

Policy document control box	
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Purpose

This policy formalises that RBAir seeks to clarify its 'target group' of students, to ensure that all students admitted will benefit from placement and allow/enable other students to progress academically and personally.

Scope

The RBAir admissions panel consists of the Assistant Head (Provision), the SENCo, the Safeguarding Lead and our Admissions Officers, who are jointly responsible for ensuring that all potential commissioning agents, parents / carers of prospective students and the students themselves understand the requirements for admission and continued attendance.

Policy statement, provision and safeguards

RBAir is an independent therapeutic educational provision (at present unable to be registered as a school, but with a DfE 'Letter of Comfort') providing for young people who are either not attending school (mainstream or other) or finding continued attendance at school damaging to their mental health.

RBAir provides for students studying at KS3 and KS4. RBAir may admit students who are chronologically outside those key stages, but whose needs are best met by studying at either of these levels (eg. a year 12 student who has missed a significant amount of their secondary education and needs to gain accreditation at GCSE level).

RBAir also runs a Post-16 Preparation for Adulthood programme.

For school-age students or those older students studying at KS4 level, admission may be sought either by parents or by a commissioning agent, the latter being most frequently a school or a local authority.

Our expectations are that any young person referred to RBAir will:

- want to attend RBAir,
- have a commitment to learning,
- acknowledge the needs and rights of other members of the community and their own responsibilities in ensuring those rights are met.

RBAir seeks to offer an environment, both in-centre and online, within which students can study successfully, and develop self efficacy, a provision in which they feel physically and emotionally safe at all times. All students working with other young people must be able to contribute positively to the working environment, or, at the very least, not actively damage the learning or personal development of their peers.

The SEN Code of Practice

Under the SEN Code of Practice, if a local authority consults with RBAir regarding a student with an EHCP, RBAir is not presently required to offer them a place, especially if:

- It would be unsuitable for the student's age, ability, aptitude or needs
- The student's attendance would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources.

Admissions Criteria

Due to the highly individual nature of the provision at RBAir it is not considered appropriate to have blanket admissions criteria - each student should be viewed as an individual and assessed for suitability as such. It is extremely important that the admissions process should be open-minded, fair and non-judgmental.

However, there are particular "red flags" when reading a student's paperwork that would mean that a place would usually be declined, on the basis of the second criteria above - that their attendance would be incompatible with the efficient education of others.

These red flags include:

Persistent, or extreme, physically aggressive behaviour

Persistent bullying of peers (where previous intervention has failed to prevent this)

Persistent and regular tendency to abscond (as we are not a secure site)

Safeguarding issues meaning that the student is not able to work safely from the home.

It is important that RBAir does not unfairly discriminate against students and therefore the above criteria are put in place purely because of the vulnerable nature of our students. Our students, who have experienced trauma, abuse or bullying in the past, would be further traumatised by exposure to the above and therefore the education of these students would be incompatible with the efficient nature of our other students.

An important caveat to the above criteria is where a student has demonstrated aggressive behaviour in the past only when highly stressed, for example, when in an unsuitable mainstream environment and when placed in an untenable situation for them. Many of our students have found themselves in situations prior to joining RBAir where aggressive behaviour has felt like the only way they were able to communicate their extreme distress and this should not be seen as grounds for unsuitability.

There are also occasions when a student referral is deemed to be inappropriate and we may advise that the students' needs could be better met elsewhere. This includes where the student's primary need is not a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) need - for example a student with moderate learning difficulties but no SEMH needs.

Admissions process

Referrals at RBAir are received and processed according to the following initial procedure.

- Referral is received from a parent, school, RB centre, or the local authority SEN team accompanied by all relevant documentation
- Referral is screened by means of an initial review of paperwork for obvious examples of unsuitability as described above - immediately unsuitable referrals are declined at this point.
- Potentially suitable referrals are added to the enquiry record tracking sheet for discussion at the next admissions panel meeting
- Referral is assessed by SENDCO, Safeguarding Lead, Therapy Lead and Lead Mentor for suitability and potential for us to meet needs
- Referral and feedback discussed at Panel level to make final decision
- If student is regarded as unsuitable, the admissions officer will feedback to the commissioner with reasons for rejection
- If we feel we can meet needs Subject Leads are contacted for staff availability to gauge a potential start date
- Admissions make first home visit to complete necessary paperwork
- Findings from enquiries and home visit are brought back to panel for final sign off
- Costings are completed and submitted. Staffing explored. Finance create PO
- Once costings have been agreed, second visit is made to the home for laptop induction and completion of any outstanding paperwork, timetable request is made, student details are added to Cloud School
- Starting date is confirmed to all parties once PO has been received

Transition arrangements and initial trial period

Once a student starts attending RBAir, there is a minimum 6-week 'settling in' period where there is the opportunity to assess more thoroughly whether we are able to meet their needs. Some students' needs have not been accurately assessed or documented - and some students present very different needs in the RBAir environment in comparison to their previous environment. All students will receive individualised sessions for the first 6 weeks to enable closer assessment of needs and the building of initial relationships with staff.

The Link Mentor coordinates input into a 'Settling In' review during the first six weeks, with all relevant staff members contributing their thoughts, experiences and useful/unproductive strategies they have found for that student.

Having considered every relevant staff member's contribution and experience with the student, RBAir will evaluate whether our provision is suitable to enable the student to progress. This may mean adaptations to the timetable or the application of specific strategies. The Link Mentor and SENCo may recommend a range of strategies to enable the

student to access the provision. There may be an extension to the six-week review period to evaluate the efficacy of these strategies upon the student's ability to engage with RBAir provision.

At the end of the review period, the Link Mentor, SENDCo and Assistant Head (Provision) decide whether it is possible to meet the student's needs at RBAir and/or whether their needs are compatible with the needs of other students. Terminating a student's placement at this stage is undoubtedly very difficult for the student, but the careful initial admissions process means that this is very rare - although it is used where necessary.

Records management

The Headteacher is responsible for the safekeeping of this policy. This policy will be available for all staff on the website or staff drive.

Legislation and Guidance that inform this document

- The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations (2012)

Other Red Balloon policies to be read in conjunction with this one

- Behaviour for Learning
- SEN Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force