

SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES

Referral and Admissions Policy and Practice

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*SES Avocet Ltd (4926028) and SES Turnstone Ltd (7972485)
are subsidiary companies of Specialist Education Services Holdings Ltd (7970185)*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Specialist Education Services (SES) provides highly individualised education and care packages for up to 8 boys at Avocet House and up to 8 boys and girls at Turnstone House. Young people coming to SES do so because of their need for 52 week placement and highly specialised education.

We believe that regardless of past difficulties and trauma every young person, given appropriate support, has the internal resources, however fragmented, to manage successful transitions to independence and educational achievement. They will also possibly have previously undiscovered gifts and talents. We aspire to the highest quality of care and education for young people with complex, social, emotional, behavioural and learning needs.

A careful placement assessment following referral is critical to ensuring that a “best fit” is possible between the young person’s needs and what SES can offer in meeting those needs. This is a highly considered process that ensures as far as possible that an offer of a place is only made after clear deliberation and full information is received.

We believe that it is throughout the admission stages that children and young people gain their first impression of what life is like in our home and Learning Centre.

Careful transition planning and pre-admission visits are critical factors in forming that impression. Experience has shown that the better prepared that a young person is on admission the more successful the admission is likely to be. Equally the more engagement with the process the young person feels, the more likely the admission is to be successful.

The same is true of engaging with family members and responsible adults.

2 REFERRALS

Specialist Education Services regularly receive preliminary contact from placing authorities seeking information about possible vacancies. An agreed comprehensive set of documentation is available to respond to these early enquiries, (see Appendix A at the end of this document), and this is often accompanied by discussion with the Principal of the establishment which will thoroughly explore the possibility of a formal referral.

Should this proceed then the relevant documentation is forwarded by the placement authority, following a request via letter or email (Initial Principal Letter A). Alternatively a placing authority may send documentation without making a prior enquiry, in which case telephone conversations will follow the paperwork.

Formal referral discussions will take place at each establishment as to the suitability of the child for placement. This involves an Admissions Panel made up from the Principal, Registered Manager, Head of Education, Consultants, Executive Principal and Directors.

Among likely factors under consideration will be:

- the match of the referral to the existing group of children and young people
- the range of learning and social needs of the child referred
- any assessed healthcare needs
- risk assessments
- the degree of care and educational support required in relation to identified needs
- family circumstances and any implications for continued support from SES

Any move on from referral will only be agreed when full discussion and explorations have been made prior to any visits to Avocet House or Turnstone House being considered by child and family/carers.

3 PLACEMENT DECISION MAKING

Discussion about placement will be based on the following process:

- a. At the point of expression of interest, the referring agency will be contacted for referral documentation. To enable appropriate decision making this should include a Case Chronology, the latest reports (IRO, SW, LAC reviews) Risk Assessments, and current placement reports (school and EHC). When these are returned, they are checked for completeness. When sufficient information has arrived the Principal will check the information against the "Principal Checklist". At this point the Principal will decide whether the referral is obviously completely inappropriate or whether to go to the next stage of the referral process.
- b. If the decision is to proceed then the information is copied and given to a selected Lead Consultant. The Principal makes the arrangements for the relevant referral paperwork to be circulated to the Admissions Panel members and a panel meeting date set, or informs the referral LA that placement is not possible.
- c. The Lead Consultant is responsible for completing the full "Lead Consultant Referral Report" and circulating it to all panel members a week in advance of the panel meeting. The report will be informed by the referral paperwork and there may be the opportunity for discussions with, and possibly visits to, existing professionals involved with the child. If so this information will be incorporated into the report or appended as a later addition. In rare circumstances the Lead Consultant may have visited existing settings to gather additional information prior to the panel meeting.
- d. The panel meeting will follow the following agenda:
 - Lead Consultant's Report - discussion lead by Lead Consultant
 - Confirmation that all information possible has been gathered

- Identification of any outstanding information or actions before a decision can be made
- Full panel completion of “Positive Indicators and Potential Obstacles Checklist”
- Recommendations to the Principal
- Principal makes final decision on Placement
- If a placement is to be offered then the panel may immediately begin planning procedures regarding the engagement of the child, family etc., in the admission process.

