

Policy document control box	
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RB Worthing approving body	Red balloon Worthing Governing Body
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Purpose

RB Worthing seeks to clarify its target group (young people who have become emotionally based school refusers or are likely to be in the future) of students and to ensure that all students admitted will benefit from placement and allow/enable other students to progress academically, socially and in their readiness to lead fulfilling adult lives.

Scope

The Head of Centre is 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

RB Worthing 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.

RB Worthing 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 (eg 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 school or local authority.

In all cases, RB Worthing will seek to respond to a referral within a target of 14 days.

Our expectations are that any young person referred to RB Worthing will:

- want to attend RB Worthing,
- 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.

It is essential that all potential referrers grasp fully the requirements of the final criterion. RB Worthing seeks to offer an environment within which students can study successfully, and develop self efficacy, a place within 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 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 RB Worthing regarding a student with an EHCP, RB Worthing is required to offer them a place, unless:

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

Admissions Criteria

Due to the highly individual nature of the provision at RB Worthing 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 behaviours identified when reading a student's paperwork that would mean that a place would usually be declined as their attendance would be incompatible with the effective education of others.

These 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 (as we are not a secure site)

Where a learner is referred whose recent history indicates the presence of one or more listed, great care will be taken to understand the individual circumstances and why those making the referral have concluded Red Balloon is the most appropriate setting. RB Worthing recognises, for instance, that behaviours could be triggered by SEMH needs exacerbated by a student being in an inappropriate setting.

In making a decision to admit, RB Worthing will take into account the needs of the referred student, but will balance those against the needs of existing students who are best supported by the maintenance of the safe environment at the heart of RB Worthing's work.

There are also occasions when a student referral is deemed to be inappropriate - we cannot refuse to offer a place under the SEN code of practice but 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 learner with moderate learning difficulties but no SEMH needs. This may also include where a learner has complex medical/physical needs and these are their primary area of need.

Admissions process

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

- 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;
- Parent/carer is contacted to arrange an informal visit to the Centre. The visit will also include time spent with the Head of Centre where an informal chat with the student and parent/carer can provide valuable opportunity for assessment of the student's SEMH needs. This visit can also include an informal activity with the SENCo, in cases where the SENCo has concerns about their ability to access the curriculum.
- Written permission is requested from parent/carers to contact other professionals working with the student.
- Once written permission is received, telephone appointments are arranged and calls made with the SENCo of the previous school as well as other professionals e.g. CAMHS where appropriate.
- The EHCP and all appendices are carefully reviewed for any areas of concern which may not have become immediately apparent. Questions are asked of the local authority SEN officer if clarification is 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. This may include dates of taster days to enable RB Worthing to fully assess the needs of the young person and whether the Centre is the right placement for them.
- Students for whom it is decided we are unable to meet their needs 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 RB Worthing (note: they will have usually consulted with more than one provision so it may be that we lose even the most suitable learner at this stage on the basis of cost or geographical location).
- We will 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

An individualised transition arrangement supports the establishment of a successful RB Worthing placement. Some learners are ready to start immediately on a full-time basis, some learners 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 spectrum of presentations between these two extremes. Therefore some learners receive a period of home support before coming to the Centre - and most students receive a graduated transition to a full time timetable.

Once a learner starts attending the Centre, there is a 6 week trial period where we have the opportunity to assess more thoroughly whether we are able to meet their needs. Some learners' needs have not been accurately assessed or documented - and some learners present very different needs in the RB Worthing environment in comparison to their previous environment.

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 learners.

The staff team meets at the point where the learner has been attending the Centre for three weeks. At this point a 'formulation' is produced for the student, with all staff members contributing their thoughts, experiences and useful/unproductive strategies they have found 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 strategies that are working well in our environment and updates the summary document accordingly. These are strategies that the SENCo looks out for staff using when completing learning walks and observations. This assessment and formulation is carried out at the three week point in order that alternative strategies can be tried during the 6 week assessment period, where this is decided to be necessary.

At the 6 week point, the staff meet again and decide whether it is possible to meet the student's needs at RB Worthing and whether their needs are compatible with the needs of other students. Terminating a student's placement at this stage would undoubtedly be 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 Head of Centre is responsible for the safekeeping of this policy. This policy 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