



Cedars
ACADEMY
TRUST

CEDARS ACADEMY TRUST

Cedars Academy: Low Fell
Cedars Academy: High Heworth

Admissions

Policy

Academic Year 2026-27

1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1 This policy explains how a child or young person is admitted to Cedars Academy: who decides, what part the Trust plays, and what happens before a pupil starts. It covers admissions at any point in a pupil's education, and works the same way at both sites except at section 7, which covers post-16 provision at Cedars Academy: High Heworth only.

2. Who we are

- 2.1 The Cedars Academy Trust is a single academy trust. It runs one academy, Cedars Academy, across two sites: Cedars Academy: Low Fell and Cedars Academy: High Heworth.
- 2.2 Cedars Academy is a special academy for children and young people aged 3 to 19 with physical, sensory and medical needs, speech, language and communication disorders, autism, and a wide range of other complex needs often associated with emotional vulnerability. Every pupil referred is expected to have a learning (cognition) difficulty as their main barrier to learning.
- 2.3 Every pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan), although a pupil may be admitted while a plan is being drawn up, as 5.6 explains.

3. The legal position

- 3.1 **The School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code do not apply to special academies.** Cedars Academy therefore sets no planned admission number, no oversubscription criteria, no admissions round and no waiting list, and has no appeal panel. Families do not apply to Cedars Academy for a place.
- 3.2 The local authority that maintains a pupil's EHC plan is the admissions authority for that pupil. For most pupils that is Gateshead Council. A pupil is admitted because the local authority has named Cedars Academy in the plan.
- 3.3 Once Cedars Academy is named in an EHC plan, the Trust **must** admit the pupil. This duty is in section 43 of the Children and Families Act 2014. The Trust cannot refuse a named pupil, and cannot apply further criteria to choose between named pupils.
- 3.4 Before naming Cedars Academy, the local authority **must** consult the Trust and consider its response. This duty is in section 39. The Trust may ask not to be named on three grounds only: the academy is unsuitable for the pupil's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs; admitting them would be incompatible with the efficient education of others; or it would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.
- 3.5 Section 33 presumes a mainstream setting unless that is against the family's wishes or incompatible with the efficient education of others. Where a pupil here is found able to be educated in mainstream provision, the Trust **will** work with the local authority on a phased, supported move.
- 3.6 This policy also has regard to the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 (2015) and the Trust's funding agreement.

4. Responsibilities

- **Trust Board.** Approves this policy and satisfies itself that the Trust meets its duty to admit pupils named in an EHC plan.
- **Headteacher of the site.** Answers every consultation for that site, having taken the Director of Inclusion's view on suitability. Agrees the admission date and transition plan and writes to the family.
- **Director of Inclusion.** Advises on whether the academy can meet the needs in the EHC plan, and oversees safeguarding and the transfer of records.

- **Academy Business Leader and Data and Office Manager.** Maintain this policy and the admission register, record each admission, request the pupil's educational record and handle admission information lawfully.

5. When the Trust is consulted

- 5.1 A parent, carer or young person who would like a place at Cedars Academy **should** contact the SEN team of the local authority that maintains the EHC plan.
- 5.2 The local authority sends the family a draft plan. They then have 15 calendar days to make representations and ask for a school to be named. The local authority then consults the Trust, sending the site Headteacher the draft plan and the reports it holds.
- 5.3 The Trust **will** respond within 15 calendar days of receiving the draft plan and supporting papers. There is no statutory deadline for this: it is a standard the Trust sets itself, to match the period at 5.2. Where papers arrive incomplete, or during a closure period, the Trust will say when it will respond instead.
- 5.4 The Trust will support a place where the academy can meet the needs in the plan, a learning (cognition) difficulty is the main barrier to learning with multi-professional evidence to that effect, and the placement is compatible with the efficient education of others and an efficient use of resources. These are criteria for answering a consultation, not admission criteria: once a pupil is named, 3.3 applies.
- 5.5 The decision is the local authority's. The Trust's response is advice. The Trust does not offer places.
- 5.6 The local authority may ask the academy to admit a pupil on an assessment placement while needs are being determined. Where it does, the academy **will** report by the end of the pupil's first term on the assessments carried out and whether its provision is suitable, to inform the EHC needs assessment.

