 

ADMISSIONS AND REFERRAL POLICY

**Document Control**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **This document has been approved for operation within:** | The Heights Blackburn |
| **Date effective from** | July 2025 |
| **Date of next review** | July 2026 |
| **Review period** | Annual |

#  INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Heights Blackburn is a Key Stage 2 - Key Stage 4 Alternative Provision School for students who have found it difficult to succeed in a mainstream school.

1.2 The aim of the Heights is to:

* Re-engage students with learning
* Secure good progress for students in line with national expectations
* Reintegrate students back into mainstream education or progression to employment, training or further education.

1.3 Admission will be through the referral process outlined in this policy. Referrals may be made at any time throughout the year.

**2.0 NUMBER OF PLACES AVAILABLE**

2.1 The Heights Blackburn will provide education for up to 160 students.

**3.0 REGISTRATION ARRANGEMENTS**

3.1 A student will be dual registered with their referring school being the home school. The length of these placements will depend on the student’s needs and will be subject to review.

**4.0 STUDENTS SUPPORTED BY THE SCHOOL**

4.1 The school will specialise in providing places for students who are showing a level of disengagement from mainstream provision which is placing them at risk of exclusion.

**5.0 REFERRAL ARRANGEMENTS**

5.1 To acquire a place at the school, children must be referred by an educational establishment or local authority. Commissioners will use the referral form here: <https://www.theheightsblackburn.com/contact/>

**6.0 COMMISSIONING PROCESS**

6.1 The point of contact for commissioners is Louise Lowe (Deputy Headteacher) louise.lowe@theheightsfreeschool.org

6.2 Once a commissioner makes contact with The Heights, then the school will start the admissions process. A commissioner will be purchasing a student’s place at the school. A Service Level agreement will be provided which will set out: our commitment to the commissioner; a commissioners commitment to the school and financial arrangements. Therefore, all parties are clear about: what will be delivered; how; when; at what price; the responsibilities of the parties to the agreement to maintain the highest level of support to the child; and what monitoring arrangements will be agreed to review the contract performance. The school will collate demographic and outcome data gathered in relation to the students’ needs, attendance, academic performance and behavioural presentation in the school. This will be reviewed jointly with the commissioner on an agreed schedule.

**7.0 FUNDING**

7.1 Each full-time equivalent place in alternative provision free schools will attract base funding of £10,000 per place.

7.2 Commissioners will provide top-up funding above this base level to cover the total cost of provision. This top-up funding is based upon the student’s assessed needs and the cost of meeting those needs in the school, and will come from the local authority or school that commissions the place. Full details will be provided in the Service Level Agreement.

**8.0 INDUCTION**

8.1 We liaise closely with our referring schools to find out as much background information as we can about each student before they begin. We aim to be aware of their individual needs and any issues, academic or personal, that they may have already experienced or are likely to experience.
 All students are initially assessed during their induction phase at The Heights including numeracy and literacy skills, phonemic decoding, reading comprehension verbal and non- verbal reasoning and working memory. The tests highlight any areas of need and inform individual targets and classroom planning.

**9.0 THE ADMISSION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

9.1 Students with an education health and care plan naming the academy will be admitted.

**10.0 CRITERIA TO BE APPLIED IN RESPECT OF OTHER STUDENTS WHEN OVERSUBSCRIBED**

10.1 The following oversubscription criteria will apply when there are more referrals than places available, in order of priority:

* Students who are or were previously looked after by a Local Authority (as defined by the Children Act 1989).
* Students who live closest to the school in a straight line. Distance will be measured from the front door of a student’s home to the front gate/door of the school. If students live exactly the same distance away from the school, random allocation will be used to determine who will be admitted, with the process undertaken by someone independent of the school.

**11.0 OFFERS**

11.1 If we can accept a referral, we will write to the commissioner accepting the referral, including financial requirements, the support to be offered, a start date and the date by which the offer should be accepted.

**12.0 PROCEDURE FOLLOWING AN OFFER**

12.1 When offer letters/emails are sent, if the commissioner fails to accept the place by the date set out in the letter/email, it will be assumed that the commissioner no longer wants the place and the offer will be withdrawn.

**13.0 APPEALS AGAINST ANY REFUSAL TO ACCEPT A REFERRAL**

13.1 Wherever a referral is refused, the commissioner can submit an appeal to the Education Partnership Trust at governance@ept-uk.com outlining the reasons for the referral along with supporting documentation.

13.2 Any appeals will be heard within 15 school days and final outcomes notified within 5 school days.

**14.0 COMPLAINTS**

14.1 Any objections to this policy or its application should be raised with the school through its normal complaints process which is published here <https://www.theheightsblackburn.com/wp-content/uploads/Complaints-Policy-Mar-24-26.pdf>

14.2 If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, they are able to complain to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) at Academy.QUESTIONS@education.gsi.gov.uk.

**15.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

15.1 The academy is committed to equal opportunities and admits students across the full spectrum of academic abilities. All students have equal access to the curriculum and there is a learning support programme for students with special needs.

**16.0 REVIEW**

16.1 This policy will be reviewed at least annually and will be published on the school’s website.

**17.0 LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES**

17.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s other policies published here: <https://www.theheightsblackburn.com/policies/>