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1. Introduction

This policy outlines the admissions criteria and processes used to determine whether Storybrook SEMH Specialist School can safely, appropriately, and lawfully meet a child's needs in line with statutory guidance. This policy is informed by the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice (2015), and the Equality Act 2010.

Storybrook supports primary-aged pupils whose primary barrier to learning is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). The school provides a trauma-informed, relational, structured environment for children who cannot access mainstream education. We work within a relational framework based on regulate, relate, repair, reflect.

Priority may be given to Looked After Children (LAC), Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), and pupils with the highest level of unmet SEMH need.

This policy is also informed by statutory safeguarding guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

Age Range

Admissions are limited to Key Stages 1 and 2 (ages 5-11). Pupils outside this age range *cannot be considered* for placement.

Primary Need Criteria

The child's primary identified need must be Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), as evidenced through formal documentation and professional assessment.

- EHCP Section B (description of needs)
- Professional reports
- Historical school information
- Behavioural presentation across settings

The school must be satisfied, based on evidence, that SEMH is the primary barrier to learning.

A formal clinical diagnosis is not required for admission; however, there must be clear, consistent evidence that SEMH needs are the primary barrier to learning.

Pupils may present with:

- ADHD
- ASD (where SEMH is the primary need)





- Sensory processing differences
- Trauma-related responses
- Anxiety-based presentations

These needs are considered secondary unless they directly drive SEMH-based difficulties.

Storybrook is not able to meet the needs of pupils where SEMH is not the primary identified need, or where needs fall outside the scope of the school’s provision, such as:

- Profound or complex learning difficulties
- Significant cognitive impairment
- Severe or acute mental health conditions requiring clinical or hospital-based intervention
- Medical needs requiring specialist nursing or medical oversight
- Physical disabilities requiring specialist equipment or adapted facilities
- High-level personal care needs (e.g., toileting, feeding, mobility support)

These needs fall outside the scope of the school’s provision and environment.

The school will consider reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010; however, a placement will not be agreed where adjustments would compromise the safety, wellbeing, or effective education of the pupil or others

Timeliness and Responsiveness

The school is committed to progressing admissions efficiently while ensuring that all decisions remain safe, evidence-based, and thorough.

Where delays occur due to incomplete information or complex multi-agency involvement, the school will maintain clear communication with the Local Authority and relevant stakeholders.

2. EHCP Requirements

In most cases, pupils referred to Storybrook SEMH Specialist School will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that identifies SEMH as the primary need. This ensures clarity around the child’s needs and the provision required to meet them.

In exceptional circumstances, the school may consider referrals where an EHCP is not yet finalised, provided there is clear, robust evidence of SEMH need and Local





Authority agreement to progress statutory assessment. Examples may include where:

- the Local Authority has initiated an EHCP needs assessment, or
- there is clear, documented evidence of SEMH needs that have resulted in:
 - school breakdown
 - persistent non-attendance
 - exclusion or risk of exclusion
 - inability to access mainstream provision

These cases are reviewed individually to ensure the school can safely and effectively meet the child's needs.

3. Suitability

The suitability assessment ensures that Storybrook can provide an environment where the pupil will be safe, supported, and able to make progress. A placement is only agreed when the school can confidently meet the child's needs without compromising the wellbeing of the existing cohort. This includes consideration of whether reasonable adjustments can be made within the school's resources without compromising the safety or wellbeing of the pupil or others.

Placement decisions are based on a holistic assessment of the following factors:

- Primary need alignment with SEMH
- Cognitive profile and ability to access a primary curriculum
- Behavioural presentation and whether it can be safely supported
- Emotional and developmental needs
- Environmental compatibility with a small, relational setting
- Safeguarding considerations
- Risk assessment outcomes
- Impact on the existing cohort, including vulnerability of current pupils
- Capacity within the school, including staffing and class composition

These factors are reviewed holistically to ensure a balanced and safe decision.

To effectively assess suitability, the school requires:

- the most recent EHCP (where applicable)
- annual reviews or interim reviews
- behaviour logs or incident reports
- attendance records





- reports from educational psychologists, CAMHS, social care, or other professionals
- any risk assessments completed by previous settings

This information enables the school to make a robust, evidence-based and defensible decision.

Pupils referred to Storyybrook SEMH Specialist School often present with academic attainment that is below age-related expectations, typically:

- up to two years below expected levels
- uneven or spiky profiles across subjects
- gaps in learning due to disrupted school experiences, exclusion, or non-attendance

These patterns are consistent with pupils whose SEMH needs have significantly impacted their access to learning.

The school is well-placed to support pupils who:

- have SEMH as their primary barrier to learning
- can engage in small-group learning with relational support
- benefit from predictable routines and consistent adult presence
- can be safely supported within the school’s staffing model
- respond positively to nurture-based, trauma-informed approaches
- can manage being in close proximity to peers
- have the cognitive ability to access a primary curriculum, with adaptations
- require small-group teaching and high levels of adult support
- need targeted interventions to rebuild confidence, engagement, and learning stamina
- does not require specialist facilities beyond the school’s offer

These pupils typically thrive in Storyybrook’s structured, relational environment and, in such cases, alternative specialist provision is likely to be appropriate.

Storyybrook is not suitable for pupils whose academic needs stem primarily from:

- Global developmental delay
- Moderate, severe, or profound learning difficulties
- Cognitive impairments that require a highly specialised curriculum
- Needs that fall outside the scope of a mainstream-adapted primary curriculum





These pupils require specialist learning environments that provide intensive cognitive and developmental support beyond the school's remit.

A placement will not be agreed where the pupil:

- requires specialist therapeutic, clinical, or secure provision
- needs continuous 1:1 or 2:1 supervision
- displays behaviours that pose significant risk to others
- cannot safely access shared or communal spaces
- requires a highly adapted curriculum due to cognitive impairment
- needs specialist equipment or facilities not available on site
- would significantly disrupt the stability or safety of the existing cohort

4. Behavioural & Emotional Presentation Criteria

Pupils referred to Storyybrook may display a range of SEMH-related behaviours that can be safely supported within the school's relational, trauma-informed environment. These include:

- emotional dysregulation, including rapid mood changes or difficulty managing strong feelings
- high levels of anxiety, including separation anxiety or generalised worry
- EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) or persistent school refusal
- attachment-related needs, including insecure or disrupted attachment patterns
- low self-esteem or negative self-perception
- oppositional or avoidant behaviours, often linked to unmet emotional needs

Some behavioural presentations may exceed the school's capacity to manage safely within its current staffing model and environment. For example, where a pupil:

- requires 2:1 staffing or higher to maintain safety
- displays persistent or unpredictable high-risk behaviours that cannot be reasonably anticipated or safely de-escalated within a small primary setting
- requires a secure environment or specialist provision with controlled access
- exhibits violent behaviour at a frequency or intensity that poses significant risk to others
- requires continuous access to individual rooms, which the school does not have
- demonstrates behaviours that would compromise the safety or emotional wellbeing of the existing cohort

These needs typically require specialist or secure SEMH provision beyond the scope of Storyybrook's environment.





5. Environmental Compatibility Criteria

Storybrook is a small, nurturing, low-arousal primary provision. Due to the school's physical environment and relational model of practice, pupils must be able to:

- be in close proximity to peers and adults
- work within small groups
- transition between compact shared spaces
- engage in a structured, predictable routine
- participate in a communal, relational environment rather than isolated learning

The school's environment is intentionally calm, consistent, and relational, designed to support pupils with SEMH needs who benefit from structure and emotional containment.

