



Admissions Policy

2026–27

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1. Purpose, status and aims

1.1 ReFocus is an independent alternative provision school registered for pupils aged 14–16. This policy explains how a referral is made, how ReFocus assesses suitability, how a placement is commissioned and agreed, how registration status and responsibilities are determined, and how an admission decision can be reviewed.

1.2 ReFocus does not accept privately funded referrals directly from parents. Placements must be referred and commissioned by a school, local authority or other authorised commissioning organisation. Parents may make an initial enquiry, but a placement cannot proceed without an identified commissioner.

1.3 ReFocus is not subject to the School Admissions Code or statutory school-admission appeal arrangements in the same way as maintained schools and academies. It will nevertheless operate clear, fair, transparent and non-discriminatory arrangements and comply with the Independent School Standards.

1.4 ReFocus's values—Employable, Sociable, Ready—shape the admission and induction process. Expectations are explained positively so that pupils and families understand the support available and what will help the placement succeed.

2. Principles and responsibilities

2.1 The proprietor/owners retain legal accountability. The Headteacher manages implementation. The Admissions and Attendance Lead coordinates referrals and registration. The admissions panel considers suitability, drawing on the DSL, SENCo, site leaders and other professionals as required. The governing board provides support, oversight and an independent review route.

2.2 ReFocus will admit only within its registered age range, registered capacity and approved premises arrangements, and only where it can provide safe and suitable education.

2.3 Decisions will be individual, evidence based and focused on the pupil's best interests, education, welfare and safety. ReFocus will involve the pupil and parent or carer and work openly with the commissioner.

3. Who may be referred

3.1 ReFocus considers commissioned referrals for pupils aged 14–16 who may be out of full-time education, at risk of permanent exclusion, unable to fulfil their potential in their current setting, or in need of a planned alternative provision intervention.

3.2 Referrals may be made by a home or commissioning school, local authority education or inclusion service, another registered education setting, or another authorised organisation able to commission and oversee the placement.

3.3 ReFocus may provide full-time, short-term, part-time, assessment, reintegration, sixth-day or other bespoke commissioned packages. The type of package does not determine registration status; this is agreed separately in accordance with the pupil's circumstances and the registration regulations.

4. Referral and placement process

4.1 Initial inquiry and referral form. A referring or commissioning organisation may request and complete the online referral form through the ReFocus Contact Page:

4.2 Completeness and safeguarding check. The Admissions and Attendance Lead checks that sufficient educational, safeguarding, SEND, medical and risk information has been provided. Missing essential information will be requested before panel consideration, although urgent safeguarding information must be shared immediately.

4.3 Suitability assessment. The admissions panel considers the referral and decides whether ReFocus may be able to meet the pupil's needs safely and appropriately, whether further information is required, and which site or package may be suitable.

4.4 Meeting, tour and pupil voice. Where the referral may be suitable, the pupil, parent or carer and referring organisation are invited to meet staff and tour the proposed site. ReFocus explains the curriculum, support, expectations and likely placement arrangements and listens to the pupil's and family's views.

4.5 Individual risk assessment. ReFocus completes and agrees an individual risk assessment with information from the pupil, parent or carer, commissioner and relevant professionals. This identifies strengths, needs, foreseeable risks, reasonable adjustments and practical controls.

4.6 Commissioning and registration agreement. If ReFocus and the commissioner agree that the placement is suitable, the parties confirm the package, funding, registration status, responsibilities, timetable, objectives, review dates and proposed start date in writing.

4.7 Final offer and start date. A place is confirmed only when the required information and agreements are complete. Where the referring school is using its off-site-direction powers, that statutory decision and parental notification remain the responsibility of the home school.

5. Suitability assessment

5.1 There are no academic entry requirements. Each referral is considered individually against:

- the pupil's age, ability, aptitude, attainment, curriculum and qualification pathway;
- SEND, disability, EHC-plan provision, communication and learning needs;
- safeguarding, vulnerability, legal status and social-care involvement;
- medical, allergy, healthcare and mental-health needs;
- attendance, engagement, behaviour, relationships and individual risk;
- peer, contextual, community, transport and safe-travel considerations;
- the proposed site, timetable, staffing, group composition and reasonable adjustments;
- the objectives, expected duration and intended destination of the placement; and
- ReFocus's registered capacity and ability to deliver safe, suitable and effective education.

5.2 The panel will record its decision and reasons. Where suitability cannot be fully established before a start, ReFocus may agree a time-limited assessment placement. This will be supportive, have clear review points and outcomes, and will not permit automatic removal from the admission register.

