



Admissions Policy

Document Control Information					
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Revision and Approval History					
Author	Summary of changes	Issue	Date Applicable From	Approved by	Date of Next Review
A Howard	New document for Spring Brook Academy, adapted from the Springboard Project Admissions Policy (issue 2026/27). General Statement rewritten for a Key Stage 1 to 3 SEMH cohort; two-phase admission route and the Springs SEMH Ecosystem described; transition at the end of Key Stage 3 added; statutory references carried across unchanged.	2026/27	[insert on approval]	Govs	[insert on approval]
Equality Impact					
Statement	We welcome feedback on this document and the way it operates. We are interested to know of any possible or actual adverse impact that may affect any groups in respect of any of the equalities act 2010 protected characteristics. The person responsible for equality impact assessment for this document is the Director of Equality and Diversity. This document has been screened by the Equality Team and the impact has been assessed as:				
Screening	☐ Not applicable ☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High				



General Information

1. General Statement

Spring Brook Academy is a specialist Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision within the Trust, catering specifically to children and young people aged 5 to 14 (Key Stages 1 to 3) whose primary special educational need is Social, Emotional and/or Mental Health (SEMH). As defined in the SEND Code of Practice (2015), SEMH encompasses a range of needs that can manifest as difficulties in social interaction, emotional regulation, and mental health challenges, often stemming from underlying factors such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma, or attachment issues. Our provision prioritises SEMH regulation as a foundation for learning and development, aligning with the principle of addressing basic needs before academic progress (Maslow before Bloom).

The Academy operates across two phases on one set of shared values and a single relational approach. The Lower phase (primary) serves pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2; the Upper phase (secondary) serves pupils in Key Stage 3. Both phases follow a broad and balanced curriculum matched to each pupil's stage of development. The admission route described in this policy is the same for both phases, and the phase a pupil joins follows from their age and the year group named in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Spring Brook Academy sits within the Springs SEMH Ecosystem alongside the Springboard Project, the Trust's 14–19 SEMH provision (Key Stages 4 and 5). Provision at Spring Brook Academy ends at the close of Key Stage 3. For pupils whose needs continue to be best met within the ecosystem, planned transition into the Springboard Project forms part of their pathway, and this policy and the Springboard Project Admissions Policy are written to work together so that families experience one consistent process across the two settings.

Admission to Spring Brook Academy is governed by the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, and the SEND Code of Practice. We are committed to inclusive practices, non-discrimination, and ensuring that admissions decisions are fair, transparent, and based solely on the young person's identified needs and the school's capacity to meet them effectively. All admissions are managed through consultation with the relevant local authority, and we do not admit pupils directly from parents/carers or other sources.

Types of SEMH Pupils We Support

Spring Brook Academy is designed to support children and young people where SEMH is the primary need identified in their EHCP. This includes those experiencing:

- **Social Difficulties:** Challenges in forming and maintaining relationships with peers and adults, communication issues, or attachment concerns that impact wellbeing, community access, problem-solving, and learning. We provide opportunities to develop social skills to enable full potential.
- **Emotional Challenges:** Difficulties with emotional regulation, recognising and normalising emotions, managing stress, building resilience, and understanding others' emotions. This may include transient issues (e.g., bereavement, family changes) that, if unsupported, could lead to longer-term concerns, as well as responses to ACEs or trauma requiring therapeutic approaches.
- **Mental Health Needs:** Diagnosable conditions or symptoms such as irrational fears, obsessive preoccupations, persistent intrusive thoughts, rumination, or safety behaviours. This encompasses children and young people whose processing of the world leads to heightened anxiety, low self-worth, or distorted perceptions of interactions and tasks, where these significantly affect educational engagement.



Our approach recognises the interconnected nature of SEMH: how thoughts influence feelings and interactions, and vice versa. We prioritise therapeutic support to address underlying causes rather than solely behavioural manifestations, ensuring a nuanced response to each pupil's needs. We can accommodate co-occurring needs (e.g., mild learning difficulties or anxiety alongside SEMH) where SEMH remains primary and our therapeutic model can address them holistically.

Types of Pupils We Do Not Support

While we are equipped to address a wide range of SEMH needs, Spring Brook Academy is not suitable for all children and young people with SEND. In line with the SEND Code of Practice, we focus exclusively on SEMH as the primary need and may not admit pupils where:

- **SEMH is Not the Primary Need:** For example, children and young people whose main difficulties fall under other SEND categories, such as Cognition and Learning (e.g. moderate to severe learning disabilities without significant SEMH components), Communication and Interaction (e.g. Autism Spectrum Disorder as the primary need without overlying SEMH), or Sensory and/or Physical Needs (e.g. profound hearing/visual impairments or mobility issues requiring specialised medical support).
- **Needs Beyond Our SEMH Focus:** Pupils requiring highly intensive interventions not aligned with our SEMH specialism, such as those needing residential placements, acute medical or psychiatric care, or provisions for profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). We also do not support children and young people whose needs would be better met in mainstream settings with additional support or in alternative specialist provisions (e.g., for specific learning difficulties like dyslexia without SEMH).
- **Behavioural Needs Without Underlying SEMH:** Isolated behavioural issues without evidence of social, emotional, or mental health underpinnings, as our provision is not a 'behavioural' placement but one focused on holistic SEMH support.
- **Pupils at Risk of Criminality or Involved in the Youth Justice System:** In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice, we assess suitability based on whether we can meet the child or young person's needs efficiently while ensuring the efficient education and safety of other pupils (Section 39(4) of the Children and Families Act 2014). Given the age range we serve, this will arise rarely and almost never for pupils of primary age; the age of criminal responsibility in England is 10, and nothing in this paragraph should be read as applying to the behaviour of a younger child, which is understood through a developmental and safeguarding lens. Where it does arise, Spring Brook Academy is not equipped to support a child or young person whose primary needs arise from high-risk behaviours associated with criminality, gang involvement or exploitation, or active engagement in the youth justice system (for example those subject to youth rehabilitation orders, detention and training orders, or requiring secure accommodation under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989). Such needs often demand specialised forensic or secure provision, multi-agency intervention led by youth offending teams, or environments with enhanced security and risk management protocols that exceed our SEMH-focused therapeutic model. We recognise that SEMH needs may co-occur with behavioural risks, and where SEMH is the primary need we can provide support through our holistic approach. However, if the risks posed (to self, to others or to the school community) cannot be managed within our resources without detriment to the efficient education of peers or



