UNLOCKING POTENTIAL
LEVELLING THE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ARENA

ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Levels School exists to provide a nurturing environment in which students with specific learning difficulties and co-occurring diagnoses can develop their self-esteem and aspire to be independent young adults who value the rights, responsibilities and rules that exist to promote and support their future welfare. Our approach toward establishing this ideology is predicated on trauma-informed practice and an obligation to develop the social skills required to build their future aspirational communities. We exist to help them find their level.

This policy covers all premises known as The Levels School.

The Board of Governors acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective and follows regulatory requirements. Governors undertake a review to satisfy themselves that the implementation of this policy is effective.
The Board of Governors ensures the establishment of familiarity with and the effective operation through monitoring, of school policies, approving those requiring GB sign-off in line with a regular cycle of school policy reviews. This occurs through a cycle of governor committee meetings and full board meetings.

Date of policy	April 2026
Next review date	April 2028
Frequency of policy review (annually, every two years)	Every two years
Policy owner	Caroline Cook – Head teacher Gayle Pennington – Admissions Coordinator
Published policy	Yes ☒ No ☐
List of connected policies	Website Privacy policy, GDPR and associated Data Policies, Digital Use policy, SEND Policy, Complaints Policy
Approved / Date	Approved by Governors

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Introduction

This policy is in line with the Independent School Standards (Revised April 2019). This policy outlines the procedures of the admission for any child to be accepted at The Levels School.

Statement and Vision

The Levels School is an independent specialist day school offering high quality education and exemplary pastoral care to students with a range of complex, specific learning differences that may include speech, language, and communication needs. Our teaching and learning provision would also meet the needs of individuals presenting with a similar learning profile to those with Dyslexia and other Speech and Language Communication difficulties. Individuals with these differences often have difficulties with working memory, executive function, and speed of processing.

The motivation behind The Levels School is to provide inclusive education for individuals who have been adversely affected by their learning differences often making it difficult to access learning. Many join the school below ARE for English and/or Maths, this combined with their speech, language, and communication needs often results in low self-esteem and accompanying anxiety.

The aims of the school are focused on maximising every individual's potential. They will be able to embrace their learning differences, accepting who they are and developing a strong self-concept enabling the young person to be their own authentic self. The individual will be able to make a positive contribution to society and live as an independent adult.

As a school we will be committed to the philosophy that each student should:

- Have a positive experience of learning all aspects of the curriculum.
- Understand that barriers to learning can be overcome.
- Enjoy their learning and remain resilient to succeed.
- Show continuous progression and improvement.
- Achieve their full potential.
- Be secure as their own authentic self

The aim of the policy is to ensure that the school is able to meet the individual needs of the children and young people who are to attend. We are committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a student's gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background.

The School Team will:

- Ensure that the school can meet the special educational and social, emotional and behavioural needs of referred children and young people at the point of admission.
- Provide a transparent process for the referral of prospective children and young people.

- Ensure that each individual referral is dealt with efficiently and within the required timescales.
- Ensure that the school has a structured and supportive admission and induction procedure for new children and young people.

Application process

Deciding on the right school for your child is very important and we believe that a personal visit is invaluable. Once we have established through initial communication if your child would be suited to the school, we will invite you to visit to get a feel for the environment we work and learn in. It is important that we do this at a time that causes minimal disruption for our cohort of students in school. We are happy to welcome all communication at any time because we recognise that our parents often require reassurance and that a regular flow of information can provide this.

To register your initial interest, parents/carers must complete our Expression of Interest form – this can be found on our website or via this link, Expression of Interest Form.

When an Expression of Interest form has been received, Gayle Pennington, our Admissions Coordinator, will arrange a convenient time to contact you.

This next step enables us to explain a little more about the school and for us to find out some further information about the family and to give the parent/carer time to explain the young person's needs and how we may be able to support the young person with their education.

Following this initial contact, the next step to take the application further is completion of the Application Form, which is sent with the admissions documents, including admissions policy, data and privacy policies and details of the fees.

At this stage we require a registration fee of £125 + vat, along with all relevant reports to enable our specialist team (Head Teacher, SENCO and Head of Therapy) to scrutinise paperwork, liaise with relevant professionals and the local authority if required, to assess if the young person would be suited to the school and their needs can be met.

Once this stage is complete and it is felt the young person may be suited to the school, we will invite the family for a tour.

Once it has been agreed that if we can meet the needs of the young person and the family are happy that the school is well placed to support them with the next phase of their education, a placement offer letter will be sent.