6. Information required before admission

6.1 The commissioning school must provide information necessary to plan a safe and effective placement, including where relevant:

- full pupil identity, contact and parental-responsibility information, including relevant court orders;
- the current school, registration status, intended main/subsidiary status and expected first day;
- the safeguarding chronology, child-protection information and named DSL contacts;
- looked-after or previously looked-after status, social worker and Virtual School Head details;
- SEND information, SEN support, EHC plan and provision, specialist reports and reasonable adjustments;
- medical conditions, allergies, healthcare plans, emergency medication and emergency contacts;
- risk assessments, safety or behaviour plans and effective risk-management strategies;
- attendance, attainment, baseline, curriculum, timetable and latest school reports;
- examination entries, coursework, controlled assessment and access arrangements;
- outside agencies, transport, collection permissions and other relevant practical arrangements; and
- placement objectives, proposed hours, review dates, intended duration and destination.

6.2 Data will be shared lawfully, securely and on a need-to-know basis. Necessary safeguarding sharing will not be delayed because consent has not been obtained. ReFocus may delay a start where missing information prevents safe planning, but will work promptly with the commissioner to resolve gaps.

7. Registration status and responsibilities

7.1 Registration status must be agreed and recorded before the pupil starts. ReFocus and the commissioner will comply with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026.

7.2 Dual registration

For an off-site-direction placement, the pupil normally remains main registered at the home school and is subsidiary registered at ReFocus from the first day. The home or commissioning school retains overall oversight of the placement, curriculum continuity and the pupil's continuing education. ReFocus records and reports attendance, progress, safeguarding information and concerns through the agreed arrangements.

7.3 Sole registration

Where ReFocus is the pupil's sole registered school, ReFocus is responsible for the admission and attendance registers, curriculum, safeguarding, SEND support, reporting and other school-level duties that apply to the pupil. The local authority or other commissioner may retain separate statutory and commissioning responsibilities.

7.4 A placement agreement will identify who is responsible for attendance follow-up, same-day absence notifications, education outside ReFocus hours, safeguarding communication, SEND/EHC-plan delivery, transport, examinations, reviews and transition.

8. Placement types and curriculum entitlement

8.1 ReFocus may offer Reset, ReFocus, twilight or another bespoke package, as described on the school website and agreed with the commissioner. Package descriptions may change; the individual written agreement is authoritative for each pupil.

8.2 A short-term, part-time or bespoke package does not remove the pupil's entitlement to suitable education. The agreement will state the hours ReFocus provides, what education is arranged outside those hours and which organisation is responsible for the complete package.

8.3 For a dual-registered pupil, ReFocus will work with the home school to maintain curriculum and qualification continuity. For a part-time placement, the pupil should normally attend the home school or other agreed education when not at ReFocus.

8.4 ReFocus may accept commissioned sixth-day provision where it confirms that the placement is safe and suitable. The excluding maintained school or academy retains its statutory responsibility for arranging suitable education and must provide the required information and registration arrangements.

9. Equality, SEND and EHC plans

9.1 ReFocus will not unlawfully discriminate in its admission arrangements. It will make reasonable adjustments for disabled prospective and registered pupils and consider whether support, auxiliary aids, staffing or other adjustments would make a proposed placement suitable.

9.2 SEND, an EHC plan, previous exclusion or behaviour history will not in itself determine refusal. Decisions will be based on the individual evidence, proposed provision, reasonable adjustments, safety and ReFocus's capacity to meet need.

9.3 Where a pupil has an EHC plan, the local authority maintaining the plan must be involved. ReFocus will consider whether it can deliver Section F provision, whether the proposed registration is consistent with Section I, and what specialist provision and funding are required. The local authority may need to review or amend the plan before the placement begins.

9.4 Where ReFocus is named in an EHC plan and the conditions in section 43 of the Children and Families Act 2014 apply, ReFocus will comply with the resulting duty to admit. This is distinct from an ordinary discretionary commissioned referral.

10. Admission, induction and baseline assessment

10.1 Before or at the start of the placement, ReFocus will:

- confirm the written placement and commissioning agreement;
- enter the pupil on the admission register with the correct registration status and expected first day;
- complete site, safeguarding, medical, emergency and transport arrangements;
- introduce the key worker and other named contacts;
- explain school expectations, attendance arrangements and the ReFocus values;
- complete appropriate Maths, English, reading and wider baseline assessment; and
- produce an initial personalised education and support plan.

10.2 The commissioner and parent or carer will sign the placement agreement and necessary specific permissions. The pupil will be invited to sign a supportive values and behaviour agreement. Safeguarding, attendance, educational and lawful data-processing responsibilities do not depend on consent where another lawful basis applies.