To ensure safety and suitability, it is important to note what the school **does not** have. Storybrook does not provide:

- Individual isolation rooms
- Sensory rooms
- Secure or locked spaces
- Medical treatment rooms
- High-supervision or containment units
- Specialist physical-disability adaptations
- Spaces for continuous 1:1 withdrawal

As a result of these environmental limitations, the school cannot safely meet the needs of pupils who:

- require continuous access to a low-stimulus individual space
- cannot safely access shared or communal areas
- require specialist sensory regulation environments
- require secure boundaries beyond what a mainstream-adapted primary site can provide
- display behaviours that would compromise the safety or emotional wellbeing of the existing cohort within a small setting

These needs typically require specialist or secure SEMH provision with enhanced environmental controls.





6. Social, Emotional & Developmental Needs Criteria

Pupils referred to Storyybrook typically require targeted support to develop the social and emotional skills necessary for learning. These may include difficulties with:

- Emotional literacy (identifying, naming, and expressing emotions)
- Self-regulation and managing strong feelings
- Building and maintaining relationships with peers and adults
- Understanding social cues and expectations
- Managing conflict, frustration, or perceived injustice
- Developing resilience, confidence, and independence
- Re-engaging with learning following trauma, exclusion, or negative school experiences

The school's relational, trauma-informed approach is designed to meet these needs through consistent routines, predictable boundaries, and emotionally attuned adults.

Storyybrook is well-placed to support pupils who:

- Have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) or trauma
- Require nurture-based approaches
- Benefit from small class sizes and high adult presence
- Need structured opportunities to develop social communication skills
- Require a safe, relational environment to rebuild trust in education

These pupils typically respond well to the school's therapeutic, relational ethos.

A placement may not be appropriate where a pupil:

- Requires specialist therapeutic intervention beyond what a school can provide
- Has complex developmental disorders requiring a highly specialised curriculum
- Needs continuous 1:1 emotional regulation support
- Cannot safely engage in group-based learning
- Requires a level of supervision or containment that exceeds the school's staffing model

These needs generally require specialist therapeutic or clinical settings.

7. Safeguarding Considerations

Safeguarding is central to all admissions decisions and underpins every stage of the process. The school must be able to ensure the physical safety, emotional wellbeing,

Date Last Reviewed: 08.04.2026 | Scheduled Review Date: 08.04.2027
Review By: R. Burbridge





and protection of every pupil and staff member. Admissions decisions therefore consider both:

- the safety of the referred pupil, and
- the safety and stability of the existing cohort

A placement will only be agreed where the school can confidently meet safeguarding requirements without compromising the needs of others.

To make an informed decision, the school requires full disclosure of any safeguarding-relevant information, including:

- Social care involvement (current or historical)
- Child protection plans or child in need plans
- Risk assessments from previous settings
- Reports relating to trauma, exploitation, or significant adverse experiences
- Information regarding family context that may impact safety
- Any known risks to peers, staff, or self

Incomplete, inaccurate, or withheld information may delay or prevent progression of a referral or result in a placement being declined.

These safeguarding considerations are applied consistently throughout the admissions process, from referral to final review.

Safeguarding responsibilities during admissions are guided by:

- national safeguarding legislation
- local Authority safeguarding procedures
- statutory guidance on children with SEND
- the school's own safeguarding and child protection policies
- multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

All admissions decisions must align with these frameworks to ensure compliance and best practice.

Throughout the admissions process, the school evaluates safeguarding factors including:

- risks to self (e.g., self-harm, emotional distress, vulnerability)
- risks to others (e.g., aggression, impulsivity, unsafe behaviours)
- exposure to harm (e.g., neglect, exploitation, domestic abuse)
- environmental triggers that may impact safety
- the child's ability to regulate emotions in a group setting





- the impact of the child's needs on the safety of the cohort

These considerations inform whether the school can safely meet the child's needs.

To make safe and informed decisions, the school requires:

- up-to-date safeguarding reports
- chronologies of significant incidents
- risk assessments from previous settings
- multi-agency involvement details
- information about family circumstances affecting safety
- any current or historic child protection concerns

Incomplete safeguarding information may delay or prevent progression of the referral.

The school must ensure that new placements do not compromise the safety or wellbeing of the current cohort. This includes:

- protecting vulnerable pupils from potential harm
- maintaining stable group dynamics
- ensuring staffing levels can safely support all pupils
- preventing environments from becoming unsafe or dysregulated
- managing peer-to-peer risks effectively

Cohort safeguarding is a critical factor in all admissions decisions.

The school must also ensure that any child admitted:

- can be safely supported within the environment
- has access to appropriate emotional and behavioural support
- is not placed in a setting that could increase distress or risk
- receives consistent, trauma-informed care
- is protected from harm, bullying, or unsafe peer interactions

A placement will not proceed if the school cannot guarantee these safeguards.

Safeguarding during admissions is strengthened through collaboration with:

- Social care
- Early Help teams
- CAMHS and mental health services
- Educational Psychology
- Health professionals





- Previous schools or provisions

This ensures decisions are informed by a full understanding of the child's needs and risks.

All safeguarding information gathered during admissions is:

- recorded securely
- stored in line with data protection legislation
- shared only with appropriate professionals
- used to inform risk assessments and decision-making
- reviewed regularly throughout the process

Accurate record-keeping ensures transparency and accountability.

8. Risk Assessment Requirements

Risk assessment is a critical component of the admissions process and is required to determine whether risks can be safely managed within the school. It enables the school to:

- identify potential risks to the child, peers, and staff
- understand the child's behavioural and emotional profile
- determine whether risks can be safely managed within the school's environment
- inform decision-making at every stage of the admissions process
- ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met

The school evaluates a wide range of risks, including:

- **Risk to self**
 - Emotional distress
 - Self-harm behaviours
 - Vulnerability to exploitation
 - Difficulty regulating emotions
- **Risk to others**
 - Aggression or violence
 - Impulsivity or unpredictable behaviour
 - Unsafe interactions with peers





- **Environmental risks**
 - Sensory sensitivities
 - Triggers within the school environment
 - Need for specialist spaces or adaptations

- **Safeguarding risks**
 - Exposure to harm at home or in the community
 - Child protection concerns
 - Missing-from-education patterns

These categories ensure a comprehensive understanding of the child’s needs.

Risk assessments are informed by:

- Local Authority referral documentation
- safeguarding reports and chronologies
- behaviour logs and incident records
- observations in current or previous settings
- multi-agency consultation
- parent/carer insights
- pupil and family visits to Storyybrook
- internal professional judgement

The school requires accurate, up-to-date information to complete a meaningful assessment.

During the early stages of the admissions process, the school conducts an initial risk screening to determine whether:

- the referral can progress
- immediate clarification is needed
- risks appear manageable within the school’s capacity
- the child’s needs align with the school’s specialist remit

Where risks are identified as unmanageable within the school’s provision, the referral will not progress.

If the referral progresses, a full risk assessment is completed. This includes:

- detailed analysis of known risks
- identification of triggers and escalation patterns
- review of successful de-escalation strategies





- consideration of environmental suitability
- assessment of staffing and supervision requirements
- evaluation of potential impact on the existing cohort

This assessment informs the final suitability decision.

Risk assessment is not a one-off event. It is:

- Dynamic - updated as new information emerges
- Responsive - adjusted following observations or visits
- Collaborative - informed by multi-agency professionals
- Continuous - reviewed throughout transition and early weeks

This ensures the school remains vigilant and proactive.