The paperwork required prior to the young person starting will be sent along with the offer letter. A refundable deposit of £550 is also required at this stage. The place is accepted on

receipt of the deposit and the first terms fees. The relevant starter pack paperwork including; **application form, medical information, consent to therapy assessment, consent to photograph, data and privacy forms are also required**. The deposit represents a security deposit and will be returned when the student leaves the school considering any deductions (See our Terms and Conditions). If for any reason the student is unable to take up their place at The Levels School the deposit will be refunded on an individual basis overseen by the Governing Body.

Once all the above has been received, a letter confirming start date and other relevant information such as term dates, relevant contact emails, uniform and student expectations will be sent. It is important to note if taking up a local authority funded place the paperwork referenced above in bold is still completed.

If the place is funded by the relevant local authority, then the deposit is incorporated within the funding agreement.

Admissions

We have in place written guidance on admissions, which clearly identifies the admission criteria. The admission of students is delegated to the Head Teacher by the Board of Governors.

We will publish A Statement of Purpose that fulfils the requirements of specific regulations and includes:

- Our setting's name, postal address, telephone number and website address.
- A named contact person.
- The classification of the school.
- Any specialism catered for.
- A description of our admissions procedure.
- Number on roll, age, gender.

Admission Criteria

In order to be accepted at The Levels School, a student's attainment in the areas of the National Curriculum, independence, self-management/regulation and organisational skills must comply with the following criteria:

- On entry pupils should have the potential and capability to function and attain at least ELC, Level 1 at the end of KS4 in Core subjects English, Maths and Science.
- Students should be able to access a school curriculum that is differentiated for individuals with a range of complex, specific learning differences that may include speech, language, and communication needs. This will involve working in classes of approximately 8 to 14 students, with a ratio up to 1:10.
- A curriculum provision that is sequential and multisensory in its delivery and links to individual SEND as outlined in the students' EHCP or defined by need within an EP (Educational Psychologists) report.

- Prior to admission students must have acquired some independence and organisational skills including:
    - Being able to carry out a sequence of simple self-care activities reliably e.g. changing for physical activities, using the toilet appropriately, eating with peers and managing personal hygiene.
    - Identifying resources required for familiar and routine activities e.g. selecting correct clothing (uniform) and selecting/using appropriate equipment in lessons.

Additionally, students' needs may cause them to require specialist interventions which may include:

- Social Skills group (of between 4-8 students).
- Timetabled SALT and OT delivered on a weekly basis.
- Fine Motor Skills group (of between 4-8 students).

The School will work in partnership with parents/carers and local authority personnel and requires that all necessary documentation is provided in accordance with any deadlines, to ensure an informed decision can be made about meeting the needs of a child/young person.

The documents required are:

- Current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- An Educational Psychologists report (this is essential if a student does not have an EHCP).
- Most recent Annual Review and/or key educational progress data.
- Any important information chronologically that provides a picture of the child's life to date.
- Current/most recent Care Plan/ Personal Education Plan or Pastoral Support Plan (PEP or PSP).
- Current or most recent Health Care Plan (HCP) if relevant.
- Any additional assessments (SALT, OT reports).
- Parental/carer submissions.
- Any other reports or information requested that may support the admissions team with their decision making

We will ensure that the special educational needs outlined in the child/young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or other records can be met.

All new admissions are considered by the Head Teacher, working with the Head of Prep, SENDCo and Head of Therapy. If funding is to be provided by the local authority, our aim is to respond within 15 working days of receipt of a formal consultation from the LA. A privately funded place will be approached in the same manner.

In making a decision to offer a place the school considers whether the child meets the admission criteria set out within this policy. In exceptional circumstances when a need is outside the criteria the school will consider whether reasonable adjustments could and should be made.

Decisions on admissions are also considered with regard to other students already within that cohort within the school. Whilst in year admission occur, we aim to stagger these with students ideally starting at the start of a term. This process ensures that new students are admitted effectively whilst maintaining the balance and stability of the school. When the admission date is decided this is communicated to all relevant parties.

Whilst a detailed review of all the relevant paperwork will be made and discussions had placing the child/young person at the centre of all decisions the school reserves the right to refuse admission to applicants based on the following considerations:

- The class size is at capacity for the year being applied for.
- Required documentation as per admissions procedure specified above is not provided.
- The daily journey time is considered excessive.
- The specialists within the school feel that the school cannot meet the individual needs of the young person.