11. Placement planning, communication and review

11.1 Every placement will have written objectives, a timetable, named responsibilities, a proposed duration or review point and an intended next step. Reviews will take place at least half-termly and

earlier following serious incidents, safeguarding concerns, significant changes in need or evidence that the package requires adjustment.

11.2 ReFocus will provide the commissioner with agreed attendance, engagement, progress, attainment, safeguarding and welfare information. The commissioner will maintain regular contact with ReFocus and the pupil and retains oversight of the alternative provision it has arranged.

11.3 Where reintegration is intended, ReFocus and the home school will agree readiness criteria, curriculum information, support, resources, timescales and a planned transition. The pupil and parent or carer will be involved appropriately.

12. Refusal, withdrawal and ending a placement

12.1 Refusal before admission

ReFocus may refuse a referral where, after individual assessment and consultation, it cannot provide safe or suitable education within its registered arrangements or where a serious risk cannot be reduced adequately through reasonable adjustments, support, boundaries or proportionate controls. The commissioner will receive a clear written reason.

Threats, abuse or harassment towards staff will be assessed seriously, but ReFocus will not automatically refuse a pupil because of another family member's behaviour. It will consider the source and seriousness of the risk, disability-related factors, reasonable adjustments and available controls.

12.2 Withdrawal of an offer

Before admission, ReFocus may withdraw a conditional offer where essential information, funding, registration or safety conditions have not been agreed, or where significant new information shows that the placement is unsuitable. Reasons will be recorded and explained.

12.3 Ending a commissioned placement

Ending a placement will be a last resort unless immediate safeguarding or safety needs require urgent action. ReFocus will convene a review with the commissioner and parent or carer, consider unmet SEND and support needs, agree continuity of education and plan a safe transition. A suspension does not automatically terminate a placement.

ReFocus will follow its own Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy where applicable. Ending a service agreement, funding arrangement or placement does not itself authorise deletion from the admission register.

12.4 Removal from the admission register

A pupil's name will be deleted only where a ground in the 2024 registration regulations applies and all required enquiries, notifications and returns have been completed. ReFocus will not remove a pupil informally or because funding has ended without a lawful ground and a continuity plan.

13. Requesting a review of an admission decision

13.1 This is an internal review process and not a statutory school-admission appeal. A commissioner or parent or carer may request a review in writing within five working days of the decision. The request should identify any factual error, missing evidence, proposed support or reasonable adjustment that should be considered.

13.2 A governing-board member who did not participate in the original decision will review the papers and may obtain SEND, safeguarding, medical or other professional advice. Because the Headteacher and proprietor roles are held by the same person, the review will not simply be returned to the Headteacher/proprietor for decision.

13.3 A written outcome will normally be provided within ten working days. The reviewer may uphold the decision, request reconsideration by a differently constituted admissions panel or recommend a revised placement proposal. External rights concerning unlawful discrimination are unaffected.

14. Fees and commissioning terms

14.1 Fees, package prices, invoicing, payment dates, notice and other commercial terms will be agreed separately in writing with the commissioner. ReFocus does not accept privately funded parent placements.

14.2 A payment dispute will be raised promptly with the commissioner. ReFocus will not abruptly end a pupil's education because of an unresolved invoice. Any termination for non-payment will involve reasonable notice, senior escalation, a placement review and an agreed continuity and transition plan for the pupil.

15. Publication, monitoring and review

15.1 Particulars of ReFocus's admission arrangements will be made available to parents and prospective parents through the school website and will be supplied free of charge on request.

15.2 The Headteacher will monitor the operation of the referral and admission process. The governing board will receive anonymised information about referrals, decisions, review outcomes, equality and placement patterns to support oversight.

15.3 The proprietor/owners will review this policy annually, with governing-board oversight, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, registered arrangements or ReFocus's commissioning model changes.

Appendix A: Referral and placement checklist

- Referral form received from an authorised referring or commissioning organisation.
- Pupil confirmed as aged 14–16 and proposed placement within registered capacity.
- Educational, safeguarding, SEND, medical, attendance, examination and risk information complete.
- Admissions-panel suitability decision and reasons recorded.
- Pupil and parent/carer meeting and proposed-site tour completed.
- Pupil voice gathered and individual risk assessment agreed.
- Package, timetable, objectives, funding and review dates agreed with commissioner.
- Sole or dual registration and main/subsidiary status confirmed.
- Attendance, safeguarding, curriculum, SEND, transport and examination responsibilities recorded.
- Placement agreement and necessary permissions completed.
- Key worker, induction, baseline assessment and proposed start date confirmed.
- Admission register entry completed and first-day attendance checked.