



Policy Name	ADMISSIONS
Relevant To	Federation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bidwell Brook Only <input type="checkbox"/> Ellen Tinkham Only <input type="checkbox"/>
Type of Policy	Model <input type="checkbox"/> School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Policy Holder	Nikki Burroughs
Subject/Department	Admissions
Approved By	Full Governing Body <input type="checkbox"/> CBT Governors <input type="checkbox"/> T&L Governors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/>
Version Date (if applicable)	n/a
Date of Last Review	Autumn Term 2025
Date of Next Review	Autumn Term 2026

Introduction

The Learn to Live Federation comprises Ellen Tinkham School and Bidwell Brook School. Both schools are Local Authority maintained special schools that provide education for children and young people with complex needs. This policy outlines the admissions process and criteria for both schools in line with statutory requirements and Local Authority procedures.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure clarity and transparency regarding how pupils are admitted to the Federation's schools. It explains the role of the Local Authority, the criteria for admission, and the steps taken to support pupils and families during the transition process.

Scope

This policy applies to all prospective pupils aged 3 to 19 years who may be considered for placement at Ellen Tinkham or Bidwell Brook School.

Admission Criteria

Both schools cater for pupils whose Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) specifies that they require provision for:

- Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)
- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)

Pupils may also present with one or more of the following characteristics:

- Severe communication impairment
- Complex physical and/or sensory impairment
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Complex health difficulties that may be life-limiting
- Challenging behaviour
- Social and emotional difficulties
- Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Obsessive/compulsive behaviours

The schools do not admit children whose cognitive abilities fall within the average range and whose primary needs are centred on emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Role of the Local Authority

As maintained schools, neither Bidwell Brook nor Ellen Tinkham is authorised to offer placements directly. All placements are determined by Devon County Council SEND Operations Team, based on the child's EHCP.

Federation schools collaborate closely with the Local Authority concerning potential admissions. Each child or young person admitted to the school will possess an EHCP through which the Devon SEND Operations Team will articulate the provisions required for each pupil. This collaborative approach ensures that education, health, and care services work in unison to meet the individual needs of the pupil, ultimately supporting the achievement of agreed outcomes.

For enquiries regarding placements, the SEND Operations Team can be contacted on 01392 383000. Further information about Devon's SEND Local Offer can be found <https://www.devon.gov.uk/send>.

Admissions Process

Admissions will be granted under the following circumstances:

- The pupil has an EHCP, or in exceptional cases, a Statutory Assessment is ongoing and the pupil has been referred by the Local Authority.
- The school can meet the child's academic, social, and medical needs effectively.
- Legal responsibilities are respected, including the SEN Code of Practice, GDPR, data protection laws, and Local Authority constraints such as Admissions Criteria and County Transport Policy.
- Careful evaluation of referral documentation by the Head of Site, appropriate teaching staff, and governors, subject to availability within the agreed capacity designated by the Local Authority.

All pupils are enrolled through the Local Authority, and places may be allocated at any point during the academic year, provided availability permits. The Governing Body is legally mandated to adhere to Local Authority decisions regarding individual applications and to operate within the Local Authority's admission arrangements.

Admissions Procedure

Prior to Placement Confirmation

- Parents/carers are encouraged to make an informal visit to the school, with or without their child. They may be accompanied by a key professional or friend. Open Days are held regularly.
- Parents/carers may express their views on the suitability of the school.
- EHCPs go to the Moderation Panel, led by Devon SEND operations Team. Prospective pupils' EHCP Plans are sent to the school for consultation.
- The Governors delegate responsibility to the Executive Head and Senior Leadership Team Admissions Group.
- Upon receipt of consultation papers, the Admissions Group reviews whether the school can fully and effectively meet the child's needs, considering the impact on other pupils.
- The school responds to the Local Authority within 15 days with one of the following:
 - Confirm the place is appropriate.
 - Notify the Local Authority that the school cannot meet the pupil's needs, with clear reasons.
 - Agree "in principle" but state that a place is currently unavailable.

Following Confirmation of Placement

Once the Local Authority confirms the placement:

- Class identified.
- Admissions Lead contacts the family and liaises with the child's current setting to share information and plan transition.
- Home visit offered by a multi-disciplinary team.
- Transport arrangements confirmed with parents and applications made to the Local Authority.
- Admissions pack sent and completed by the family.
- Reception pupils: Home visits may be carried out to complete paperwork and medical plans.
- Welcome letter sent prior to start.

- Reception pupils follow an induction programme during the first half term, starting part-time and moving to full-time by the end of the term.
- Pupils above Reception generally start full-time immediately.
- Opportunities for pre-start visits arranged as appropriate.

Once the Child Has Started School

Pupils will have full-time places. Parents of younger children may prefer to agree a staged move towards full-time attendance. They will need to be in full-time attendance the term after their fifth birthday.

- Opportunities for close liaison between home and school will be maintained via the Home:School Diary;
- Liaison between home / school may also be via telephone or by making a time to meet with school staff and parents / carers in school;
- Each term there will be a Parents' Evening to enable parents / carers and teachers to meet and discuss the child's progress;
- An Annual Review is held within 12 months of the Education, Health & Care Plan being issued and thereafter annually;
- Parents' "open" mornings are held at least termly during term time.

Appeals

Parents/carers who wish to challenge an admission decision should follow the Local Authority's statutory appeals process.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance or Local Authority procedures