

Admissions Policy 2025-26

Benton House School

At Benton House School, we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and aspirational environment where every pupil is supported to achieve their full potential. We place safeguarding, wellbeing, and inclusion at the heart of all we do, ensuring pupils feel secure, respected, and valued.

Our curriculum and provision are designed to be broad, balanced, and stimulating, enabling pupils to make progress academically while also developing socially, emotionally, and personally. We foster resilience, independence, and a love of learning, preparing pupils for the next stage of their education and life beyond school.

Our ethos is underpinned by the values of Curiosity, Ambition, Respect, and Empathy. Through positive relationships, high expectations, and nurturing principles, we ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to succeed, contribute, and thrive in a caring and inclusive community.

All Benton House School policies are grounded in this vision, ensuring consistency, compliance, and a shared commitment to safeguarding, high-quality education, and the holistic development of every pupil.

The aims of this policy is:

- 1) To ensure that the school admits, as far as is possible, those pupils whose special educational needs can be met effectively and in doing so ensure progress in all aspects of their development.
- 2) To establish clear and rigorous procedures for the admission of pupils into BHS.

Rationale:

Benton House School is a specialist independent school for pupils aged 5–14 with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), whose primary needs are typically Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), frequently alongside autism, communication needs or other neurodevelopmental differences. We recognise that pupils often arrive having experienced disrupted education, adverse childhood experiences, trauma and significant barriers to learning. Our admissions process therefore carefully considers whether Benton House can safely and effectively meet each pupil's educational, therapeutic and pastoral needs whilst maintaining the wellbeing of the whole school community.

The objectives of the policy are that: -

All concerned will have a clear understanding of the criteria used in assessing the appropriateness of a placement for individual pupils at The School.

All concerned will have a clear understanding of the processes of judging the appropriateness of that placement.

Parents/carers, each pupil and representatives of LA's, social service departments and other interested professionals have clear understanding of the opportunities on offer at the School

Procedure for Admissions:-

- Applications for admission to Benton House School are normally made by a SEN Officer of the Local Authority in whose area the pupil currently resides. The officer will contact the school direct or via their Admission manager and send over the relevant documents relating to the pupil. Parents can contact the school direct and organise to visit independently. The school will also use the NEPO NE12 Procurement Portal.

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- Regulations under the Education Act 2011 and all subsequent legislation state that parents have the right to express a preference for a school which is not a LA school, but which is an Independent special school approved by the DFE. If the LA agrees it will fund the placement at that school.
- All of the pupils referred to Benton House School will have a history of SEMH and or associated learning difficulties. Pupils will be aged between 5 - 14 years, Academic year 1 - 9.
- The initial visit will take place after school. This allows all pupils, parents, carers, social workers etc. or anybody else who has accompanied the pupil to have:
 - a tour of the school, an introduction to key staff, a discussion with senior staff concerning such issues as: the school curriculum, the prospective pupil's likes and dislikes. The content of key school policies, including the school expectations for good behaviour and discipline and the positive behaviour support and restrictive physical intervention of pupils. A discussion about the school's physical intervention strategy. And an opportunity for each visitor to ask any questions they may have
- A further visit will then be offered during the normal working day which gives the opportunity for the pupil to see the school in action.
- If, following these visits, all concerned are agreed that the pupil's needs as outlined in the EHCP or other documentation can be met at the school, and that the young person can be adequately managed with the planned resources available, and that the pupil and parents/carers are committed to the placement, the school will formally offer a place in writing through our admissions manager

Referrals Procedure

Pupils are referred to BHS from the following local authorities, Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle, South Tyneside, and Durham. The referral will be sent to the schools admission manager at OFG. The Headteacher and SENDCo will review the consultation documentation, including the EHCP, professional reports, risk information and current provision, to determine whether Benton House School is able to meet the pupil's educational, therapeutic and pastoral needs whilst maintaining the efficient education and safety of all pupils.

Admission Criteria:-

- The pupil will be aged between 5-14 years –
- The pupil will have an Education, Health and Care Plan, or be in the process of having one written –
- The plan will specify that the pupil has social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH) or social communication difficulties as a primary need –
- The school will consider whether the pupil's cognitive, communication, learning, social, emotional, behavioural and therapeutic needs can be effectively met within the provision available. The pupil may have one or more specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia –
- The pupil will express a commitment to the placement –
- The pupil's parents/carers will express a commitment to the placement.
- For all "Looked After Children", there must be permanently named carers and a permanent home base for the pupil, available at any time throughout the year. This placement should be stable and

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secure.

- The admittance of the pupil will not be detrimental to other pupils already on the school role - There is a space available in the pupil's academic year group so their curriculum need can be met
- Pupils are admitted at any time in the school year although it is easier for pupils to start at the beginning of a term or half term. We endeavour to start all pupils on a Monday.
- Once a decision has been reached; and funding has been agreed by the Local Authority, a start date will be agreed, and transport will also be arranged where appropriate.

Transitional Start:

Transition arrangements are planned on an individual basis and may include phased attendance, visits, home-school liaison, current setting visits, therapeutic support and graduated increases in attendance according to each pupil's needs.

Baseline assessments, risk assessments and initial wellbeing assessments are completed during the first half term to inform personalised planning, curriculum access and therapeutic support.

1. If pupils are admitted from other educational establishments within the school year careful individual transition arrangements will be made with the young person's previous school. Similarly, if a young person transfers from Benton House School to elsewhere.

All parents will be given an Admissions pack, which contains the following information to be read or to be completed by parents prior to their child's start date.

- General consent form
- Child friendly GDPR privacy notice
- 1 Page pupil profile
- Child friendly anti bullying policy
- Photograph consent form
- Privacy notice
- Pupil Information form
- School uniform list
- Medical form
- Relevant persons contact details
- Code of Conduct
- Worried or Complaints leaflet
- School Prospectus

Discharge Process

Where Benton House can no longer safely or appropriately meet a pupil's needs, the school will work collaboratively with parents, the Local Authority and relevant professionals to identify an alternative placement. This will normally include an emergency or annual review of the EHCP before any notice period is considered.

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Outcomes
First Group

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