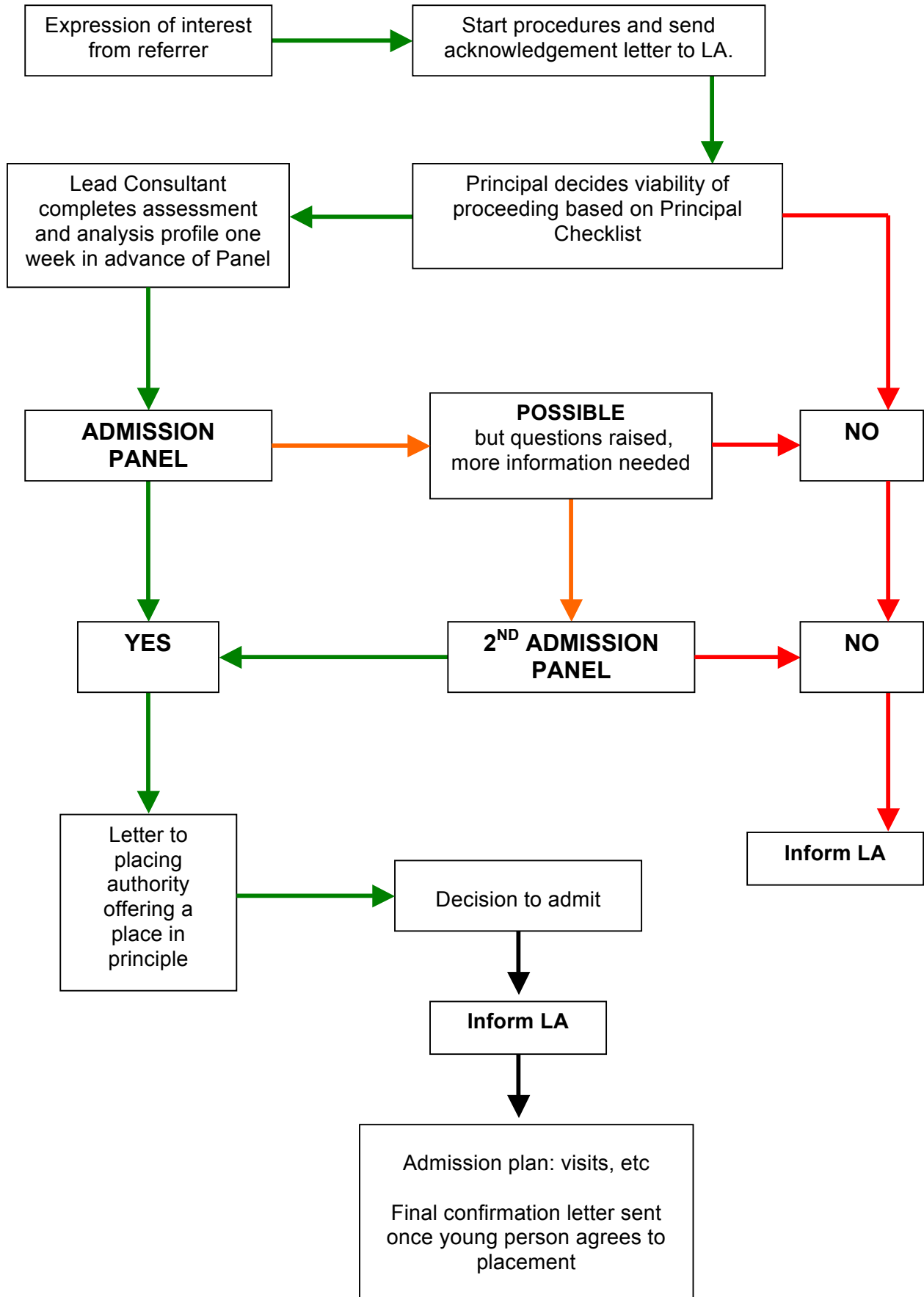
Ideally the above can all happen at the first panel meeting, however this agenda may take more than one meeting.