An acceptable risk assessment will demonstrate that:

- the school can safely meet the needs of the referred pupil
- the pupil will not be placed in an environment that is unsafe or unsuitable
- the safety and wellbeing of the **existing cohort and staff** are protected
- the school's environment, staffing model, and routines are appropriate for the pupil's profile

Where risks are identified but manageable, the school develops a risk mitigation plan that may include:

- increased supervision;
- key adult support;
- adapted routines or expectations;
- access to regulation spaces;
- personalised strategies for emotional regulation;
- adjustments to class composition;
- multi-agency involvement.

Mitigation plans are shared with relevant staff and reviewed regularly.

A placement may not proceed if:

- risks exceed the school's capacity to manage them
- the environment cannot be safely adapted
- the child's needs require specialist or secure provision
- the placement would compromise the safety of the cohort
- multi-agency professionals advise against placement





In such cases, the school provides a clear rationale to the Local Authority.

All risk assessments are:

- recorded securely
- stored in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements
- updated throughout the admissions and transition process
- used to inform decision-making and planning
- shared appropriately with relevant professionals

Accurate documentation ensures transparency and accountability

To complete a thorough assessment, the school requires full and accurate information, including:

- behaviour logs and incident reports from previous settings
- any existing risk assessments (school, social care, or multi-agency)
- records of exclusions, suspensions, or reduced timetables
- information relating to self-harm, harm to others, or high-risk behaviours
- reports from CAMHS, educational psychologists, or other professionals
- details of triggers, patterns, and effective de-escalation strategies
- information about environmental or sensory factors that impact behaviour

This information must be provided before a placement decision is made.

The school can safely support pupils who present with:

- predictable dysregulation linked to identifiable triggers
- anxiety-based behaviours
- low-level aggression that responds to relational support
- shutdowns or withdrawal
- behaviour linked to trauma or attachment needs
- behaviour that improves with consistent routines and adult attunement

These risks align with the school's trauma-informed, relational model.

A placement may not be appropriate where a pupil:

- displays unpredictable high-risk behaviours that cannot be anticipated or de-escalated
- requires constant 1:1 or 2:1 supervision to maintain safety
- has a history of serious harm to peers or adults beyond the school's capacity
- requires a secure or controlled-access environment
- engages in behaviours that pose significant risk to younger or vulnerable pupils





- requires specialist clinical or therapeutic risk management
- has risks that cannot be mitigated within a small primary setting

9. Transition Planning

Transition planning ensures that pupils joining Storyybrook experience a safe, supported, and well-structured introduction to the school. Transitions are designed to reduce anxiety, build trust, and establish predictable routines from the outset. The process is tailored to each child's needs and informed by the information gathered during the admissions process.

Transitions are guided by the following principles:

- Predictability - providing clear routines, expectations, and structure
- Relational safety - ensuring the child builds trust with key adults
- Gradual exposure - allowing the child to experience the environment in manageable steps
- Consistency - maintaining stable staffing and communication
- Collaboration - working closely with families, professionals, and previous settings

These principles help pupils feel secure and ready to engage with learning.

Depending on the child's needs, transition planning may involve:

- a pre-admission visit for the child and family
- a tour of the school with opportunities to meet key staff
- a transition booklet with photos and simple explanations
- short, supported visits to the classroom
- a phased start, gradually increasing time in school
- meetings with previous settings to share strategies and insights
- a key adult introduction, ensuring relational continuity
- opportunities for the child to explore the environment at their own pace

These activities are adapted to ensure the child feels safe and supported.

A placement may not proceed if:

- The child is unable to safely access the site even with a phased transition
- The level of dysregulation during visits indicates significant risk
- The child cannot tolerate shared spaces or proximity to peers
- The transition process reveals needs beyond the school's capacity
- Multi-agency professionals advise that the environment is unsuitable





In such cases, the school will work with the Local Authority to identify a more appropriate provision.

Please see appendix 1 for further information.

10. Multi-Agency Collaboration

Effective multi-agency collaboration is essential to ensuring that pupils with SEMH needs receive coordinated, holistic support. Storyybrook works closely with external professionals to ensure that placement decisions are informed, safe, and in the best interests of the child.

The school expects all agencies involved with the pupil to contribute openly and constructively to the admissions process.

Depending on the child's needs and history, collaboration may involve:

- Local Authority SEND teams
- Educational Psychology Services
- Social Care (including Child in Need or Child Protection teams)
- CAMHS or other mental health services
- Early Help teams
- Youth support services
- Previous or current educational settings
- Health professionals, such as paediatricians or occupational therapists

These agencies provide essential information that helps the school understand the child's needs and risks.

To support a safe and informed placement decision, Storyybrook requires agencies to:

- Share accurate, up-to-date information
- Provide relevant reports, assessments, and risk documentation
- Attend multi-agency meetings as needed
- Contribute to discussions about suitability and transition
- Offer professional insight into the child's needs, strengths, and vulnerabilities
- Support the development of a coordinated transition plan

Transparent communication is essential to safeguarding and placement success.

A placement may not proceed if multi-agency professionals identify:

- risks that cannot be safely managed within the school





- needs requiring specialist or secure provision
- concerns about the pupil's ability to access the environment
- safeguarding issues that exceed the school's capacity
- significant gaps in information that prevent safe decision-making

In such cases, the school will work with the Local Authority to identify a more suitable alternative.

11. Parent and Carer Engagement

Storyybrook recognises that strong, trusting relationships with parents and carers are essential for supporting pupils with SEMH needs. Effective engagement ensures consistency between home and school, promotes emotional security, and supports positive outcomes for the child.

The school expects parents and carers to work collaboratively with staff throughout the admissions process and beyond.

To support a safe and successful placement, parents and carers are expected to:

- Provide accurate and complete information about the child's needs
- Attend meetings, visits, and transition activities
- Engage openly and honestly with staff
- Share insights about triggers, strengths, and effective strategies
- Support the child's transition into the school
- Maintain regular communication with the school once the placement begins

This partnership helps ensure the child receives consistent support across settings.

Storyybrook is committed to building positive, respectful relationships with families. Support may include:

- Regular communication from key adults
- Opportunities to visit the school and meet staff
- Guidance on supporting SEMH needs at home
- Involvement in reviews, planning meetings, and multi-agency discussions
- Access to pastoral support or signposting to external services
- Clear explanations of routines, expectations, and strategies used in school

The aim is to empower families and create a shared understanding of the child's needs.

A placement may not be appropriate if:





- parents or carers are unable or unwilling to engage with the admissions process
- significant information is withheld, preventing safe decision-making
- there is a breakdown in communication that compromises safeguarding
- professionals identify concerns that require a different type of provision
- the level of support needed from home cannot be sustained

In such cases, the school will work with the Local Authority to identify a more suitable alternative.

12. Placement Review and Monitoring

Once a pupil joins Storybrook, their placement is monitored closely to ensure it remains safe, appropriate, and beneficial. Regular review ensures that the school can respond to emerging needs, adjust support, and maintain the wellbeing of both the pupil and the wider cohort.

Placement monitoring is a core safeguarding responsibility and forms part of the school's commitment to high-quality SEMH provision.

During the first weeks of a new placement, the school undertakes enhanced monitoring, including:

- daily observations by class staff
- regular check-ins with the pupil's key adult
- communication with parents and carers
- review of behaviour, engagement, and emotional regulation
- assessment of how well the pupil is managing transitions and routines
- evaluation of the impact on the existing cohort

This early period helps identify whether the placement is settling as expected.

