



Admissions policy

Approved by:
The Directors of Strive Alternative Provision

Signed on behalf of the Directors by:
Stacey Hickey, Provision Manager

Date Approved: July 2025
Review Date: July 2026

1. Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity and transparency around the admissions process to Strive Alternative Provision and to ensure that decisions are fair, consistent, child-centered, and safeguarding-led.

Strive recognizes that many children referred to alternative provision have experienced disrupted education, unmet special educational needs, trauma, anxiety, or exclusion from mainstream settings. Admissions decisions are therefore made carefully, with the welfare, safety and long-term outcomes of the child as the central consideration.

Safeguarding Considerations in Admissions

Safeguarding is a central consideration throughout the admissions process. All referrals are reviewed in line with Strive's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*.

Information relating to safeguarding concerns, risk assessments, attendance history, behaviour incidents, and involvement with external agencies must be disclosed during the admissions process. Failure to disclose relevant safeguarding information may result in the admissions process being paused or terminated.

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by and aligns with the following legislation and guidance:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice (2015, updated guidance applied)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education and Inspections Act 2006

Although Strive operates as an Alternative Provision, admissions practice reflects statutory expectations placed on education providers and commissioning authorities.

3. Behaviour, Regulation and Safety Considerations

Admissions decisions take into account behaviour, emotional regulation, and support needs in line with Strive's *Behaviour and Relationships Policy*.

Strive recognizes that behaviour is a form of communication and will consider children whose behaviour reflects unmet needs, trauma or anxiety. However, placements will only be offered where behaviour can be managed safely and does not present an ongoing risk to the child, other pupils or staff.

Where behaviour presents significant safeguarding concerns, additional risk assessments may be required prior to placement.

4. About Strive Alternative Provision

Strive Alternative Provision provides primary and secondary day placements for children and young people aged 6–18.

We support pupils with:

- Communication and interaction needs
- Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs
- Neurodivergent profiles, including autism and ADHD
- Trauma-informed and attachment-aware needs

Many pupils may:

- Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Be Children We Care For or previously looked after
- Be placed via schools or local authorities

Placements are commissioned by schools and local authorities and are subject to availability, suitability, and funding.

5. Admissions Criteria

5.1 Special Educational Needs

Strive may be able to meet the needs of children who:

- Have an EHCP or are undergoing assessment, indicating:
 - Autism spectrum condition and associated communication needs
 - ADHD
 - Anxiety or emotionally based school avoidance

- Speech, language and communication needs
 - Neurodevelopmental or early developmental trauma
- Have cognitive ability within the average or above-average range, often with uneven or “spiky” profiles
- Present with co-occurring mental health or medical needs

All admissions are subject to an assessment of whether needs can be safely and effectively met within existing resources.

SEND and Graduated Response

Admissions decisions are informed by Strive’s *SEND Policy* and the *SEND Code of Practice*. Consideration is given to whether the provision can deliver outcomes through appropriate, reasonable adjustments and a graduated, needs-led approach.

Where a child has an EHCP, Strive will ensure that provision is compatible with the outcomes specified and that placement does not compromise the efficient education of others.

5.2 Needs We Are Unable to Meet

Strive is unable to support:

- Children with severe or complex SEMH, including psychosis or schizophrenia
- Children with complex physical or sensory disabilities requiring specialist facilities beyond reasonable adjustment

6. Young Person Views and Parental / Carer Preference

Strive places high value on:

- The voice of the child
- The views of parents and carers
- The commissioning school or local authority

Admissions decisions consider whether:

- The placement aligns with the child’s views and aspirations (where expressed)
- Parents/carers are supportive of the placement and Strive’s policies
- The proposed placement is appropriate to age, ability, aptitude and SEN

7. Age, Ability and Cohort Compatibility

Admissions requests may be considered for pupils in:

- Key Stages 1–4
- Post-16 / NEET (16–18)

Consideration is given to:

- Educational stage and upcoming transition points
- Compatibility with existing cohorts
- The impact on the effective education and wellbeing of other young people

8. Travel and Accessibility

Admissions will consider whether:

- Travel time is reasonable and appropriate for the child
- Travel arrangements would not negatively impact wellbeing, regulation or engagement

Transport remains the responsibility of the commissioning authority or parents/carers unless otherwise agreed.

9. Admissions Procedure

Admissions operate on a rolling basis, subject to availability. Where safeguarding concerns are identified during assessment, the DSL will determine whether admission can proceed or whether further multi-agency consultation is required.

Stage 1 – Initial Enquiry

Referrals may be made by:

- Schools
- Local authorities
- Parents/carers via an advocate

Initial discussions and visits allow Strive to gather information and determine potential suitability.

Stage 2 – Assessment and Information Review

Strive will request and review:

- Referral form
- EHCP documentation (where applicable)
- Professional reports and risk assessments
- Safeguarding information

Failure to disclose relevant information may result in the process being terminated.

Assessment may include:

- Observations in the current setting
- Short visits to Strive

Stage 3 – Decision and Funding Agreement

If Strive considers the placement suitable:

- Start dates and provision model are discussed
- The referrer submits paperwork for panel approval
- Funding and contracts must be agreed before transition begins

Stage 4 – Bespoke Transition

Every child receives a personalized transition plan, adjusted to individual needs and pace. This may include phased attendance and relationship-building support.

10. Refusal of Placement

Strive may refuse a placement where:

- No suitable places are available
- The child's needs cannot be safely met
- Funding is insufficient
- The placement would negatively impact others
- The placement would not represent an effective use of resources

All refusals will be communicated clearly to the referrer. Decisions are made in line with safeguarding duties, SEND legislation, and the efficient education of all young people currently attending the provision.

11. Reviewing a Child's Placement

Placements are reviewed:

- Annually via EHCP review (where applicable)

- Earlier if concerns arise regarding suitability, attendance, safety or wellbeing
- Persistent non-attendance is treated as a safeguarding concern and managed in line with Strive's Attendance and Engagement Procedures and Child Protection Policy

12. Exit Criteria

A placement may end where:

- The child is ready to transition to another provision
- A key educational transition point is reached
- Attendance significantly deteriorates
- The child or referrer requests a change
- Behaviour poses a health and safety risk
- Needs change beyond Strive's ability to meet them
- Funding ceases or becomes insufficient

13. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Strive is committed to the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments wherever possible.

Where needs cannot be met despite reasonable adjustment, this will be explained clearly to parents/carers and referrers.

Related Policies

This Admissions Policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance and Engagement Procedures
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

END OF POLICY

MONITORING & REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, statutory guidance, local authority requirements, or significant operational changes. The Provision Manager is responsible for ensuring timely review and for communicating updates to all staff.

Version Control

Version	Date	Changes Made	Approved By
2025.1	July 2025	Full rewrite and update to 2025 legislation	Directors of Strive AP (via SH)