If we feel that a child/young person may need additional resources we will ensure that these resources, and the possible involvement of any external agencies, will be discussed prior to offer of a placement. This will include those prospective students with Chronic Illness. The school does not currently have a medically trained member of staff on the team, only First Aiders. As a day school, the school currently has the medical facilities required, as laid out in the ISI standards to care for a child that is unwell whilst they await collection by the parent/carer.

Chronic Illness can include students with allergic reactions, anaphylaxis, asthma, chronic fatigue syndrome, diabetes, HIV, epilepsy and hepatitis. This is not an exhaustive list.

If required we will ensure that an individual risk assessment is generated prior to admission. Where appropriate, an initial care plan will be drawn up. Prior to admission a student passport will be created. All of these documents will be reviewed regularly once the child/young person arrives.

We will ensure that all relevant documentation (contracts, permissions, medical information and consent etc.) have been signed by the appropriate parent/carer/local authority representative prior to admission of the child or young person.

It is expected that contractual arrangements between the setting and/or parent/carer/any placing authority, including funding agreements for fees, transport and any associated therapy are approved before the admission of any child/young person.

Waiting Lists

It is important that we do not go over class sizes within cohorts. Many students have a particular class size specified within the EHCP and we are legally obligated not to exceed that. It may therefore be necessary to hold a student's admission to the school until such time that the year group can be split so that the required class size can be maintained. In this instance we will keep the lines of communication open with Parents/carers and ensure that a clear time frame is communicated.

Post-Admission follow up

We will ensure that there is regular contact through at least the first half term of the placement commencing. The aim of this is to ensure the details of the education provision and the development of an individual support plan are reflective of the young person's needs. Depending on the circumstances this contact could be telephone calls, remote or face to face meetings which could be held by any member of The Levels School team that has regular contact with the student. Any recommendations made will come from the Education team, which includes the therapy team, and may include suggestions around a part time provision to support a gradual integration into The Levels School. It may well be that through this initial transition we agree to extend the time period before endorsing the placement to give the school more time to tailor provision, giving the student every chance to be successful. This will be done in consultation with parents, teachers, therapists and where appropriate, the student.

We will ensure when admitting a child/young person that prior to the end of the post admission period they have identified and completed:

- The identification of any additional special educational needs that the school is equipped to cater for. (Consideration will be given to advice from the therapy team regarding the need for more time for assessments or if anxious the student to be allowed to settle so that a true picture can be gained).
- Any relevant baseline information and assessment details.
- Information stating what needs to be in place to support a child/young person in the placement.
- A system that identifies the resources and expertise required to meet the changing/developing needs of the child/young person's individual needs.
- Students' views.
- Parents views regarding the admissions process

Issues and Complaints

Communication is paramount throughout this process and beyond. We encourage parents/carers (and students) to express their thoughts and concerns at any time.

Any complaint or concern related to the school's Admissions Policy and its implementation, including any admissions decisions, should be submitted to the Admissions Coordinator, Mrs Gayle Pennington at admissions@thelevelsschool.co.uk

Every request will be reviewed and responded to within 5 working days. If the Admissions Coordinator has not resolved the concern to the full satisfaction of the applicant, the complaint should be escalated to the Head Teacher – caroline.cook@thelevelsschool.co.uk

It will be reviewed and responded to within 5 working days.

If the issue can not be resolved then the applicant should follow the process laid out within the complaints policy.

Reviewed – C. Cook & G Pennington, April 2026

Application Process

Applying for a place at The Levels School is a simple, five-step procedure.

Step One

Initial Enquiry

Website: Complete the Expression of Interest on the Website.
Phone: 01458 211014 to request support completing the Expression of Interest
In person: Collect an Expression of Interest form from Etonhurst, 7 Bath Road, Ashcott, Somerset, TA7 9QS
Assistance is available at any stage if required.

Step Two

Follow-Up Contact

An email is sent to arrange a convenient time for a call and/or a telephone call is made.
Information about the school and the young person shared and the admissions process is discussed.
Information about fees can be sent.

Step Three

Apply for a Place

Complete our application form. The application form will be sent with our relevant admissions, complaints, data and privacy policies.
A registration fee of £125 + vat is required to take your application further.
A member of our Admissions Team will contact you to request relevant reports.

Step Four

On Receipt of Application Form, Registration Fee and relevant paperwork

The senior team will scrutinise all relevant reports and contact any relevant professionals, including liaising with the local authority if appropriate.
A tour of the school will be arranged for the family if required.

Step Five

Placement Offer

A letter is sent out to confirm the offer of a place. The place is accepted upon receipt of:

- A refundable deposit of £550
- The completion and receipt of all relevant forms stated in the Admissions Policy