After the initial period, placement suitability continues to be reviewed through:

- termly progress reviews
- EHCP annual reviews
- multi-agency meetings where appropriate
- behaviour and safeguarding monitoring
- regular communication with families
- adjustments to support plans as needed

This ensures the placement remains aligned with the pupil's evolving needs.

A placement is considered successful when the pupil:





- shows increasing emotional regulation
- engages with learning and routines
- builds positive relationships with staff and peers
- demonstrates improved attendance
- responds to relational and trauma-informed approaches
- makes progress academically, socially, or emotionally

These indicators show that the environment is meeting the pupil's needs.

A placement may require further assessment if the pupil:

- struggles to maintain safety for themselves or others
- shows escalating dysregulation despite support
- cannot access shared spaces or group learning
- experiences significant emotional distress in the environment
- requires supervision levels beyond the school's capacity
- demonstrates needs that exceed what the provision can offer

In such cases, the school will work with the Local Authority and professionals to review suitability.

In rare cases, despite support and adjustments, a placement may no longer be viable. This may occur when:

- risks cannot be safely managed
- the pupil's needs require specialist or secure provision
- the placement significantly impacts the safety or wellbeing of the cohort
- multi-agency professionals advise that the environment is unsuitable

If this occurs, the school will collaborate with the Local Authority to identify a more appropriate setting.

13. Decision-Making Framework

The decision-making framework ensures that all admissions decisions are consistent, transparent, and aligned with statutory responsibilities. It provides a structured process for evaluating whether Storybrook can safely and appropriately meet a pupil's needs, while maintaining the wellbeing of the existing cohort.

The framework aligns with statutory guidance, safeguarding duties, and the school's trauma-informed ethos.

Admissions decisions are based on a holistic review of all available information, including:

Date Last Reviewed: 08.04.2026 | Scheduled Review Date: 08.04.2027
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- EHCP documentation (where applicable)
- Professional reports (EP, CAMHS, social care, paediatrics)
- Behaviour logs and incident records
- Attendance history
- Risk assessments from previous settings
- Safeguarding information
- Observations from visits or transition activities
- Discussions with parents, carers, and professionals
- The school's capacity, staffing, and cohort composition

This ensures decisions are grounded in a full understanding of the child's needs.

The school applies the following principles when determining suitability:

- Safety first - the safeguarding of all pupils and staff is paramount and non-negotiable
- Needs-led - decisions are based on the child's needs, not availability alone
- Cohort protection - placements must not compromise the stability of the existing group
- Transparency - decisions are communicated clearly and respectfully
- Professional collaboration - multi-agency input is valued and considered
- Evidence-based - decisions rely on documented information, not assumptions
- Child-centred - the child's wellbeing and long-term outcomes guide the process

These principles ensure fairness and consistency.

Following review, the school may reach one of the following outcomes:

a) Placement Approved

The school determines that it can safely, effectively, and appropriately meet the child's needs. A transition plan is agreed and implemented.

b) Placement Approved with Conditions

The placement is suitable if specific supports or arrangements are in place, such as:

- A phased transition
- Additional multi-agency involvement
- Updated risk assessments
- Temporary adjustments to class composition

These conditions are agreed collaboratively.





c) Placement Declined (with rationale)

The school concludes that it cannot safely meet the child's needs, or that the placement would compromise the wellbeing of the existing cohort. Reasons are clearly explained to the Local Authority, with recommendations for alternative provision where appropriate.

Communication of the Decision

The final decision is communicated to:

- The Local Authority
- Parents and carers
- Relevant professionals (where appropriate)

The school provides a clear rationale, outlining the evidence considered and the factors influencing the decision.

14. Documentation and Evidence Requirements

To make a safe, informed, and evidence-based admissions decision, Storybrook requires full and accurate documentation from the Local Authority, previous settings, and relevant professionals. This ensures the school has a complete understanding of the pupil's needs, risks, and history before determining suitability.

Incomplete or missing information may delay or prevent a placement decision.

The following documents must be provided as part of the admissions process:

- EHCP (where applicable), including the most recent version
- Annual review reports or interim review updates
- Educational Psychology reports
- CAMHS or mental health assessments
- Social care reports, including Child in Need or Child Protection documentation
- Behaviour logs and incident records from previous settings
- Attendance records, including details of persistent absence or EBSA
- Risk assessments, including behaviour-related or safeguarding-related assessments
- Exclusion records, including fixed-term or permanent exclusions
- Medical information, where relevant to the child's needs
- Transition or support plans from previous schools

Depending on the complexity of the child's needs, the school may request:





- reports from paediatricians, occupational therapists, or speech and language therapists
- multi-agency meeting minutes
- updated risk assessments following recent incidents
- information relating to family context where relevant to safeguarding
- details of successful strategies used in previous settings
- evidence of interventions already attempted

This ensures the school has the most up-to-date and comprehensive picture possible.

For safeguarding and suitability reasons, all agencies must provide complete and accurate information. This includes:

- historical concerns
- previous placement breakdowns
- known risks to peers, staff, or self
- any involvement with external services
- patterns of behaviour that may impact safety

Withholding information may result in an unsafe placement decision and is therefore not acceptable.

A placement may not proceed if:

- essential documentation is missing or incomplete
- significant safeguarding information is not provided
- risk assessments indicate needs beyond the school's capacity
- evidence suggests the environment would not be suitable
- professionals identify concerns that require specialist provision

In such cases, the school will work with the Local Authority to identify a more appropriate setting.

Final Decision Recording

All admissions decisions must be recorded clearly and accurately to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with statutory duties. A formal record provides an auditable trail demonstrating that decisions were made fairly, consistently, and with full consideration of the child's needs and the safety of the school community.

Each decision record includes:

- Summary of the referral

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- Key information reviewed, including documentation and professional reports
- Risk assessment outcomes
- Safeguarding considerations
- Cohort impact assessment
- Environmental compatibility assessment
- Multi-agency input
- Parent/carer engagement summary
- Rationale for the final decision
- Any conditions attached to the placement (if applicable)
- Transition plan outline (for approved placements)
- Recommendations for alternative provision (for declined placements)

This ensures that every decision is fully evidenced.

The final decision is recorded under one of the following categories:

a) Placement Approved

The school confirms it can safely and effectively meet the pupil's needs.

b) Placement Approved with Conditions

Approval is granted subject to specific arrangements, such as:

- A phased transition
- Additional professional involvement
- Updated risk assessments
- Temporary adjustments to class composition

c) Placement Declined

The school determines that it cannot safely meet the pupil's needs or that the placement would compromise the wellbeing of the existing cohort.

Recording the Rationale

The rationale must:

- clearly explain the evidence considered
- reference specific needs, risks, or environmental factors
- demonstrate how safeguarding and cohort protection were prioritised
- show that the decision aligns with the school's admissions criteria
- provide a balanced, professional justification





This ensures decisions are defensible and transparent.

Once completed:

- the decision record is shared with the Local Authority
- a summary is provided to **parents and carers**
- relevant professionals may be informed where appropriate
- records are stored securely in line with **data protection legislation**

This ensures clarity for all parties and maintains compliance with statutory requirements.

15. Appeals and Dispute Resolution

The appeals and dispute-resolution process ensures that all parties—parents, carers, and Local Authorities—have a clear and fair route to challenge or seek clarification about an admissions decision. This promotes transparency, accountability, and trust in the school's admissions procedures.

