

Admissions, Remissions and Exclusions Policy – Children & Young People

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Purpose

To ensure there are planned and robust systems in place to support an efficient and consistent approach to referrals, admissions, remissions, exclusions, additional support provision and case conferences at NAS schools and young people's services. To also ensure assessments are conducted consistently and in a manner which will ensure needs can be met. Assessments will support the development of support plans which will allow the NAS to understand thoroughly its obligations towards an individual and the local authority which, have responsibility for placements, in accordance with the contract and all other documentation.

Scope

Applies to all NAS schools and young people's services.

This policy incorporates and updates the content relating to schools from the following former policies:

Referral policy (SO-0221); Admissions policy (SO-0002); Remissions policy (SO-0227); Exclusions policy (SO-0120); Additional Support policy (SO-0554) and Case Conference – Guidance Document (SO-0059); Management Systems – Schools O-0230, Admissions Policy (SO-0013).

Policy Summary

Each management system included in this policy forms part of a systematic planned approach to ensure each pupil/student is treated appropriately in all aspects of their placement and in a manner consistent with the individual's contract/statement of terms and conditions.

The following sections of this policy document set out broad statements and procedures for each element covered within this policy.

Referral

Plans must be in place to allow the NAS to discharge its obligations towards those clients and authorities having responsibility for placements, in accordance with the contract or other documentation.

Referrals will normally be accepted from pupils who have an autistic spectrum diagnosis identified on the statement of special educational needs and those with associated conditions. This need must be recognised through appropriate funding through the relevant statutory authority. The school must also be satisfied that the parents are supportive of the placement and that the needs of the child can be accommodated within the resources and benefit from the aims of the school.

Referral – Procedure

1. All referrals should be made directly to the school.
2. All referrals are logged on Caresys
3. Papers read by relevant members of SLT.
4. Assessment of potential pupil/student offered if criteria are met which includes the following:
 - Can we offer a compatible peer group?
 - Can we meet complex behavioural and learning needs?
 - Can we provide an appropriate curriculum and learning environment?
5. Parents are encouraged to visit and inspect the school. If they wish their child to be considered for admission they should contact the relevant Local Authority and request that admission procedures are initiated. Parents will also be given a copy of the schools prospectus and guide to admissions leaflet.
6. The local authority (except in the case of tribunals) will send information about the child to the school. At least 2 members of the schools admissions panel will read the pupil's papers and determine whether given the current information it is likely that the pupil's needs could be met by the school.
7. The NAS cannot undertake assessments at the request of parents/carers.
8. The National Autistic Society reserves the right to recoup reasonable costs incurred for travel and assessment.
9. All decisions relating to the proposed placement of any individual are confidential. There will be open communication with relatives, carers and advocates, which acknowledges and respects the needs of each individual.

10. Schools must inform Business Services, Bristol Office of vacancies each week on NASS2 forms. Vacancies are monitored by Head of Contracts/Customer Care.

Admissions

Admission processes will be planned and agreed with individual we support or /and their parents where possible to ensure all needs and expectations can be met.

We accept referrals from Local Authorities (LA). Whilst parents are welcome to visit the school and can be provided with information about the school, the school cannot proceed to the admissions stage without local authority support.

All pupils must have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health Care plan (EHC). This Statement or EHC must contain either a diagnosis of autism or have a clear reference to autistic features or associated disorders within the autistic spectrum.

Criteria for admission:

- Compatibility with peer group
- Compatibility with curriculum and learning environment
- Suitability of environment:

Admission will not be detrimental to the needs of other children – no pupil/student should compromise the opportunities of others within the school. It is essential that admissions are properly planned and allow for smooth transition.

Admissions - Day and Residential Procedure

1. We are able to give parents information regarding our assessment and admission process on enquiry. We encourage parents to engage in a dialogue with their local authority and to make a joint application.

Note: the school will take referrals and organise admissions assessments at any point in an academic year. Intake is not restricted to September only.

2. If during the referral stage the school assesses (based on reading the child's papers and any pre admissions information sought) that the school may be able to meet the child's needs and the school has a suitable vacancy the school admissions panel will in most cases be able to make a decision over the following few days. The decision will be made in line with the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs:
 - a) Special Educational Needs – can the school meet the child's needs?
 - b) Resources – would the placement be an inefficient use of resources?
 - c) Current pupils – would the placement be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children with whom the child will be educated?

