Hedgewood School

Admissions Policy

Date policy last reviewed: June 2026

Signed by:

_____ Co-headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

Last updated: 11 June 2026

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1. Statement of Intent

Hedgewood School is a maintained primary special school for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. The school is designated for pupils with Complex Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), including Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), and associated needs.

The school aims to:

- Provide a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment
- Ensure fair and equitable access for eligible pupils
- Work collaboratively with local authorities, families and professionals
- Meet pupils' educational, social, emotional and medical needs

All admissions comply with statutory guidance and legislation for maintained special schools.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education Act 1996
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended, including 2024 updates)
- School Admissions Code (2021) **[gov.uk]**
- School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 **[statutoryi...liament.uk]**
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (or 2025 from September 2025) **[gov.uk]**
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (statutory guidance, applies from 19 August 2024, updated 2026) **[gov.uk]**
- Children Missing Education (statutory guidance, updated September 2025) **[gov.uk]**

This policy operates in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

3. Designated Capacity

The school has a designated capacity of 190 pupils.

Pupils are organised into:

- Mixed ability or needs-based classes (7–10 pupils)

- Vertical groupings across year groups
- Phases: Pre-Phase 1, Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3

All pupils receive support specified in their EHC plans, including:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational or Physiotherapy where required

09/6/2026 update on building works and Hedgewood's capacity to offer places for the academic year 2026/27:

Hedgewood will be closing 2 classrooms with effect from July 2026, as building works will commence and carry on through the autumn term. This reduces our capacity to 170 places until works are complete, and 2 high needs classes restored.

4. Admission Criteria

As a maintained special school:

- All pupils must have an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan)**
- Hedgewood School must be **named in Section I** of the EHC plan

Admissions are managed by the Local Authority (LA) in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice.

Pupils admitted will typically have:

- Moderate Learning Difficulties
- Autism Spectrum Condition at a complex level
- Communication and interaction needs
- Additional sensory, medical or physical needs

Admissions must:

- Be appropriate to the child's age, ability and needs
- Not negatively impact the education of others
- Represent efficient use of resources

Equality

Admissions decisions comply fully with the **Equality Act 2010**:

- No child will be refused on discriminatory grounds
- Reasonable adjustments will be made where required

5. Admission Process

1. The Local Authority consults with the school by sending the EHC plan and supporting documentation
2. The Senior Leadership Team assesses:
    - Needs and suitability
    - Capacity and resources
3. Observations may be undertaken in the pupil's current setting
4. The school responds formally to the LA with a decision
5. The LA makes the final decision and names the school if appropriate
6. Parents are formally notified by the LA

Following confirmation:

- Parents/carers are offered visits
- Transition arrangements are agreed
- Start dates and transport are arranged

6. In-Year Admissions

Pupils may be admitted at any point during the year where:

- A vacancy exists
- The school can meet need appropriately

Priority is usually given to pupils within the local authority.

7. Safeguarding

The school operates in accordance with **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024/2025**.

This includes:

- A strengthened definition of safeguarding, including abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Emphasis on early help and early identification
- Safeguarding responsibilities across online and offline environments
- Robust information sharing and data protection practices

Safeguarding considerations are integral to all admissions decisions.

8. Attendance and Admission Registers

In line with statutory guidance:

The school will:

- Maintain accurate **admission and attendance registers**
- Follow up absence promptly
- Monitor patterns of absence
- Work collaboratively with families and external agencies

From August 2024, schools must comply with **Working Together to Improve School Attendance** guidance, including:

- Early intervention for persistent absence
- Multi-agency collaboration
- Targeted support for vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND

Pupil Registration Regulations (2024 updates)

The school ensures:

- Accurate and timely recording
- Compliance with removal from roll procedures
- Information sharing with the Local Authority

9. Children Missing from Education (CME)

The school follows **Children Missing Education statutory guidance (2025)**.

Children missing education are at risk of:

- Harm or exploitation
- Poor outcomes

The school will:

- Investigate unexplained absence
- Notify the LA of pupils absent for 10 consecutive days
- Work with external agencies to locate pupils
- Ensure no pupil is removed from roll without LA agreement

The updated guidance strengthens:

- Joint working with local authorities
- Safeguarding oversight
- Legal compliance with attendance regulations [gov.uk]

10. Pupils with Medical Needs

Pupils with medical conditions:

- Have equal right to admission
- Will not be refused on medical grounds

Where required:

- An **Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP)** will be implemented
- Multi-agency collaboration ensures needs are met

11. Fair Access and Vulnerable Pupils

Admissions comply with:

- Fair Access Protocols
- Requirements of the School Admissions Code

The school prioritises:

- Vulnerable pupils
- Those with complex SEND
- Pupils at risk of exclusion or without a school place

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy is:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated in line with legislative changes

The governing body ensures compliance with statutory duties and promotes fair, transparent and inclusive admissions.