Parents, carers, and Local Authorities have the right to:

- request further clarification about the reasons for a decision
- challenge factual inaccuracies in the information used
- ask for a review of the decision where new evidence becomes available

Appeals must be submitted in writing to ensure a clear record of concerns. Appeals should be submitted within a reasonable timeframe (typically 10 working days) from receipt of the decision.

An appeal may be considered where:

- relevant information was not available at the time of the decision
- there is evidence that the decision was based on incomplete or inaccurate documentation
- there are concerns about the fairness or consistency of the process
- professionals believe the child's needs may now be manageable within the school following updated assessments or changes in circumstances

Appeals based solely on parental or Local Authority preference, without new or additional evidence, are unlikely to result in a change of decision.

The appeals process follows these steps:





1. Written submission from the Local Authority or parent/carer outlining the grounds for appeal
2. Review of all documentation by the senior leadership team
3. Consultation with relevant professionals, where appropriate
4. Re-evaluation of risk, safeguarding, and suitability factors
5. A written response outlining the outcome of the appeal and the rationale

The school aims to respond within a reasonable timeframe, depending on the complexity of the case.

Following review, the school may:

- uphold the original decision
- approve the placement where new evidence indicates suitability
- approve the placement with conditions, such as a phased transition or updated risk assessments
- recommend alternative provision, where the school continues to believe it cannot safely meet the child's needs

All outcomes are communicated clearly and respectfully.

Where disagreements arise between the school and the Local Authority:

- a multi-agency meeting may be convened
- additional evidence may be requested
- independent professional advice may be sought
- a collaborative approach is taken to identify the most appropriate provision

The child's safety, wellbeing, and long-term outcomes remain the central focus.

While the school is committed to fairness and collaboration, it retains the right to decline a placement where:

- risks cannot be safely managed
- the environment is unsuitable for the child's needs
- the placement would compromise the wellbeing of the existing cohort

This ensures the school maintains a safe and stable environment for all pupils.

Where appropriate, external professional input or Local Authority review may be sought to ensure fairness and transparency.

This process does not replace the statutory rights of appeal available to parents through SEND Tribunal processes.





16. Referral Submission Process

The referral submission process ensures that all placement requests are handled in a consistent, transparent, and timely manner. It provides a clear pathway for Local Authorities and professionals to submit referrals and ensures the school receives the information required to make an informed decision.

Referrals to Storyybrook may be submitted by:

- Local Authority SEND teams (primary route)
- Social care teams, where appropriate
- other professionals, only when acting in coordination with the Local Authority

Parents and carers cannot submit direct referrals; however, they may request that the Local Authority consider Storyybrook as a potential placement.

All referrals must be submitted in writing and include:

- a completed Local Authority referral form
- the child's most recent **EHCP** (if applicable)
- relevant professional reports
- behaviour and safeguarding information
- attendance records
- any existing risk assessments
- details of previous interventions and support

Referrals must be complete before the school can begin the assessment process.

Upon receiving a referral, the school will:

The school will:

- acknowledge receipt of the referral within 2 working days
- confirm whether all required documentation has been received within 5 working days
- request any missing information promptly
- provide an indicative timeline for the next stage of the process

This ensures clarity and transparency from the outset.

The senior leadership team conducts an initial screening to determine whether:

- the referral aligns with the school's SEMH specialist remit
- the child's needs appear compatible with the school's environment

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- the documentation is sufficient to proceed
- immediate safeguarding concerns require urgent clarification

If the referral is clearly unsuitable at this stage, the school will notify the Local Authority promptly with a clear rationale.

A referral may be returned to the Local Authority without progressing to full assessment if:

- essential documentation is missing
- the child's primary need is not SEMH
- the referral indicates needs requiring specialist or secure provision
- the school is at capacity and cannot safely consider additional placements
- the referral is submitted by an agency without Local Authority involvement

This ensures that only appropriate and complete referrals enter the assessment process.

17. Initial Assessment Procedures

The initial assessment ensures that Storybrook gains a clear, accurate understanding of the pupil's needs, strengths, risks, and suitability for the school environment. This stage determines whether the referral should progress to a full assessment and whether a placement is likely to be viable.

Once a referral has passed initial screening, the senior leadership team undertakes a detailed review of all submitted documentation noted above.

This review forms the foundation of the school's understanding of the pupil's profile and the assessment cannot progress until essential information is provided.

Where appropriate, the school may:

- consult with the Local Authority SEND caseworker
- contact previous schools for contextual information
- liaise with social care or Early Help teams
- seek clarification from CAMHS or other professionals

This ensures the school has a full and accurate picture before moving forward.

Following the initial assessment, one of the following outcomes is reached.

The initial assessment stage will normally be completed within 10 working days of receiving all required documentation.





Where additional information is required, timelines may be extended; however, the school will keep the Local Authority informed of any delays.

a) Progress to Full Assessment

The referral appears potentially suitable, and the school proceeds to the next stage (e.g., observation, visit, or meeting).

b) Request for Further Information

The school requires additional documentation before making a decision.

c) Referral Declined at Initial Assessment

The school determines that the pupil's needs cannot be safely met, or that the placement would not be appropriate. A clear rationale is provided to the Local Authority.

18. Pupil Observation and Information Gathering

The observation stage allows Storyybrook to gain a first-hand understanding of the pupil's presentation, needs, and behaviours in a real-world context. Observations help validate the information provided in reports and ensure that the school can accurately assess whether the environment is suitable and safe.

This stage is essential for safeguarding, risk assessment, and ensuring a child-centred decision.

Depending on the pupil's circumstances, observations may take place in:

- their current school or provision
- a temporary education setting
- a home-education environment, where appropriate
- a neutral setting, if agreed by professionals
- a Storyybrook visit, if suitable and safe

The aim is to observe the pupil in a familiar or supportive environment to gain an accurate picture of their needs.

Staff conducting observations will consider:

- Emotional regulation and responses to stress or change
- Interactions with peers and adults
- Communication style, including expressive and receptive language





- Engagement with learning and ability to follow routines
- Behavioural patterns, including triggers and de-escalation responses
- Risk indicators, including impulsivity, aggression, or withdrawal
- Sensory needs and environmental responses
- Ability to transition between activities or spaces

These insights help determine whether the pupil can safely access Storyybrook’s environment.

In addition to direct observation, the school may gather further information by:

- speaking with class teachers or key adults
- reviewing recent behaviour logs or safeguarding notes
- discussing successful strategies and unmet needs
- understanding the pupil’s daily routine and structure
- exploring any recent changes in behaviour or circumstances

This collaborative approach ensures a rounded understanding of the pupil.

Parents and carers play a vital role in this stage. The school may request:

- insights into the child’s strengths and interests
- information about triggers, anxieties, or routines
- details of strategies that work well at home
- updates on recent changes in family or emotional circumstances

This helps ensure the assessment reflects the child’s full context.

An observation may not be possible if:

- the pupil is not currently attending any setting
- the pupil’s needs or risks make observation unsafe
- the current setting cannot facilitate a visit
- multi-agency professionals advise against observation
- the pupil is in crisis or undergoing significant change

In such cases, the school will rely more heavily on documentation and professional reports, though this may limit the ability to progress the referral.

Following observation and information gathering, the school may:





a) Proceed to the Next Stage of Assessment

The pupil appears potentially suitable, and further steps (e.g., visit to Storyybrook) are arranged.

b) Request Additional Information

More detail is needed to make an informed decision.

c) Determine That the Placement Is Not Suitable

The observation indicates that the pupil's needs or risks cannot be safely met within the school's environment. A clear rationale is provided to the Local Authority.

