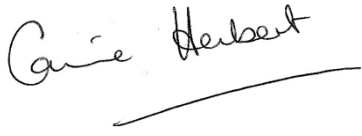


Admissions Policy

POLICY DOCUMENT CONTROL BOX	
POLICY TITLE	ADMISSIONS
POLICY OWNER (INCLUDING JOB TITLE)	RBET-AYLESBURY
VERSION	1.0
RBET-AYLESBURY APPROVING BODY	RED BALLOON EDUCATIONAL TRUST
DATE OF MEETING WHEN VERSION	22 JULY 2024
SIGNED:  DATE: 6 AUGUST 2024	
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	SEPTEMBER 2025

Policy contents	
• Purpose	2
• Scope	2
• Policy statement, provision and safeguards	2
• The SEN Code of Practice	2
• Admissions criteria	3
• Admissions process	3
• Transition arrangements and initial trial period	3
• Records management	4
• Legislation and guidance that inform this document	4
• Other Red Balloon policies to be read in conjunction with this one	4

Purpose

The children and young people that RBET-Aylesbury admits have either become emotionally-based school refusers or are likely to be such in the future. We seek to ensure that all the students we admit will benefit from their placement, will be able ultimately to attend regularly, will make academic and social progress, and will behave with respect towards the other students, the staff and visitors.

Scope

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that all potential commissioning agents, parents¹ of prospective students and the students themselves understand the criteria for admission and continued attendance.

Policy statement, provision and safeguards

The Red Balloon Learner Centre RBET-Aylesbury is an independent school providing for young people who are either not attending school (mainstream or other) or are finding continued attendance at school damaging to their mental health.

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

Admission may be sought either by parents or by a commissioning agent, the latter being most frequently a school or local authority.

In all cases, the Centre will seek to respond to a referral within 14 days.

Our expectations are that any child or young person referred to RBET-Aylesbury will:

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

Potential referrers must realise that the Centre offers an environment in which students can study successfully, and develop self-efficacy, a place in which they feel physically and emotionally safe at all times. The Centre is small and students have to be able to work together in a supportive manner. All students must contribute positively to the environment, or, at the very least, not actively impede 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 RBET-Aylesbury regarding a student with an EHCP, we are required to offer them a place, unless:

- the student's age, ability, aptitude or needs preclude us from so doing;

¹ NB Wherever the term "parent" is used in the policy, it means any person with parental responsibility for the young person.

- the student's attendance would be incompatible with the effective education of others or the efficient use of resources.

Admissions criteria

Owing to the highly individual nature of the provision at RBET-Aylesbury, it is not considered appropriate to have blanket admissions criteria – each student should be viewed as an individual and assessed for suitability as such. The admissions process must be open-minded, fair and non-judgmental.

However, if the paperwork accompanying a potential student describes behaviours that suggest their attendance would be incompatible with the effective education of others, a place will not be offered.

Such behaviours 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 (our students are not locked in).

When a student is referred whose recent history includes one or more such behaviours, we shall investigate the individual circumstances and elucidate why those making the referral have concluded Red Balloon is the most appropriate setting. For instance, it could be that such behaviours were triggered by SEMH needs, exacerbated by the student being in an inappropriate setting.

In making a decision to admit a particular student, we shall take their needs into account, but balance those against the needs of existing students.

On occasion we might consider a student referral to be inappropriate. Under the SEN code of practice we cannot refuse to offer a place, but we may advise that the student's needs could be better met elsewhere. For example, the student's primary need might be that they have moderate learning difficulties but no SEMH needs. Or their primary area of need might be complex medical or physical needs.

Admissions process

Referrals at RBET-Aylesbury are received and processed as follows.

- The referral is received from the local authority SEN team.
- 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 a prospective student list and dated to assist with future admissions priority. From the date of receipt we have 14 days to respond to the local authority;
- The parent is contacted to arrange an informal visit to the Centre. The visit will include some time with the Head of Centre for an informal chat with the student and parent to provide valuable opportunity for assessment of the student's SEMH needs. This visit can also include an informal activity with the SENCo if the SENCo has concerns about their ability to access the curriculum.

- Written permission is requested from the parent to contact other professionals working with the student.
- Once that permission is received, telephone appointments are arranged and calls made with the SENCo of the previous school as well as other professionals, such as CAMHS, where appropriate.
- The EHCP and all appendices are carefully reviewed for any areas of Questions are asked of The local authority SEN officer is asked for clarification if necessary.
- A response is provided to the local authority SEN team detailing:
 - whether we can meet the student's needs;
 - the level of provision required;
 - the cost of this provision, and
 - a provisional start date. Dates of taster days might be offered to enable us to fully assess the needs of the student and decide whether the Centre is the right placement for them.
- Students whose needs we cannot meet have their details removed from our records at this point.
- The local authority will respond and let us know whether they agree to fund the student for a place at the Centre (NB: they will have usually consulted with more than one provision so it may be that we lose even the most suitable students at this stage on the basis of cost or geographical location).
- We agree a start date with the local authority, complete placement agreements and make arrangements for the student's admission.

Transition arrangements and initial trial period

Some students are ready to start immediately on a full-time basis, some are very anxious and may only be able to walk past the Centre with their hood over their faces and take a quick peek at it, and there is a whole range of behaviours between these two extremes. Some students receive a period of home support before coming to the Centre - and most students move gradually to a full-time timetable.

Once a student starts attending the Centre, there is a six-week trial period during which we can assess more thoroughly whether we are able to meet their needs. Some students' needs have not been accurately described or documented - and some students present very different needs in our environment from their previous environment.

The initial strategies used by staff are those documented in the EHCP, which is distilled into a smaller **summary document** by the SENCo and which all staff read and sign before working with the student.

When the student has been attending the Centre for three weeks, the staff team meets and produce a 'formulation' for the student, with all staff members contributing their thoughts, experiences and descriptions of the strategies they have found useful or unproductive for that student.

Having produced a formulation based on every staff member's contribution and experience with the student, the SENCo compiles a list of the strategies that are working well and updates the summary document accordingly. The SENCo expects staff to use these strategies, and hopes to observe their use during their learning walks. This assessment and formulation is carried out at the three-week point in order that alternative strategies can be tried during the six-week assessment period, where this is decided to be necessary.

After six weeks the staff meet again to decide whether the student's needs can be met and whether their needs are compatible with the needs of the other students. Terminating a placement at this stage would undoubtedly be very difficult for the student, but the careful admissions process means that this rarely happens.

Records management

The Head of Centre is responsible for the safekeeping of this policy, which will be available for all staff on the 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

- Use of Reasonable Force