The school must also be satisfied that the parents / carers of the child are supportive of the placement.

3. If the school believes they can meet the needs of the pupil they will contact the local authority and parent to offer a place. Then the LA and/or parent/carer will

be notified in writing of the outcome of the assessment within 10 working days of completion of the assessment process.

NB: The process is deemed to be complete when all information has been gathered.

4. If the school is able to meet the child's special educational needs, an offer of a place, a start date and the proposed fee will be suggested to the LA. When the LA confirms that the offer of a place is going to be taken up, the school will send contracts to the LA.
5. After this the school will send out an admissions pack which will include information about the school for both parents and pupil and detailed pre admission questionnaires. The admission pack will include procedures for introducing children to school, staff and other pupils/students, daily routines and expectations. This will all be in a suitable format for the child and personal guidance and support will be provided as appropriate. The parents / carers and if appropriate the pupil will be invited to an admission interview.
6. The admissions interview will typically consist of:

Two members of the senior leadership team meeting with parents / carers to obtain up to date information, including but not exclusive to the following areas:

- Previous placement
 - Communication
 - Behaviour
 - Academic ability
 - Life skills / self-help skills
 - Religious and cultural needs
 - Parents' aspirations for the future / what they want the school to do
7. The parent or LA is responsible for making transport arrangements with the parents and will inform the school accordingly.
 8. Transition plans will be made with the LA, the current school placement and the parent/carer.
 9. Prior to admission the Principal will ensure that the following information has been collected:
 - a) Communication Profile and / or previous communication reports,
 - b) Whether the child is looked after and if so the name of the contact person and key personnel in the placing authority.
 - c) Name and contact details of the child's parents or guardians,
 - d) Statement of Educational Needs/Record of Need,
 - e) Current care, health, educational plans or relevant personal needs if available,
 - f) Details of any matter which makes the child particularly vulnerable or a danger to others.

10. Where parents are considering complementary or supplementary treatments this must be discussed with the Principal. (See the NAS Supplementary Treatments Guidance policy – SO-0175.)

11. A baseline assessment will commence as soon as a pupil / student starts school. (see appendix 1)

Emergency admissions

These are extremely rare and should only take place with the permission of the Director of Education. A review meeting is initiated as soon as possible (and never longer than four weeks) after any emergency admission to consider whether the placement is appropriate.

Admissions Panel – Schools

Following an assessment of a young person who would like a placement at one of the NAS Schools the Principal or Registered manager can seek advice and support from the panel if it is felt there is a significant risk, or is advice is required from the panel or by others within the NAS who hold the expertise. (see appendix 2)

The panel for Schools/Young People's Services is made up of:

- Director of Education
- Nominated Individual (Chair)
- The lead assessor of the individual
- Expert guest (area manager/principal/other within the NAS who has expert knowledge around the areas of risk presented)

NB - The chair of the panel reserves the right to ask additional experts or NAS managers onto a panel at any time to support the process of admissions.

A panel review of a placement will be held after 8 weeks to ensure that risks have been met.

Residential Placements

The following are additional points of procedure for residential placements only:

1. Children are encouraged to bring favourite and cherished possessions when they move into the home. A list of items will be made and updated with every home visit. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of bringing items of high value. Any item brought into the home will be subject to the approval of the Principal/designated deputy to ensure compliance to health and safety regulations and the safety of all pupils/students.
2. Children will be given appropriate assistance in settling, and information about bedroom policy and daily schedule will be provided in a suitable format.
3. Pets are only allowed at the discretion of the Principal subject to risk assessment.

Baseline Assessment

Individual needs will be measured through baseline assessment prior to support being offered. In all NAS schools, the baseline assessment period runs from the date of admission to the end of month six. Our admissions assessment is the process by which we decide whether to admit a child/young person or not.

Baseline Assessment - Procedure

Baseline assessment will be undertaken on all pupils new to NAS schools. The intention is to provide data on attainments and abilities so that future progress can be ascertained.