19. Pupil and Family Visits to the School

Visits allow the pupil and their family to experience the school environment first-hand and help Storyybrook assess how the child responds to the setting. This stage supports:

- building early relational connections
- reducing anxiety through familiarisation
- observing the child's responses to the environment
- identifying potential triggers or support needs
- ensuring the placement feels appropriate for the family

Visits are structured, supportive, and tailored to the child's needs.

Before a visit takes place, the school will:

- confirm that the referral has progressed through earlier assessment stages
- ensure that the environment is safe and appropriate for the child
- provide parents/carers with clear information about the visit
- identify a key adult to welcome and support the child
- prepare staff to observe and record relevant information

This preparation ensures the visit is purposeful and supportive.

A typical visit may include:

- a warm welcome from key staff
- a guided tour of the school
- time in the classroom to observe routines
- opportunities to meet potential peers





- a short, supported activity with staff
- time for parents/carers to ask questions
- a calm, structured ending to support emotional regulation

The visit is paced according to the child's tolerance and needs.

Staff will sensitively observe:

- the child's emotional responses to new environments
- ability to separate from parents/carers
- interaction with staff and peers
- engagement with activities
- responses to sensory stimuli
- ability to follow simple routines
- signs of anxiety, distress, or dysregulation
- any emerging risk indicators

These observations help determine whether the environment is suitable and safe. This collaborative approach supports a shared understanding of the child's needs.

20. Multi-Agency Consultation

Multi-agency consultation ensures that admissions decisions are informed by a full, accurate, and up-to-date understanding of the pupil's needs. It allows professionals from different services to share insights, clarify concerns, and contribute to a safe, child-centred decision-making process.

This stage is essential for safeguarding, risk management, and ensuring the placement is appropriate.

Depending on the child's circumstances, consultation may involve:

- Local Authority SEND caseworkers
- Educational Psychologists
- Social workers or Early Help practitioners
- CAMHS or mental health professionals
- Previous or current school staff
- Youth support or family support workers
- Health professionals (e.g., paediatricians, OTs, SALT)

The aim is to gather a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary perspective.

Professionals may be asked to provide:





- updates on the child's emotional and behavioural presentation
- recent safeguarding concerns or changes in risk
- details of interventions attempted and their outcomes
- insights into triggers, strengths, and effective strategies
- information about family circumstances that may impact the placement
- recommendations regarding suitable provision

This collaborative approach ensures decisions are based on the most current information.

Where appropriate, the school may request or participate in a multi-agency meeting to:

- discuss the child's needs in detail
- clarify discrepancies in documentation
- explore risk management strategies
- consider the suitability of the school environment
- plan potential transition arrangements
- identify any additional support required

Meetings may take place in person or virtually, depending on availability and need.

Further consultation may be necessary if:

- new information emerges during the assessment process
- professionals raise concerns requiring clarification
- there are significant safeguarding or risk-related questions
- the child's circumstances have recently changed
- the school requires specialist advice to determine suitability

This ensures the decision remains evidence-based and safe.

21. Final Suitability Assessment

The final suitability assessment brings together all information gathered throughout the admissions process to determine whether Storybrook can safely, appropriately, and effectively meet the pupil's needs. This stage ensures that decisions are evidence-based, child-centred, and aligned with safeguarding responsibilities.

The senior leadership team reviews all available evidence, including:

- Documentation submitted by the Local Authority
- Professional reports and assessments
- Behaviour logs, attendance data, and safeguarding information



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- Observations from current or previous settings
- Information gathered during pupil and family visits
- Multi-agency consultation outcomes
- Parent/carer insights
- Internal assessments of cohort impact and environmental suitability

This holistic review ensures that no single factor determines the outcome.

During the final assessment, the school considers:

- Can the pupil's needs be safely met within the school's environment?
- Are the risks manageable within existing staffing and structures?
- Will the placement support the pupil's emotional, social, and academic development?
- Is the placement compatible with the needs and vulnerabilities of the existing cohort?
- Does the school have the capacity and expertise required at this time?
- Are there any safeguarding concerns that cannot be mitigated?
- Would the placement promote long-term stability and positive outcomes?

These questions ensure decisions remain consistent and safeguarding-led.

A critical part of the final assessment is evaluating the potential impact on the current pupils, including:

- vulnerability of existing children
- group dynamics and relational needs
- risk of destabilising established routines
- compatibility with class composition and staffing
- potential for peer-to-peer risk

The school must ensure that new placements do not compromise the safety or wellbeing of the cohort.

The school evaluates whether the physical environment can meet the pupil's needs, considering:

- sensory sensitivities
- need for quiet or low-stimulus spaces
- ability to access shared areas safely
- requirements for specialist equipment or adaptations
- capacity for safe movement around the site





If the environment cannot be safely adapted, the placement may not be appropriate.

Safeguarding remains central to the final decision. The school assesses:

- any known risks to self or others
- history of significant incidents
- vulnerability to exploitation or harm
- ability to maintain safety in group settings
- whether risks exceed the school's capacity to manage them

If safeguarding cannot be assured, the placement cannot proceed.

Following review, the school may reach one of the following outcomes:

a) Placement Suitable

The school determines that it can safely and effectively meet the pupil's needs. The process moves to final decision recording and transition planning.

b) Placement Suitable with Conditions

The placement is appropriate if specific supports or arrangements are implemented, such as:

- a phased transition
- additional multi-agency involvement
- updated risk assessments
- temporary adjustments to class composition

The school concludes that it cannot safely meet the pupil's needs or that the placement would compromise the wellbeing of the existing cohort. A clear rationale is provided to the Local Authority.

c) Placement Not Suitable

The school determines that it cannot safely or appropriately meet the pupil's needs.

The outcome of the final suitability assessment is:

- documented in the admissions record
- communicated to the Local Authority
- shared with parents/carers in an appropriate format
- used to inform the final admissions decision





This ensures transparency and clarity for all parties.

22. Final Decision Communication

Clear, timely communication of the final admissions decision ensures transparency, supports positive relationships with families and professionals, and allows appropriate next steps—whether transition planning or alternative provision—to begin without delay.

The school is committed to communicating decisions respectfully, professionally, and with full explanation of the rationale.

The final decision is formally communicated to:

- The Local Authority SEND team (primary recipient)
- Parents and carers, via the Local Authority or directly where appropriate
- Relevant professionals, where necessary for safeguarding or planning

This ensures all key stakeholders are informed and able to act on the outcome.

Decisions are communicated in writing and include:

- the final outcome (approved, approved with conditions, or declined)
- a clear summary of the evidence considered
- key factors influencing the decision
- any conditions attached to the placement (if applicable)
- next steps for transition or alternative planning
- contact details for further clarification

Written communication ensures accuracy and provides an auditable record.

Where a placement is approved, the communication will include:

- confirmation of suitability
- any agreed conditions or support requirements
- outline of the proposed transition plan
- arrangements for initial meetings or visits
- expected timelines for starting the placement

This ensures families and professionals can prepare effectively.

Where a placement is declined, the communication will:

- clearly explain the reasons for the decision





- reference specific needs, risks, or environmental factors
- highlight safeguarding or cohort-impact considerations
- recommend that the Local Authority explore alternative provision
- offer to participate in further discussion if required

The school ensures that declined decisions are communicated sensitively and professionally.

The school aims to communicate decisions:

- promptly, once the final suitability assessment is complete
- within a reasonable timeframe agreed with the Local Authority
- as soon as all necessary information has been reviewed

Once all required documentation, observations, and consultations have been completed, the school will aim to:

- reach a final suitability decision within 15 working days
- communicate the decision in writing within 5 working days of the final decision

Communication is clear, proportionate, and supportive rather than overwhelming.