- e. Once it has been agreed to offer the placement then:
- a letter is sent to the placing authority agreeing to offer a place in principle together with the Referral and Admissions Questionnaire
 - a plan for the process of admission is drawn up by relevant staff
 - plans for meeting needs identified in the referral process are drawn up by the Case Coordinator, Personal Tutor, Link Tutor and Learning Mentor liaising with the Lead Consultant, together with any other relevant consultants. The plans are then checked with Senior Managers prior to presentation to the whole team.
- f. Once all parties including the child are agreed on placement and the referral and admissions questionnaire returned, an admission date is confirmed and a final confirmation letter sent, setting out clear and ambitious aspirations for placement discussed during the process.

All forms and formats to support the referral and admission process are located on the staff area of the particular establishment’s network.

The flow chart overleaf outlines this process in diagrammatic form.

3.1 PLACEMENT DECISION PROCESS



3.2 PLACEMENT CONTRACTS

Both Avocet House and Turnstone House are primarily registered as Independent Residential Special Schools. Therefore SES uses the National Association of Independent Schools & Non-Maintained Special Schools (NASS) contract for placements.

The dual registration as a Children's Home has to be made due to the fact that children and young people are accommodated for more than 295 days in any 12 month period. This falls within the definition of a Children's Home and as such must be separately registered with Ofsted.

3.3 TERMS OF PAYMENT

Our business plan is based on all fees, regardless of the referral route, being invoiced and paid for in advance.

Invoices are for three 4 monthly periods as follows:

- 1st January to 30th April;
- 1st May to 31st August;
- 1st September to 31st December.

Each invoice will be based on the annual fee; (e.g. an invoice from 1st January to 30th April will equate to 4/12 of the annual fee)

Where placement falls between charging periods the initial invoice and any variance from the standard payment periods will be discussed with the placing authority by the Principal.

4 CHRONOLOGY OF THE ADMISSION PROCESS

Prior to admission but following a placement being offered the following will take place:

4.1 ACTIONS ONCE ADMISSION IS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE

- Letter/email offering a place in principle is sent to placing authority
- Principal liaises with Social worker – where appropriate set date(s) to meet Parents/Carers
- There may be a visit to them followed by visit to Avocet House or Turnstone House
- Liaise with social worker and current carers to set a date to meet Young Person
- Agree communication strategy for Young Person with Social Worker
- Post Brochure to Parents
- Post First Look Guide to Young Person
- Registered Manager and/or Principal visit Young Person
- Registered Manager and Principal offer/arrange a date for Young Person to visit Avocet

- Registered Manager/Head of Care makes arrangements for current children to be involved in the preparation for a new arrival
- Young Person visits – time in house and in Learning Centre (*Times and number of occasions to be configured to suit individual needs and preferences*)
- The terms of the contract, including fees and charging schedules, are agreed

4.2 ONCE A FINAL CONFIRMATION OF PLACEMENT IS MADE

- Confirmation letter sent to placing authority, which includes aims for placement.
- Liaison with Learning Centre (HoE or DHoE)
- Contact is made with the Contracts/Finance Department to confirm charging schedule

A dated framework of actions (Admission Plan) from the following is agreed to help prepare for the Young Person for arrival and completion of the Admission Paperwork.