1. Baseline Assessment should, for the majority of children, cover the following areas:
 - a. **Cognitive ability** assessed by qualified educational or clinical psychologists using standardised assessments and observations.
 - b. **Communication skills** assessed by qualified specialist speech and language therapists
 - c. **Social skills and independence** assessed by psychologists, education and care staff using standardized tests and observation
 - d. **Educational attainments** assessed by teaching and psychology staff using school assessments.
 - e. **Sensory sensitivities** assessed by specialist Occupational therapist, education and care staff.
 - f. **Behaviour** assessed by all relevant staff including the transdisciplinary team.

Parents and carers will be invited to contribute to any baseline assessment meetings as partners to agree and discuss the assessments and plans as appropriate.

Copies of the reports that form the baseline assessment will be given to parents and carers and will present the information in a format that is understandable. This will be in the form of a baseline report which will be shared at a baseline review meeting. Professionals of outside bodies who have a professional interest in the child's wellbeing and education will be invited to the meeting and / or provided with a copy of the report.

The baseline review meeting will review all information collected and planned programmes. It will also review the suitability of the provision for the coming year, staffing levels and whether the statement is appropriate and being met.

The Baseline Assessment will normally be completed within 3 months of the pupil commencing attending an NAS school.

At the end of the assessment period any change in fee or service provision will be notified to the Purchaser in writing.

Following the baseline assessment. All children undergo annual reviews as laid down by the SEN Code of Practice and Transition Review meetings from year 10 or through negotiation with the Purchaser at the most appropriate time in special circumstances.

All records will comply with the Data Protection Policy and Record Retention Policy.

Remissions - Procedure

1. Should parents or the funding authority wish to remove a pupil/student termination notice will be in line with individual contractual agreements.
2. If this notice is not given the funding authority will be liable for paying fees for the appropriate notice period.
3. If the pupil/student does not appear to be benefiting from attendance at the school, and all strategies have been tried, the school will give the funding authority the appropriate notice as agreed in the individual contractual agreement.
4. The Principal is entitled to exclude a pupil/student from the school if there is a risk of the pupil endangering him/herself or other pupil/student or member of staff and, in some cases, property in line with the Exclusion section of this policy (see below).

Additional Support

Where a pupil/student has a clearly identified need that cannot be adequately met by the current agreed level of support, an enhancement to provide the individual care needed should be sought, subject to agreement from the funding authority. Should the pupil/student's needs improve, a corresponding reduction in the enhancement should be similarly considered. (see appendix 3)

Recording and documentation process

Prior to any additional support being requested from the placing authority, the existing level of support for the pupil/student needs to be specified. This will include the base staff to person we support ratio and the programme of support/activities already agreed. This should be discussed, reviewed and documented at each annual review and Transition Review meetings from year 10.

A sudden deterioration in health or a change in support due to an accident should be recorded and reported within 48 hours to the relevant purchasing agency through the care management process.

Additional Support - Procedure

1. If a need has been identified to vary the contractual arrangements regarding any additional support the Head of Contracts/Customer Care must be notified.

2. Additional support should be requested at the pupil's annual review. If there is not an annual review due then the school should contact the local authority to organise an interim review of Placement meeting.
3. If the decision is to accept the requirement of additional funds to support the pupil/student all relevant documentation should be completed on the NASS2 form and sent to the Business Unit on receipt of the confirmation. No invoices for additional costs will be sent to the purchasing agency without their express agreement. If the decision is accepted by the local authority / commissioner the school must ensure they each receive a written agreement and forward this to the contracts team.
4. The purchasing agency should also be advised that should the identified needs of the pupil/student improve and the requirement for additional staffing reduces, then any reduction in costs will be reflected in the agreement with the purchasing agency.

Exclusion

It is to be expected that NAS schools will be best able to manage children who present with challenging behaviour as a consequence of their autism or related condition. Exclusion from a NAS school is very rare, and only happens in extreme circumstances. Behaviour policies and strategies, partnership with parents, staff training and development in the management of complex and challenging behaviour will seek to avoid the need to exclude a pupil/student.

A pupil/student's parents and Local Authority will be informed of inappropriate behaviour that causes particular concern. The school will liaise with parents and the LEA to review the statement if appropriate. A Support Programme written in conjunction with all relevant staff and agreed by the Principal will be forwarded to parents, Local Education Authority, Social Services (if required) and, when appropriate, discussed with the pupil/student. Exclusion will only then be considered as a last resort if this plan should prove unsuccessful.