23. Full Start and Early Review

The full start marks the point at which the pupil begins attending Storybrook according to their agreed timetable. This phase focuses on embedding routines, strengthening relationships, and monitoring the child's emotional and behavioural adjustment to ensure the placement remains safe and appropriate.

The early weeks are treated as a sensitive period requiring enhanced oversight.

To support a calm and predictable first day, the school will:

- ensure the child is greeted by their key adult
- provide a clear, simple structure for the day
- introduce routines gradually
- offer access to regulation spaces as needed
- maintain low-demand expectations while the child settles
- communicate with parents/carers at the end of the day

The aim is to reduce anxiety and build early relational safety.

During the initial period, staff will closely monitor:





- emotional regulation and signs of distress
- engagement with learning and routines
- interaction with peers and adults
- use of coping and regulation strategies
- responses to sensory input
- ability to manage transitions
- any emerging risks or safeguarding concerns

This monitoring ensures early intervention where needed.

Regular communication is maintained throughout the early weeks to:

- share progress and positive moments
- discuss any concerns or challenges
- agree adjustments to support strategies
- ensure consistency between home and school
- provide reassurance during the settling-in period

This partnership strengthens the child's sense of safety and continuity.

Where appropriate, professionals such as social workers, EPs, or CAMHS practitioners may:

- visit the school to observe the child
- provide guidance on emotional or behavioural needs
- support risk management planning
- contribute to early review discussions

This ensures the placement is supported by a full professional network.

A successful early phase may be indicated by:

- increasing comfort and confidence in the environment
- positive engagement with staff
- gradual participation in routines
- use of regulation strategies with support
- safe interaction with peers
- reduced anxiety over time

These indicators suggest the placement is likely to be sustainable.

Concerns may arise if the child:

- shows escalating dysregulation





- cannot safely access shared spaces
- exhibits risks that exceed the school's capacity
- struggles to separate from parents/carers
- becomes distressed despite adjustments
- impacts the safety or wellbeing of the cohort

In such cases, the school will:

- adapt the support plan
- increase monitoring
- seek multi-agency input
- consider whether the placement remains appropriate

If significant concerns persist, the school may initiate a placement review, which could lead to:

- additional support or interventions
- adjusted timetables
- increased multi-agency involvement
- consideration of alternative provision

The child's safety and wellbeing remain the central priority.

24. Ongoing Monitoring of Placement Suitability

Once a pupil has joined Storyybrook, the school undertakes continuous monitoring to ensure the placement remains safe, appropriate, and supportive of the child's emotional, social, and academic development. This monitoring also protects the wellbeing of the wider cohort and ensures that any emerging concerns are identified early.

Ongoing monitoring is a core safeguarding responsibility and forms part of the school's trauma-informed approach.

Staff monitor a range of indicators to assess how well the pupil is settling and whether the placement continues to meet their needs. These include:

- emotional regulation and responses to stress
- engagement with learning, routines, and expectations
- attendance patterns, including signs of EBSA
- interactions with peers and adults
- use of coping and regulation strategies
- behavioural patterns, including triggers and escalation points





- responses to sensory input and environmental factors
- safeguarding concerns or emerging risks

This holistic approach ensures that no single factor is viewed in isolation.

Monitoring takes place through:

- daily staff observations
- key adult check-ins
- behaviour and safeguarding logs
- weekly team discussions
- review of attendance and punctuality
- monitoring of engagement in structured and unstructured times

This ensures that concerns are identified promptly and addressed collaboratively.

The key adult continues to play a central role in monitoring the child's wellbeing by:

- providing consistent relational support
- observing emotional and behavioural patterns
- acting as a safe point of contact
- communicating regularly with parents/carers
- feeding back to the wider staff team

This relational consistency is essential for SEMH pupils.

The school maintains ongoing communication with parents and carers to:

- share positive developments
- discuss concerns or emerging challenges
- agree adjustments to support strategies
- ensure consistency between home and school
- strengthen the child's sense of safety and stability

This partnership is vital for sustaining a successful placement.

Where appropriate, professionals such as social workers, EPs, or CAMHS practitioners may:

- provide ongoing guidance
- attend review meetings
- support risk management
- offer strategies for emotional regulation
- contribute to updated assessments



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This ensures the placement remains well-supported and informed.

If monitoring indicates that the child is struggling, the school may:

- increase support from the key adult
- adjust routines or expectations
- implement additional interventions
- review risk assessments
- seek multi-agency input
- increase communication with parents/carers

These steps aim to stabilise the placement and support the child effectively.

If concerns continue despite support, the school may:

- initiate a formal placement review
- request updated professional assessments
- consider whether the environment remains suitable
- explore alternative provision with the Local Authority

The safety and wellbeing of the child and the cohort remain the priority.

25. Formal Placement Review

A formal placement review is undertaken when concerns arise about whether the school can continue to meet a pupil's needs safely and effectively. The review provides a structured, multi-agency process to evaluate the placement, identify required adjustments, and determine whether the placement remains appropriate.

The aim is always to stabilise and support the child wherever possible, while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the wider cohort.

A formal placement review may be initiated when:

- persistent dysregulation impacts the child's safety or learning
- risks to self or others increase
- the child struggles to access the environment despite support
- attendance becomes significantly reduced or erratic
- safeguarding concerns emerge or escalate
- the placement begins to impact the stability of the cohort
- multi-agency professionals raise concerns
- adjustments made during ongoing monitoring have not resolved issues

The decision to initiate a review is made by the senior leadership team.

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Before the review meeting, the school will:

- gather recent behaviour, attendance, and safeguarding data
- review support plans, interventions, and risk assessments
- consult with the key adult and class team
- request updated information from parents/carers
- seek input from relevant professionals (e.g., social care, CAMHS, EP)
- prepare a summary of concerns and strengths

This ensures the review is informed by accurate, up-to-date evidence.

A formal placement review typically includes:

- parents/carers
- Local Authority SEND representatives
- senior leadership team members
- the child's key adult or class teacher
- relevant professionals (e.g., social worker, EP, CAMHS)

This multi-agency approach ensures a balanced and collaborative discussion.

The meeting will cover:

- strengths and positive developments
- current concerns and challenges
- impact on the child's wellbeing and learning
- impact on the wider cohort
- effectiveness of previous interventions
- updated risk assessment
- recommendations from professionals
- possible adjustments or next steps

The discussion is solution-focused and centred on the child's needs.

Following the review, one of the following outcomes may be agreed:

a) Placement Continues with Adjustments

Additional support, interventions, or changes to routines are implemented to stabilise the placement.

b) Placement Continues with Increased Multi-Agency Involvement

Further professional support is required to meet the child's needs safely.



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c) Time-Limited Review Period

A set period is agreed to monitor progress with specific targets and support strategies.

d) Placement No Longer Suitable

If risks cannot be safely managed or the environment cannot meet the child's needs, the school may recommend that the Local Authority identify alternative provision.

Communication of Review Outcomes

After the meeting, the school will:

- provide a written summary of the review
- share updated plans or risk assessments
- outline agreed actions and responsibilities
- confirm timelines for follow-up or further review

Clear communication ensures all parties understand the next steps.

Depending on the outcome, follow-up may include:

- increased monitoring
- additional interventions
- further multi-agency meetings
- adjusted timetables or support plans
- planning for transition to alternative provision (if required)

The school remains committed to supporting the child throughout the process.

