

FOOTSTEPS TRUST ADMISSIONS POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Footsteps Academy is committed to providing an inclusive, supportive and accessible learning environment for young people who require alternative educational provision.

Admissions arrangements are conducted fairly, transparently and in accordance with:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- SEND Code of Practice
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Data Protection legislation

Footsteps Academy does not discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or any other protected characteristic. All admission decisions are made in the best interests of the child and with consideration of the Academy's ability to meet identified needs safely and effectively.

2. Principles

Footsteps Academy will:

- Provide equal opportunity for all students.
- Promote inclusion and remove barriers to learning wherever possible.
- Work collaboratively with referring schools, local authorities, parents/carers and other agencies.
- Ensure safeguarding considerations are central to all admission decisions.
- Support students with SEND, disabilities, social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Promote positive educational outcomes, attendance, wellbeing and engagement.
- Ensure admissions arrangements remain fair, transparent and consistent.

Admissions decisions will always consider:

- The needs of the students.
- Existing provision and available support.
- Safeguarding and welfare considerations.
- Compatibility with the educational needs of current students.

3. Scope of Provision

Footsteps Academy accepts referrals for students in:

- Year 8
- Year 9
- Year 10
- Year 11

Students may access:

- Full-time Alternative Provision placements.
- Short-term intervention placements.
- Reintegration placements.
- Bespoke support programmes where appropriate.

Admissions may take place throughout the academic year subject to available capacity and suitability of placement.

4. Referral Process

Referrals will normally be made through:

- Schools
- Local Authorities
- Multi-Agency Panels
- Alternative Provision Commissioners

- Other recognised educational agencies

Direct parental applications will be considered only where appropriate and in accordance with local authority arrangements.

All referrals must include relevant documentation including:

- Referral form
- Educational history
- Attendance information
- Behaviour records
- SEND information
- Risk assessments
- Safeguarding information
- Current support plans
- Medical information where relevant

The Academy reserves the right to request additional information before determining whether a placement can be offered.

5. Safeguarding Considerations

Safeguarding is a key factor in all admission decisions.

Prior to placement, Footsteps Academy will seek relevant information to ensure appropriate support and risk management arrangements can be implemented.

This may include:

- Child Protection information
- Early Help involvement
- Social Care involvement
- Youth Justice involvement
- Medical and mental health information
- Risk assessments

- Attendance concerns
- Behaviour and exclusion history

Information sharing will take place lawfully and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

6. Students with SEND and Disabilities

Footsteps Academy is committed to supporting students with:

- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- SEND Support Plans
- Disabilities protected under the Equality Act 2010
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs

Reasonable adjustments will be considered to support access to education and participation in school life.

Admission will not be refused solely on the basis of SEND or disability. Decisions will be based on whether the Academy can appropriately meet identified needs while maintaining the safety and wellbeing of all students.

7. Admission Procedure

Prior to admission:

1. Referral documentation is received.
2. Information is reviewed by Principal.
3. Initial discussions take place with the referring agency.
4. Safeguarding and risk assessments are considered.
5. Student and parent/carers are invited to visit where appropriate.
6. Expectations, curriculum and support arrangements are explained.
7. A placement decision is made.
8. Induction arrangements are agreed.

Where a placement is offered, the Academy will develop an individual induction programme to support successful integration.

8. Induction and Assessment

Following admission, students will:

- Participate in an induction programme.
- Complete baseline assessments where appropriate.
- Receive information regarding safeguarding, behaviour and expectations.
- Be allocated appropriate support.
- Have learning needs reviewed regularly.

The Academy will ensure students are placed on suitable programmes and provided with appropriate interventions and support.

9. Partnership Working

Footsteps Academy recognises that successful outcomes depend upon effective partnership working.

The Academy will work closely with:

- Referring schools
- Local authorities
- Parents and carers
- Social care services
- Health professionals
- Youth services
- Other relevant agencies

Regular communication will support student progress, attendance, wellbeing and reintegration planning where appropriate.

10. Data Protection

Information collected during the admissions process will be:

- Stored securely.
- Processed lawfully.
- Shared appropriately where safeguarding or educational needs require.
- Managed in accordance with current data protection legislation.

11. Monitoring and Review

The Principal will monitor admissions procedures to ensure:

- Fairness and transparency.
- Compliance with legislation.
- Appropriate safeguarding arrangements.
- Effective support for students and families.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or government guidance changes.