compliance with health and safety duties under the Education Act 1996 and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the placement would not be appropriate. All decisions are made on a case-by-case basis during the EHCP consultation process, in collaboration with the local authority, children's social care, youth justice services where relevant and other professionals, ensuring no unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. We do not exclude on the basis of past involvement or at-risk status alone, but evaluate whether our provision can reasonably adjust to meet the needs without compromising the Academy's core SEMH remit or statutory obligations.

Decisions on suitability are made on a case-by-case basis during consultation, considering the school's resources, expertise, and the efficient education of existing pupils. We collaborate with local authorities to ensure placements are appropriate and compliant with legal duties.

Equality and Inclusion

Spring Brook Academy adheres to the Equality Act 2010, ensuring no discrimination on grounds of protected characteristics (e.g., age, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation). We make reasonable adjustments to support access and promote equality of opportunity.

Initial visits

It is good practice that when parents of a child or young person who has an EHC Plan are considering any school placement for their child, they should look at the range of provision available to them. Many parents are unclear about the type of need catered for at Spring Brook Academy and can visit our website <https://www.springbrookacademy.org/> and an initial visit to the school will clarify this and help them to consider all options and express their preference.

Visits to the school are organised in the following way:

- All enquiries for visits go to the EHCP Coordinator via consultations received from the Local Authority.
- Visits will then be co-ordinated and led by the coordinator and SLT lead, on behalf of the Local Authority, so that the outcomes of any EHC needs, assessment decision or placement are not pre-empted.
- The named person will escort parents/carers on a tour of the school, if appropriate, and then, if required, either, be available to answer questions/talk to parents/carers
- Parents/carers may sometimes be accompanied on their visit by family friends or educational professionals on the understanding that the visit is for the parents/carers
- We ask where possible and appropriate for the child or young person to also be in attendance of the visit
- Open day events may also occur during the academic year which will be identified for particular cohorts i.e. transitional purposes

General admissions procedures:

• If the Local Authority decides, after considering all the professional advice and information available and consulting further with parents and the professionals who gave the advice, that a pupil has needs that are consistent with the described profile of the pupils at Spring Brook Academy, or if placement at Spring Brook Academy is a parental preference then:

2. The Local Authority will consult with Spring Brook Academy by sending all paperwork to the Head of Site and EHCP Coordinator.



3. The EHCP Coordinator will organise a Spring Brook visit for the potential pupil/ young person with parents/carers to receive a tour of the site.
 4. Spring Brook Academy will consider the consultation request and any other relevant information at their Admissions Panel (held on a weekly basis) where a decision will be formed, following this a consultation form providing their agreement, comments or disagreement with the admission of the pupil will be returned to the Local Authority.
 5. The responsible Local Authority will then discuss any comments with the school and submit papers with Spring Brook Academy's views to the Local Authorities panel.
- If the placement is agreed at the panel meeting, the Local Authority will:
 1. Follow the timing of admissions and transition arrangements;
 2. Finalise the EHC Plan and name Spring Brook Academy.
 3. A home visit will be facilitated by the SLT lead and the EHCP Coordinator to complete the young person's risk assessment, complete all relevant forms and discuss the transition process.
 - If the placement is not agreed at the panel meeting, the Local Authority will:
 1. Consult further with Spring Brook Academy and professionals;
 2. Name an appropriate placement on the final EHC Plan, or:
 3. Inform the requesting Local Authority of the decision by letter that includes reasons why the placement has been turned down.

Timing of admissions and transition arrangements:

1. Admissions into Spring Brook Academy will mainly be at the beginning of the autumn term following a planned transition from other settings.
2. Mid-year admissions will be made at the beginning of a term to allow for a well-planned transition and for the appropriate staffing changes at each school to be made.
3. Admissions in the summer term may compromise an equitable transition for the pupil, and Spring Brook Academy may advise the Local Authority to consult with an alternative provision if the child is in Year 9, since provision here ends at the close of Key Stage 3. Decisions will be made following consideration of each individual case.
4. For pupils who have moved into Oldham from a distant authority who are not able to continue attending their previous special school, and for any other exceptional circumstances, Spring Brook Academy and the Local Authority may jointly agree an earlier admission date that will include a well-planned transition.

Spring Brook Academy require an option of an extended transition for all new pupils. This is to ensure the safe and efficient start, to allow for preparation and changes for the new pupil and our current cohort. This transition will be a minimum of 1 week. This will allow the child to build up time spent in school, understanding new expectations and boundaries alongside building trusting relationships with adults and peers within school.



Transition at the end of Key Stage 3. Provision at Spring Brook Academy ends at the close of Year 9. Planning for a pupil's next placement begins in the autumn term of Year 9 and is led with the Local Authority through the pupil's annual review, so that the EHCP names a post-14 setting in good time. Where the Springboard Project is the agreed next step, the two settings plan the move together and the extended transition arrangements described above apply on arrival there.

Monitoring

This policy will be monitored through the MAT's accountability framework.

