstream school, not a special school.)

Parents have a right to state their preference for a maintained school for their child. (mainstream or complex needs). Parents receive information about available schools locally and also the support available from Parent Partnership and voluntary organisations.

In line with its Equal Opportunity Policy, The Parkside School, as a fully inclusive school, admits students irrespective of gender, sexual orientation/identity, disability, race or belief.

The school does not operate a waiting list.

3.1 Definition of Complex Needs

A child/young person may be considered for a place in a Complex Needs School if they can be described as having A and either B and or C in the following three categories:

A. They have a diagnosed learning disability or difficulty and will be functioning at a very or extremely low level of cognitive and general ability.

B. Where, despite a period of sustained reasonable adjustment strategies from the child's mainstream setting, the child's needs continue to be unmet.

C. They present with multiple coexisting complexities of need that require sustained specialist interventions, therapies and teaching approaches that can be more appropriately delivered within a complex needs school and class sizes that do not exceed government statutory advice around pupil to class space ratios

These significant needs might include:
Learning Difficulties
Multi-sensory impairments
Profound and multiple learning difficulties
Physical impairment
Sensory impairment
Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Complex health (including technology dependent)
Associated Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
Severe speech, language and communication difficulties

A Complex Needs School will not be tasked with supporting children and young people whose main presenting difficulty is Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs who have a cognitive profile within the normal range and whose recent [last six months] access to the curriculum in their current placement has been in line with expectations of ultimate potential.

The admission process will:

Be clearly outlined to prospective parents / carers which may include making opportunities for parents / carers to visit to help them make an informed decision both informally and formally.
Be handled as sensitively as possible taking into account both the needs of the pupil and their family.
Begin to establish the partnership with parents / carers and clarify expectations.
Facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between home and school through home visits and planned transition visits.
Enable parents / carers to become confident partners in their child's education.
Be sensitive to the needs of other pupils in the class and the resources available.
Include liaison with the external agencies involved with the pupil as appropriate (e.g. SALT, EP, Social Care, OT)

3.2 Sixth Form

Our sixth form has twelve spaces per year group. We follow the same admissions process for entry to this phase of our school. All pupils will be consulted on before entry, both those already attending Parkside School and those currently attending a different setting. All applications are made by submitting paperwork to the SEN Placements Team at the LA following the Year 11 Annual Review. The LA makes the final decision/offer of placement.

The places in Sixth form are for those for whom attending college is not yet appropriate. Existing Pupils are not guaranteed a place in Sixth Form, it is aimed to meet the needs of those pupils that do not have a clear route into Post 16 provision and will not gain an appropriate place at a college due to the vulnerability of their learning and social needs.

3.3 The Children's Services Placements Team

The Placements Team is responsible for the administration of all specialist educational and residential placements made by Norfolk Children's Services.

The Placements Team undertakes all consultation with maintained, non-maintained Complex Needs schools and independent schools and their relevant governing bodies on behalf of the LA in order to maintain a consistent process and to provide a clear single point of contact re admissions to these placements for all concerned.

The Placements Team issues all admission letters offering places at maintained, non-maintained and independent Complex Needs schools and liaises with the Procurement and Finance Sections with regard to contractual and financial arrangements regarding placements.

3.4 Dual Placements and Inclusion Placements – Mainstream and Complex Needs Schools

The school follows all advice and guidance issued by the Local Authority relating to dual placements.

3.5 Visiting the school

Parents, carers and professionals are most welcome to contact the school to arrange a visit. This can often help to understand whether a placement at the school would be appropriate for a pupil. As the school receives many such requests however, visitors are often asked, in the first instance, to attend one of our regular tours without their child.

3.6 Appeals

Information about whether a pupil has been granted a place at a complex needs school comes in a letter direct from the Local Authority and not via or from the school. Appeals against a placement in a complex needs school, or against a decision not to offer a place in a complex needs school, must therefore, be made

to the Local Authority. In the first instance this should be via the pupil's EHCP Coordinator. Up to date information on how to appeal will be contained with the placement letter

4. Additional information to support the policy

https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/education-and-learning/schools

School Admissions Code: Mandatory requirements and statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, schools adjudicators and admission appeals panels; Department for Education; September 2021