A pupil/student may only be excluded by the Principal. Before a pupil/student is excluded all other alternatives/strategies should be considered but the safety, education and welfare of all pupils and staff is of paramount importance and therefore exclusion may be appropriate.

Exclusion - Procedure

1. A decision to exclude a pupil/student will only be taken in response to serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy or if allowing the pupil/student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil/student or others in the school.
2. A decision to exclude should not be taken in the heat of the moment unless there is an immediate risk to the safety or welfare of the pupil/student or of other persons.

3. Exclusion will not be appropriate for minor incidents such as failure to complete homework, poor academic achievement, lateness or truancy, pregnancy, breaching uniform or jewellery policy or punishing parent(s) for the behaviour of pupils, for example, by extending a fixed period exclusion until the parent(s) agree to attend a meeting.
4. Before deciding the type of exclusion a full investigation will take place with the Principal considering all facts and evidence from all parties concerned. This will take into account the NAS policy on Equal Opportunities (SO-0240), checking whether the incident appears to be provoked by discriminatory practice and, if necessary, consultation with others but not involving anyone who may later take part in the review of the decision. The pupil/student should be enabled to participate to give their version of events where possible.
5. Exclusions can be either fixed, normally for a period of not more than 15 days to allow for a 'cooling off' period or to allow for the provision of additional resources. Permanent exclusion is an extreme measure made after consultation when the school can no longer meet the pupil/student's needs, whatever the level of resources that might be made available.
6. A fixed period exclusion shall not exceed a total of 45 school days in any academic year.
 - 6.1 the pupil shall be returned to the care of the parent or placing Authority as appropriate;
 - 6.2 the school will provide work for the pupil/student to undertake and/or guidance with regard to activities and occupation of time during the period of exclusion;
 - 6.3 a meeting will be convened at the earliest opportunity with the Authority. The outcome of this meeting will be a strategy plan to be adopted for the pupil/students return;
 - 6.4 In the case of a pupil/student who is looked after by the Local Authority the Principal will convene an urgent review meeting to agree the next steps.
7. If a pupil/student is to be temporarily excluded for more than 15 school days in one term, the Principal must plan how to enable the pupil/student to continue their education; how to use the time to address the pupil/students problems, and in conjunction with the LEA, what arrangements will best help the pupil/student to re-integrate into the school at the end of the exclusion.
8. A meeting will be held following any fixed term exclusion to outline the conditions for return, emphasising the need for appropriate behaviour/school rules taking into account the degree of control the pupil/student has to modify their behaviour and their understanding of why they were excluded (dependent on the pupil's level of understanding).
9. If a fixed term exclusion is to be extended for any reason, the Principal must write again to the parent(s) explaining the change.

10. Permanent exclusion is only appropriate when the school cannot meet the pupil's needs whatever the level of resources that might be made available. The Principal will consult with the School's Senior Management Team, parent(s) and the Purchasing Authority. It is particularly important that parent(s) are encouraged, at an early stage to play a positive part in the resolution of the pupil/student's difficulties. The school will plan how to enable the pupil/student to continue their education if the pupil/student remains on roll throughout the appeal process.
11. The Principal will inform the LA immediately of all permanent exclusions, and all exclusions which result separately or in total of the pupil/student missing more than five school days in any one term, or which deny the pupil/students chance to take an examination. Short fixed period exclusions of one to five school days should be reported each term unless the LA requests more frequent reports.
12. The Principal will liaise with LA and arrange reviews to establish if additional support and resources can be made available or whether the changes to the Statement are required. If these are made, the exclusion should be withdrawn.
13. The Principal who excludes should notify the parent(s)/guardian immediately by telephone, followed by a letter within one school day. Exclusion should normally begin on the next day. The letter should explain:
 - why the decision was taken
 - steps to enable the pupil/student to continue their education
 - the right and how to appeal
 - the right to see their child's school record
 - If the exclusion is permanent, the date the exclusion takes place and details of any relevant previous warnings, exclusions or measure before the present incident
 - If the exclusion is fixed, the date and time of return
 - The name and telephone number of the LEA Officer together with the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) (England & Wales).

Correspondence should be in a format that the parent(s)/guardian can understand.