- Key Workers – Personal Tutor, Case Co-ordinator, Learning Mentor identified
- Initial Planning meeting chaired by Registered Manager/Head of Care
- Bedroom and furniture selected
- Peer Buddy(ies) identified
- Children’s Welcome Guide is posted/delivered to Young Person
- Return visit(s) by the Young Person; (may include meals, an overnight, time in Learning Centre)
- Follow up visit(s) for Key Workers to current setting and family home – Personal Tutor and Case Co-ordinator – Peer Buddy visit also considered, if appropriate.
- Meeting(s) with Social Worker to ensure all admissions paperwork and Placement Plan is completed.
- Admissions summary is completed by the case co-ordinator.
- Main File and Casework File set up 1 week in advance of briefing session to wider team, including all contact details ranging from Key Contacts through to key names addresses of clubs/existing activities etc. As well as:
 - a Avocet Risk Assessment Completed
 - b Development and Learning Overview Completed
 - c Daily Care Plan Completed
 - d Pocket Money Book
 - e Diary
 - f Damages recording
 - g Restorative Log
 - h Personal Budgets
 - i Twenty Four Hour Learning
 - j Activity Planning Sheets
 - k Network Access (email/kerio/server)
- Folders are set up by the admin team on the network in accordance with the agreed structure
- Preparation and final briefing of existing young people.
- Young Persons 1st day and first week planned in detail and reflected on existing planning structures, e.g. week day and weekend activities planner.

- Young person's clothing audit completed in first day
- Young person's electrical equipment PAT tested in the first week.
- Communication structures for Parents and Social workers agreed and in place and reflected in Casework file and at staff briefing.
- 1st PAN (Portfolio of Achievements and Needs) Meeting – 2 Weeks after admission to agree first child action plan targets.

4.3 THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The overwhelming purpose of the whole process from the beginning is to engage with the young person and family in a positive, partnership way. These families and children will have experienced a loss of control over decisions in their lives and it is critical for the success of the placement that they are re-engaged in the decision making process to the degree that that is possible. The child is placed at the centre of this process.

4.4 ON THE DAY OF ADMISSION

Admission can be an extremely stressful and anxious time for young people and their family/carers. Staff should ensure the young person and their family are made to feel welcome in a relaxed comfortable atmosphere, with easily prepared food and refreshments made available on arrival if appropriate in terms of timing, (taking into account any special dietary needs).

Prior to arrival the young person's bedroom will be prepared by the Personal Tutor with the bed made and room set out to look comfortable and welcoming with some personal items present if possible. Staff should not underestimate the importance of these first few minutes; they often form the foundations for all future interactions.

Ideally the only outstanding issues for the child to consider on their first day are:

- To go through the Young Person's guide with their Personal Tutor
- To be introduced to their peer buddy
- To be taken through the fire procedure
- Where applicable – say their goodbyes
- Unpack and settle in

Parents/carers need to be assured that any feelings can be expressed in privacy, but a degree of oversight with appropriate interventions by staff are paramount at the point when any relatives leave. There might be occasions where staff have to take the initiative and state clearly what they feel is an appropriate length of time for relatives to stay, but this must be done with the utmost tact and sensitivity.

4.5 INFORMATION AND CONSENT LETTERS

A set of letters are used during the admission process to obtain consent and/or register receipt of documentation with placement authority, social worker and parent/carer:

- Administration of Medication and Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Activities

- Information Sharing
- Positive Management of Behaviour
- Computers, Internet Access and Acceptable Internet Use Statement
- Regulation 44 visitor file sharing permission
- Consent for use of Photographic and Video Materials

These are kept on the internal network and printed when needed as part of the admission process. They are kept under review and may be reviewed or added to at any time.

5 APPENDIX A

List of documentation sent to social workers/placing authorities in response to initial request for information:

- Brochure (Including Statement of Purpose)
- Vision Statement
- Complaints and Representations Policy and Practice
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Practice
- Positive Management of Behaviour Policy and Practice
- Anti-Bullying Policy and Practice
- Children Missing from Care and Education Policy and Practice
- Acceptable Use of Technology
- Data Protection Policy and Practice
- Equality and Diversity Policy and Practice
- Health and Safety Policy and Practice
- Partnership with Families Policy and Practice