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#### 1.0 Introduction

This policy outlines a clear and robust procedure for the managing of referrals and admission enquiries by Holistic Childcare & Education, which comprises of Maben House & School, and Closeburn House & School.

The purpose of this policy is to recognise the importance of having a robust and clear referrals and admissions procedure that sets out the processes that will be followed in managing and responding to referrals and admission enquiries in a timely manner, in order that we can demonstrate how we can, or cannot meet an individual's needs.

It is essential that all referrals and admission enquiries are handled with the utmost courtesy and professionalism, and that they are treated in confidence, in line with our GDPR policy and with the same processes applied to all for consistency of service and service delivery.

To ensure equity and avoidance of discrimination, this policy is underpinned by the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended), the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000, the Equality Act 2010 and the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). We also recognise the importance of children's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and will ensure these rights are respected throughout the admissions process.

#### 2.0 Referrals and admission enquiries

Holistic Childcare & Education accepts referrals and admission enquiries from Local Authorities, families, and advocates of children and young people with additional support needs who would benefit from specialist care and education to meet their needs.

Holistic Childcare & Education supports children and young people with a range of additional needs, including trauma, mental health issues and those who are neurodivergent, and as a result struggle with their wellbeing and face barriers to education.

Holistic Childcare & Education cannot meet the needs of every child/young person. In line



with our safeguarding responsibilities, admissions may not proceed where:

- The assessed risks cannot be managed safely within our staffing or environmental capacity
- The young person's needs fall outside of the scope of our provision, for example, those requiring personal care, or those whose primary area of need is not related to the areas mentioned above.
- An placement would negatively impact the safety, wellbeing or academic prospects of our current cohort of pupils, as set out within our Safeguarding Policy

### **3.0 Responding to referrals and admission enquiries**

3.1 When a Local Authority, parent/family member or advocate approaches Holistic Childcare & Education, they will be responded to promptly, courteously and effectively by the Admissions Manager.

3.2 The Admissions Manager will seek to establish the nature of the enquiry including:

- Additional needs of the child/young person including any diagnoses, presentation, and behaviours
- Supports in place where the young person resides
- Known risk factors/triggers
- Chronology of the young person and professional involvement
- Current education provision and attendance
- Supports currently in place at school and their success

3.3 Once all the required information has been provided, the Admissions Manager will consider the information gathered and decide on whether an assessment can be undertaken to assess suitability and risks associated with a placement. This may require further input from other colleagues including, but not limited to, the Head of Education, Head of Care, Registered Manager, or Clinical team.

3.4 Where the request requires a formal response, this will be provided following a full assessment (see section 4.0) by the Admissions Manager.

3.5 The Admissions Manager shall provide up to date information about the school/home and provision offered to any interested party.

### **4.0 Assessing suitability**



4.1 Our assessment process involves the input from various departments within the service, including education, care and clinical teams. Regardless of the type of placement sought (residential or day pupil), we use the matching principles contained within the Matching and Admissions Guidance published by the Care Inspectorate in June 2022 as a basis for ensuring we are a positive option. We adopt a strengths-based approach to our assessment process, whilst considering the additional support needs of each individual. We look to identify the abilities and aspirations of each child/young person to ensure we can support their growth, development and progress towards positive destinations. Additionally, we seek to understand their past experiences and trauma to ensure we can support their recovery and reintegration back into society and education.

4.2 To avoid disadvantaging certain groups of people and additional needs through the admissions process, our assessment can include several different methods to ensure we are able to accurately and sensitively assess needs. Our holistic approach encompasses wellbeing and academic indicators and can include discussions with professionals, parents/carers and young people. In addition, professionals and families can be invited to tour around the school and home with members of the Leadership team, and prospective pupils invited to participate in short sessions with other pupils. For those young people out of education for significant periods of time, or those who have experienced trauma surrounding their education, our Leadership and Clinical teams can also visit a young person in their current residence to discuss potential placements in a more familiar setting.

As part of our assessment process, our Senior Leadership Team will meet every young person prior to formally offering a place.

4.3 The suitability assessment will consider the following areas when assessing a child/young person for a place at Holistic Childcare & Education:

- Child/young person's primary needs
- The child/young person's wishes and aspirations
- Risks presented by the child/young person which impact our ability to safeguard our current cohort of children and young people
- Health and wellbeing
- Physical and emotional needs
- Sensory and communication needs
- Environmental requirements
- Suitability to be placed alongside our current cohort of young people (match)
- Current and future availability within the school and home and plans for post-school transitions, in line with our registration limits



4.4 Following the guidelines set out in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000, section 15 (presumption of mainstreaming), we proactively work with Local Authorities to make them aware of young people who have approached Holistic Childcare & Education regarding a place, ensuring they have the time and opportunity to review their support for a young person and, where necessary, offer further support. Additionally, we encourage families to engage with their Local Authorities to explore alternatives before formally requesting a place at Holistic Childcare & Education.

4.5 Once the assessment is complete, the Admissions Manager, in collaboration with the Head of Education and Head of Care, will decide if an offer of a place can be made. A formal offer letter will then be provided to either the Local Authority, family or advocate indicating the offer of a place.

For families, further information will also be provided as to the placing request process along with information on organisations who may be able to support them with this process.

4.6 For those children and young people whose needs we are unable to meet, Local Authorities, families, and advocates will be informed in good time following the completion of our assessment process.

## **5.0 Supporting the transition process**

5.1 Once the placement of a child/young person has been agreed, then the transition planning process begins. This is a flexible process that is designed to meet the needs of our young people, supporting their wellbeing and focussing on areas of need. The process is designed to support the following principles:

- The transition is led by the needs and wishes of the child/young person, taking into account their history and current setting, ensuring a smooth and timely transition in planned
- Transition planning meetings will be arranged between Holistic Childcare & Education and key people around the child/young person to develop a transition plan including, but not limited to, Social Worker, Educational Psychologist, parents/guardians and staff from current placement (where applicable)
- To allow our service to make any necessary adjustments and arrangements to meet the needs of the new pupil
- To support parents/guardians to develop the trust and confidence required to support and promote the new placement to their child/young person, reducing anxiety and distress
- To ensure the relevant administration details are completed, fees agreed with Local Authorities, and relevant legal documents are put in place without delay

5.2 The timing of each admission to the service will be individually tailored to the needs of the child/young person, but the Senior Leadership Team will work to ensure there are no



unnecessary delays, and the transition process is not unduly extended.

We do not take emergency/same day placements as this would not provide sufficient time to complete a full and thorough assessment and could result in an unsafe placement.

5.3 Depending on the needs of the young person, the transition process can include contact with our education, care and clinical teams, in addition to transition visits to the home/school (including online introductory meetings where a physical visit isn't suitable or logistically possible), visits to visit a young person in their current residence, and the gradual progress from a part-time to a full-time timetable.

**Policy created August 2025, to be reviewed August 2026.**

**Iain Owens**  
**Relations & Admissions Manager**