14. The Principal must notify the Director of Education, Parent(s), pupil/students Local Education Authority and any other relevant body by telephone at the earliest opportunity of any decision to exclude. This must be confirmed in writing to the LEA within 24 hours.
15. When a pupil/student is excluded they should be referred to the appropriate sources of help and support. Effort will be made to welcome the pupil/student and strategies will be put in place to assist the pupil/student in returning to school. Advice and information is available to a parent(s) through the funding LA's SEN partnership scheme.

16. If a parent(s) sends a pupil/student to school or refuses to collect him or her during a formal exclusion, the school should have due regard for the pupil/students safety and contact the LA/Education Welfare Office for advice.

Appeals (Stage I) Exclusion Panel Review Meeting

17. The Director of Education will not be involved in the exclusion process unless and until receipt of a notification from purchasing authority and/or parent(s) wishing to make representation about or appeal against a decision made by a Principal to exclude.
18. The Director of Education will then set up an Exclusion Review Panel consisting of at least himself/herself and a member of the Services Portfolio Group. The size of the panel is at the discretion of the Director of Education but it will not include any person who was involved in the exclusion process to date.
19. The panel review meeting will be held between 7 and 21 days after receipt of the notification of appeal. Written invitations to attend will be sent to the parent(s) and purchasing authority including details of the date, time, venue enclosing any statements or evidence to be produced at the panel review meeting. At the parent(s) request, the excluded pupil/student should be permitted, at the discretion of the Director of Education to attend the Exclusion Review Panel meeting.
20. If the pupil/student returns to school prior to the Review Panel meeting, that Panel will consider whether or not the exclusion was objectively fair and appropriate and what (if any) note should be made to the pupil/student's record with respect to the exclusion.
21. The Director of Education will notify the Principal, purchasing authority and parent(s) of the Exclusion Review Panel's decision, with reasons, within 5 days of the meeting. If it is not possible to give a final decision (for example if further investigation is necessary), an interim response will be given within 5 days giving an explanation of the delay and timeframe for a final decision.
22. A record of the Review Panels decision will be kept on the pupil/students file together with a copy of the Principal's exclusion letter.

Review Panel Meeting/Appeal Hearing

23. Neither of these meetings should be held at the school in question, if possible. Everything possible will be done to establish an atmosphere of informality in which all parties can present their cases effectively and at their ease.
24. Decisions will be based on all relevant facts including whether or not the exclusion process was in accordance with policy and procedure and fairly implemented.
25. The needs and interests of all other pupil/students and staff in the school will be taken into account as well as those of the excluded pupil/student.

26. The Appeal hearing will consider whether or not there was consistency in terms both of other exclusions (if any) on similar grounds in similar situations and it terms of sanctions imposed on other pupil/students involved in that case (if relevant).
27. The Chair will welcome and introduce all parties, explain in which order the parties will be heard, and explain that there will be an opportunity for questions to be raised after each party has spoken.
28. The conduct of the proceedings is based on fairness and informality.
29. The meetings will not be tape recorded unless there is a good reason for it and all parties agree. Minutes will be taken.
30. A decision will be made and notified within 5 days of the meeting.

Measure

Monitoring of Occupancy and Contract Compliance, OFSTED, CQC Inspection, Purchasers Inspections, Autism Accreditation.

References

Care Quality Commission (CQC)
Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales
HMEI
Ofsted
Children and Families Act 2014
Care Inspectorate Scotland
SEN Code of Practice (excl. Scotland) Children Act 1989
Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) Northern Ireland
Children in Scotland Act 1995 / Education Act 1997
Department for Education - includes examples of letters
DfES Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Circular No 10/99,
SEN and Disability Act 2001
Race Relations Act 1976
Original offer letter and stated level of staff support
Reviews / OK Health Check
Staff Ratio and Grid
KCSiE 2019

Other relevant policies & guidance

Admissions & Referrals – Adults Policy SO-0013
Contracts Policy SO-0095
Lone Working Policy HS-0420
Supplementary Treatments and Approaches Policy SO-0175
Parents and Schools in Partnership policy SO-0184
Individual Care Plans and Education Plan/Programme SO-0214
Disability Discrimination
The Duty to Promote Equality
Business Unit for up to date hourly rate costings
Chair of the Admission Panel
Transition Plans for Schools Policy SO-0313