6. Admission and transition

- 6.1 Where the local authority names Cedars Academy it **must** tell the Trust in writing and **should** send the reports and assessments it holds. The Trust **will** ask for anything missing. A named pupil is admitted whether or not the papers are complete, because the duty at 3.3 does not depend on them, and the Trust will raise any resulting risk with the authority in writing.
- 6.2 The site Headteacher writes to the family confirming the place, the type of placement (full time, part time or an assessment placement) and the admission date, and to the local authority to confirm the date and request transport where needed.
- 6.3 Pupils of compulsory school age start as soon as the arrangements are complete. Where the right class group is full but places are available elsewhere in the academy, the Trust **will** discuss the individual case with the local authority first.
- 6.4 Parents and carers are encouraged to visit before their child is placed, and to bring their child with them. **A visit is not a condition of admission:** where a pupil is named, 3.3 applies whether or not a visit has taken place. Staff may also visit the pupil in their current setting.
- 6.5 Before a pupil starts, the Teaching Team Lead for the class **will** carry out a home visit to meet the family, complete the admission forms and introduce the 'All about me' document.
- 6.6 Where a pupil is moving from another school or setting, the site Headteacher **will** agree a phased transition: staff visiting the pupil where they are, introductory visits to Cedars Academy, all reports sent before admission, the multi-disciplinary team liaising with their counterparts, and the home visit at 6.5.
- 6.7 Where a meeting is held to discuss a pupil's needs and Cedars Academy is under consideration, the Trust **expects** to be invited.

7. Post-16

- 7.1** Cedars Academy: High Heworth provides for students up to the age of 19. Post-16 places are for students already on roll who are moving up from Key Stage 4. **The Trust does not accept external post-16 placements.**
- 7.2** Students may leave at the end of Key Stage 4 for further education locally or specialist provision out of borough. Others stay on to develop core skills, literacy and numeracy, life skills and vocational qualifications. Progression is discussed at the annual review from Year 9 onwards, as part of preparing for adulthood.

8. Appeals and complaints

- 8.1** There is no admission appeal panel at Cedars Academy and no appeal to the Trust against a placement decision, because the Appeals Code does not apply.
- 8.2** A family who disagrees with the school named in an EHC plan, or with a refusal to name the school they asked for, **may** appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), and **may** first use the authority's mediation and disagreement resolution arrangements.
- 8.3** A complaint about the way the Trust handled an admission, rather than the placement decision itself, is dealt with under the Trust's Complaints Procedure.

9. Funding, transport and records

- 9.1** Cedars Academy is funded directly by the Department for Education for its places. The authority that maintains a pupil's EHC plan provides top-up funding and **must** fund the placement it has named. The Trust does not charge for a place.
- 9.2** Home to school travel is the responsibility of the local authority, not the Trust. Eligibility is decided by its transport team and applications **must** be made to it. Travel for students over compulsory school age falls under its post-16 transport policy statement, a separate duty. Handover at the start and end of the day is covered by the Transport and Handover Policy.
- 9.3** Consultation and admission information is personal data, and special category data where it concerns special educational needs or health. It is processed under the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and the Trust's Data Protection Policy. Papers for a pupil who is not admitted are kept only as long as necessary. The admission register is kept under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

10. Monitoring and review

- 10.1** The co-headteachers monitor how this policy works in practice and report to the Trust Board. The policy is reviewed annually.

Annex: linked policies, forms and systems

Linked policies. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; SEND Policy; SEN Information Report; Intimate and Personal Care Policy; Transport and Handover Policy; Complaints Procedure; Data Protection Policy; Privacy Notice for Parents and Carers.

Forms and systems. Admission forms and 'All about me', completed at the home visit; the admission register; the Trust's management information system.