26. Placement Adjustment or Withdrawal

These procedures ensure that when a pupil's needs change, or when risks emerge that cannot be safely managed, the school responds in a structured, transparent, and child-centred manner. The aim is always to stabilise and support the placement wherever possible, while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and the wider cohort.

Placement adjustments may be considered when:

- the pupil is struggling to access the full timetable
- emotional or behavioural needs escalate
- attendance becomes inconsistent or significantly reduced





- the pupil requires additional regulation time or alternative spaces
- the class environment becomes overwhelming
- multi-agency professionals recommend temporary changes
- the pupil's needs fluctuate due to external circumstances

Adjustments are designed to support the child, not to reduce entitlement.

Adjustments may include:

- a temporary reduced timetable, agreed with the Local Authority
- increased support from the key adult
- additional regulation or sensory breaks
- adapted routines or expectations
- increased multi-agency involvement
- short-term alternative provision (e.g., outreach support)
- enhanced risk management strategies

All adjustments are time-limited, reviewed regularly, and documented clearly.

Placement withdrawal is considered only when:

- risks to self or others cannot be safely managed
- the pupil is unable to access the environment despite significant support
- the placement negatively impacts the safety or wellbeing of the cohort
- multi-agency professionals advise that the provision is no longer suitable
- the pupil requires specialist or alternative provision
- adjustments and interventions have not stabilised the placement

Withdrawal is always a last resort and follows a structured review process.

Before recommending withdrawal, the school will:

- hold a formal placement review
- consult with all relevant professionals
- seek updated assessments where necessary
- discuss concerns with parents/carers
- explore all reasonable adjustments
- consider alternative strategies to maintain the placement

This ensures decisions are fair, transparent, and evidence-based.

Throughout the process, the school will:

- communicate concerns clearly and sensitively



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- share evidence and observations
- involve parents/carers in decision-making
- provide opportunities for discussion and questions
- work collaboratively to explore solutions

This partnership approach supports the child's best interests.

The Local Authority is informed at every stage and is responsible for:

- coordinating multi-agency support
- identifying alternative provision if required
- ensuring statutory duties are met
- supporting the family through the process

The school works closely with the Local Authority to ensure continuity of education.

If withdrawal is agreed, the school will:

- support the Local Authority in identifying a suitable alternative
- provide a detailed transition report
- share relevant documentation and assessments
- participate in transition meetings
- offer advice on strategies that support the child
- ensure the child is supported emotionally during the transition period

The aim is to ensure a smooth, safe, and well-supported move.

Safeguarding remains central throughout. The school will:

- ensure the child is not left without education
- monitor wellbeing during any transition period
- share safeguarding information appropriately
- work with professionals to manage risks
- prioritise the safety of the child and the cohort

All decisions are made with safeguarding as the primary concern.

27. Final Statement

Storybrook SEMH Specialist School is committed to ensuring that all admissions decisions are:

- lawful
- transparent



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- consistent
- child-centred
- grounded in safeguarding practice

Placements will only be agreed where the school can clearly demonstrate that it is able to meet the child's needs safely, effectively, and without compromising the wellbeing, stability, or safeguarding of the school community.





Appendix 1 - Transition

Transition Planning

The plan is documented and shared with relevant stakeholders.

Depending on the child's needs, transition activities may include:

- A **pre-start visit** for the child and family
- A **transition booklet** with photos and simple explanations
- Short, supported classroom visits
- Gradual introduction to peers
- Familiarisation with key spaces (classroom, sensory room, outdoor areas)
- Opportunities to practise routines such as arrival, transitions, and breaktimes
- Meetings with the child's key adult
- A phased start, increasing time in school gradually

Activities are designed to build confidence and emotional safety.

Parents and carers are essential partners in the transition process. They are encouraged to:

- Share insights about the child's needs, triggers, and strengths
- Support the child in preparing for visits
- Attend planning meetings
- Maintain open communication with the school
- Provide updates on the child's emotional state during transition

This collaborative approach helps ensure consistency between home and school.

Where appropriate, professionals such as social workers, EPs, or CAMHS practitioners may:

- Contribute to the transition plan
- Attend planning meetings
- Provide strategies for supporting the child
- Offer guidance on managing risks or emotional needs

This ensures the transition is informed by a full understanding of the child's profile.

The transition plan may be adapted if:

- The child shows signs of distress or dysregulation
- Risks emerge that require additional support





- The pace is too fast or too slow for the child's needs
- Professionals recommend adjustments
- Family circumstances change

Adaptations are made collaboratively and documented clearly.

In rare cases, a transition may indicate that the placement is not suitable. This may occur if:

- The child is unable to safely access the environment
- Dysregulation escalates despite support
- Risks cannot be managed within the school's capacity
- The child cannot tolerate shared spaces or routines
- Multi-agency professionals advise against continuation

If this occurs, the school will work with the Local Authority to identify an alternative provision.

Transition Implementation

Transition implementation is the practical stage where the child begins engaging with Storyybrook according to the agreed transition plan. This phase focuses on **emotional safety, relationship-building, and gradual familiarisation**, ensuring the child feels supported and secure as they enter a new environment.

A designated **key adult** plays a central role throughout transition. Their responsibilities include:

- Greeting the child at each visit or session
- Providing consistent emotional support
- Acting as a safe, predictable point of contact
- Helping the child navigate routines and expectations
- Monitoring emotional regulation and wellbeing
- Communicating with parents/carers about progress

This relational anchor is essential for SEMH pupils.

Transition sessions are tailored to the child's needs and may include:

- Short, low-demand visits to the classroom
- Supported exploration of key areas (classroom, sensory room, outdoor spaces)
- Meeting peers in small, carefully managed groups
- Participation in simple, structured activities
- Gradual exposure to routines such as arrival, transitions, and breaktimes





- Opportunities for the child to practise using regulation strategies

Sessions are paced to avoid overwhelming the child.

Staff closely observe:

- Signs of anxiety, distress, or dysregulation
- Ability to separate from parents/carers
- Engagement with activities and staff
- Responses to sensory input
- Interaction with peers
- Use of coping or regulation strategies
- Any emerging risks

These observations inform ongoing adjustments to the transition plan.

Throughout transition, the school maintains regular communication with families to:

- Share updates on the child's progress
- Discuss any concerns or emotional responses
- Agree adjustments to the transition plan
- Ensure consistency between home and school
- Provide reassurance and guidance

This partnership strengthens the child's sense of safety.

Multi-Agency Support During Transition

Where appropriate, professionals such as social workers, EPs, or CAMHS practitioners may:

- Attend transition sessions
- Provide strategies for supporting emotional regulation
- Offer guidance on managing risk
- Contribute to ongoing planning

This ensures the transition remains well-informed and responsive.

The transition plan may be adapted if:

- The child becomes overwhelmed or distressed
- The pace is too fast or too slow
- New information emerges about needs or risks
- Professionals recommend changes





- Family circumstances shift

All adjustments are documented and shared with relevant stakeholders.

A successful transition is indicated by:

- Increasing comfort and confidence in the environment
- Positive engagement with staff
- Gradual participation in routines
- Reduced anxiety over time
- Ability to regulate with support
- Safe interaction with peers

When these indicators are present, the child moves toward a full start.

Concerns may arise if the child:

- Shows escalating dysregulation
- Cannot safely access shared spaces
- Struggles to separate from parents/carers
- Exhibits risks that exceed the school's capacity
- Becomes distressed despite adjustments

In such cases, the school may pause, adapt, or review the placement with the Local Authority.