V2.0

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Admissions Panel Checklist

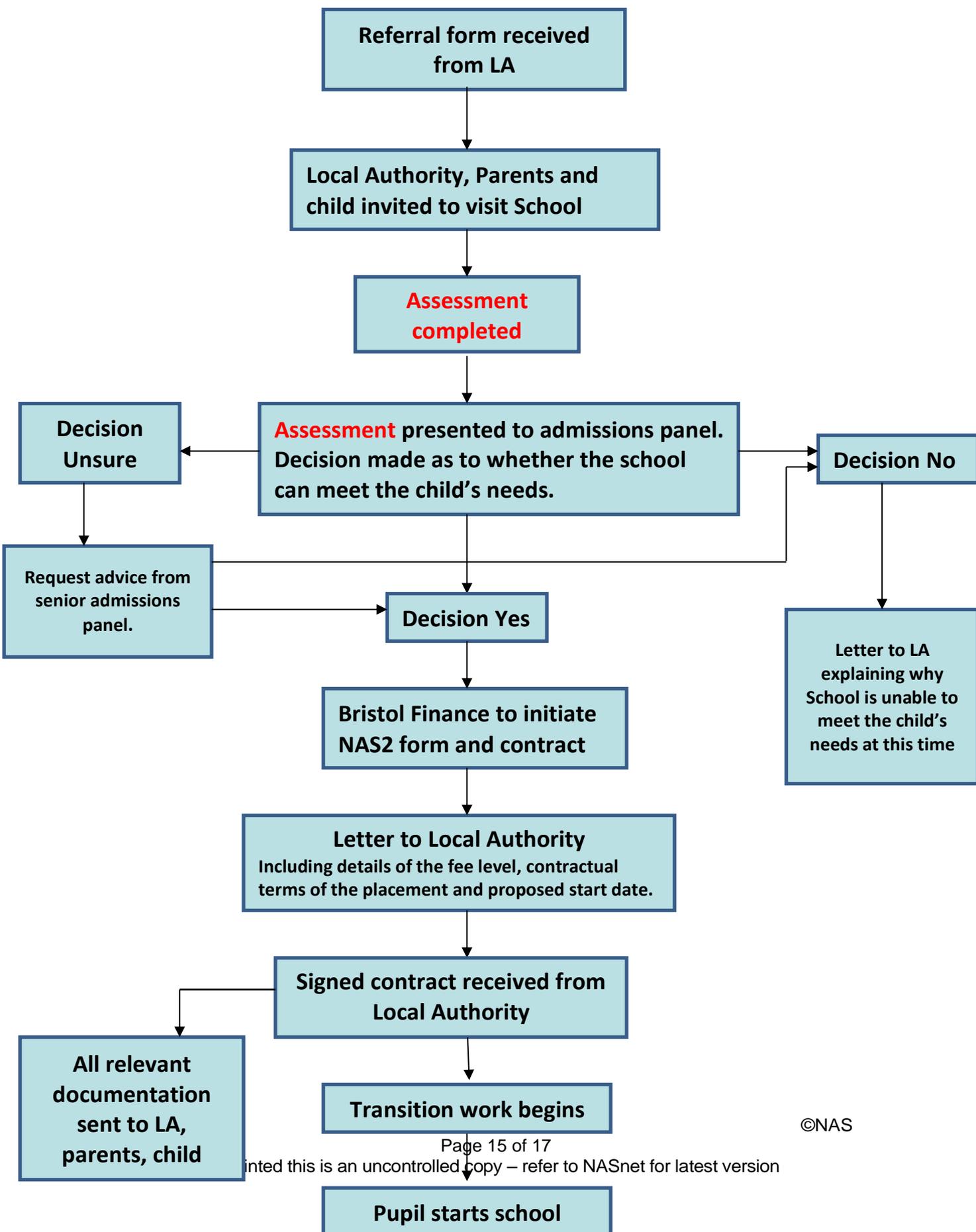
Data Protection Policy SC-0001

Record Retention Policy SC-0002

Equal Opportunities in Schools SO-0240

Appendix 1

Referral and Admissions Processes flowchart





Appendix 2

ASSESSMENT PANEL SUMMARY REPORT

Name of person to be supported	
Potential Service	
Date of Panel	
Panel Members	

Risks Identified	Suggested Actions	Date & Person Responsible

Panel decision to offer placement Yes No

Conditions of offer:-

Completed by Job title..... Date.....

Appendix 3

Provision mapping

