



Joanna Gardner
Head of Education

ADMISSIONS POLICY

2026

Admissions Policy: The Ferry Centre

May 2026

Operated by: Projection Education

Location: Felixstowe, Suffolk

Status: Independent Special School (SEMH)

Capacity: 16 Pupils (KS1 – KS3)

1. Introduction and Vision

The Ferry Centre is a specialist, co-educational independent school providing a nurturing and highly structured learning environment for pupils aged 5 to 14 (Key Stages 1-3). We transition from our roots as an alternative provision (Projection Education) to a formalised special school setting, maintaining our commitment to pupils who find mainstream environments challenging due to Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

We cater to pupils with a range of barriers to education, including those with diagnoses or presentations of:

- Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Learning Difficulties

2. Leadership and Governance

The admissions process is overseen by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), comprising:

- The Proprietor
- Head of Education
- Head of SEND

3. General Principles

- **Partnership:** We work in close collaboration with Local Authorities (LAs) and parents/carers.
- **Equality:** We promote the rights of all pupils regardless of disability, ethnicity, language, culture, faith, or gender.
- **Referral Path:** We accept referrals exclusively from Local Authorities. While we welcome parental enquiries and tours, we cannot proceed to formal admission without LA support and a formal consultation.
- **Timing:** The Ferry Centre operates a rolling admissions policy. Intake is not restricted to September; pupils may be admitted at any point in the academic year, subject to space and suitability.

4. The Admissions Process

Phase 1: Initial Review

Once a referral is received from an LA, the SLT will review the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and supporting documentation. If the paperwork suggests the pupil is a potential fit, we will invite the parents/carers for an interview and tour.

Note: If suitability is unclear from paperwork alone, a designated staff member will arrange to observe the pupil in their current setting or home environment.

Phase 2: Visit and Assessment

The child and their family will visit the school for a tour and presentation. We aim to make a decision within a few working days of this meeting. In complex cases, we may delay a final decision to gather further information or conduct additional school/home visits to ensure the placement is right for the child.

Phase 3: The Offer

If the SLT determines the school can meet the child's needs, a formal offer and fee proposal will be sent to the LA. The fee structure typically covers our Core Offer, though additional fees may be negotiated if the pupil requires enhanced 1:1 support or specialist interventions beyond our standard ratio.

Phase 4: Pre-Placement Gathering

A member of the SLT will meet with the family and, where possible, the previous school to gather:

- Academic ability and NC levels.
- Attendance records and exclusion history.
- Behavioural triggers and successful de-escalation strategies.
- Safeguarding status (e.g., Looked After Child, CAF/Early Help involvement).
- Religious, cultural, and family requirements.

5. Transition and Induction

Once a place is confirmed and contracts are signed, a Bespoke Transition Plan is created. This may include:

- Short "taster" sessions where the pupil joins a class or plays in the playground.
- Graduated start dates (part-time to full-time).
- An experienced staff buddy to accompany the pupil during their first week.

Within the first two months of joining, a baseline assessment is completed. This leads to the creation of an Individual Educational Learning Plan (IELP), which is shared and agreed upon with parents/carers.

No pupil will be admitted until all required pre-admission information has been received and reviewed, including safeguarding information, attendance history, medical information, transport arrangements, behaviour/risk information, and confirmation of funding and placement agreement from the placing local authority.

6. Criteria for Declining a Placement

The Ferry Centre will consider each Local Authority consultation on an individual basis and will respond with clear reasons, based on a thorough review of the pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), supporting documentation, risk information and the school's ability to meet need safely. The school will carefully assess whether it can meet the pupil's identified needs, outcomes, and provision requirements safely and effectively within its available resources and

specialist provision. The Ferry Centre is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion and will not refuse admission on the grounds of disability, race, ethnicity, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or any other protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments will be considered in all cases to support access to the school's provision.

Children with a history of absconding will not be offered a place due to the site location.

The Ferry Centre will agree to being named in a pupil's EHCP unless the school concludes that it cannot offer a place. The response will explain whether this is due to:-

- The placement would be incompatible with the efficient education, welfare, or safety of the pupil and/or other pupils attending the school;
- The placement would be incompatible with the efficient use of the school's resources and available specialist provision; or
- The school is unable to provide the provision specified within the EHCP in a safe and effective manner.

Should parental or carer views indicate significant concerns regarding the proposed placement, these views will be considered as part of the wider assessment of suitability, transition planning, and the likelihood of a successful placement. However, admission decisions will not be based solely on parental preference or opposition and will instead be determined by the evidence available and the school's ability to provide a safe, suitable, and effective education for the pupil.

7. Transport and Confidentiality

- **Transport:** The Parent or LA is responsible for arranging and funding transport to and from the Felixstowe site.
- **Confidentiality:** All admissions data is handled in accordance with GDPR. Communications regarding placements remain confidential between the school, the LA, and the family.

Policy Review: This policy is reviewed annually by the Proprietor and Head of Education to ensure it meets the evolving needs of the Ferry Centre community.