



Admissions Policy

Policy owner:	Director
Lead responsible:	Carly Mason
Provision covered:	On-site, outreach and home-based non-school alternative provision
Date approved:	22/04/2026
Review date:	22/04/2027
Applies to:	All staff, tutors, volunteers, learners, parents/carers, commissioning schools, local authorities and relevant professionals

1. Statement of intent

Gateways Education and Wellbeing Limited is committed to operating a fair, transparent and child-centred admissions process for its non-school alternative provision. Admissions decisions will always be made with careful regard to whether Gateways can safely and appropriately meet a learner's needs within the resources, staffing, environment and type of provision available.

This policy sets out how enquiries and referrals are considered, the criteria used when assessing suitability, how Gateways works with parents/carers, commissioning schools, local authorities and relevant professionals, and how offers, waiting lists and transitions into provision are managed. It is intended to support lawful, safe and appropriate admission arrangements across on-site, outreach and home-based provision.

Many learners referred to Gateways may have special educational needs and disabilities, anxiety, trauma-related needs, social, emotional and mental health needs, communication differences, medical needs, disrupted educational histories or barriers to attending mainstream education. Admissions arrangements must therefore be flexible and responsive to individual circumstances while remaining consistent, evidence-informed and compatible with safeguarding, health and safety, equality and safer working requirements.

2. Aims of this policy

- ensure admissions decisions are fair, consistent and clearly explained;
- identify at an early stage whether Gateways is likely to be a suitable provision for the learner;
- ensure sufficient information is obtained before a placement begins so that provision can be delivered safely and appropriately;
- support collaborative decision-making with parents/carers, commissioners and relevant professionals;
- set out how offers, trial placements, waiting lists and transition arrangements are managed; and
- support compliance with safeguarding, equality, data protection and alternative provision expectations in England.

3. Legal and guidance framework

This policy should be read alongside Gateways' Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Complaints Policy, SEND procedures, Risk Assessments and Data Protection and Confidentiality arrangements. It reflects relevant legal duties and guidance, including:

- the Children Act 1989 and 2004;
- the Education Act 1996, including section 19 where relevant to education otherwise than at school arrangements;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
- the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years; and
- relevant Department for Education guidance concerning alternative provision, children who cannot attend school because of health needs, safeguarding in tuition

and commissioned provision, and equality duties owed to disabled children and young people.

Nothing in this policy limits Gateways' ability to refuse, defer or review a placement where essential safeguarding, medical, funding or risk information is unavailable or where Gateways reasonably concludes that it cannot safely or suitably meet need.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Director / lead responsible

The Director has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy, for ensuring that admissions decisions are made consistently and fairly, and for ensuring that placements offered by Gateways are compatible with safeguarding, staffing, funding, health and safety and the needs of the existing cohort.

4.2 Staff involved in admissions

Staff involved in admissions must consider referrals objectively, request and review relevant information, record key decisions, maintain appropriate confidentiality, and escalate any safeguarding or suitability concerns without delay.

4.3 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to provide full, accurate and timely information about the learner's needs, history, risks, strengths, attendance barriers, medical information and current involvement of schools or professionals, and to notify Gateways promptly if circumstances change.

4.4 Commissioning schools, local authorities and professionals

Where a placement is commissioned by a school or local authority, the commissioner and any relevant professionals should provide available reports, plans, safeguarding information, attendance information, risk information and placement aims so that Gateways can make an informed decision and, where appropriate, plan a safe start.

5. Admissions criteria

A learner may be considered for a placement at Gateways where, following assessment of the available information, Gateways is satisfied that:

- the learner requires alternative provision, tuition or a tailored placement which Gateways is lawfully able to provide;
- the learner's profile of need, presentation and likely outcomes are broadly compatible with the type of provision, staffing model and environment available at Gateways;
- Gateways can make suitable and reasonable adjustments, where required, within its provision model;
- the learner's attendance is not likely to create an unmanaged or unreasonable risk of harm to themselves, staff or other learners;
- there is a realistic prospect that the learner will be able to engage with provision, whether immediately or through a supported and phased transition; and
- funding is either confirmed or there is clear evidence of an alternative lawful means by which the placement will be funded.

Gateways recognises that some learners may initially present as highly anxious, dysregulated, school-avoidant or reluctant to engage. A low starting point, reduced timetable or phased approach will not necessarily prevent admission where there is a reasonable prospect that the learner can engage over time and where the placement can be delivered safely.

Gateways may decline a referral where it reasonably concludes that the learner requires a different level or type of provision, where the placement would create an unacceptable risk that cannot be managed proportionately, where essential information has not been provided, or where the placement would be incompatible with the needs and safety of existing learners.

6. The admissions process

Applications and referrals may be received from parents/carers, schools, local authorities or other professionals. Referrals are welcomed at any time during the year, subject to availability, suitability and funding arrangements.

The admissions process will usually include the following stages, although Gateways may adapt the process reasonably to reflect the age, needs and circumstances of the learner:

Stage 1: Initial enquiry or referral. Basic information is gathered and parents/carers will normally be contacted to discuss the learner, the nature of the provision sought and the next steps in the process.

Stage 2: Information gathering. Gateways will request and review relevant documentation, which may include the EHCP, professional reports, risk assessments, behaviour plans, attendance information, safeguarding information, medical information and any current school or local authority paperwork.

Stage 3: Consideration of suitability. The Director and/or relevant lead will assess whether Gateways may be able to meet need safely and appropriately and whether the referral should progress further.

Stage 4: Visit, discussion or introductory contact. Where appropriate, this may involve a parent/carer meeting, learner visit, virtual discussion, meet-and-greet or other low-demand introduction to the provision or tutor.

Stage 5: Decision-making. Gateways will decide whether to offer a place, add the learner to a waiting list, request further information, suggest an alternative arrangement, or decline the referral.

Stage 6: Transition planning. Where a place is offered and accepted in principle, Gateways will work with the family and, where relevant, the commissioner to plan the learner's transition into provision.

7. Involving the learner

Gateways is committed to a person-centred approach and recognises that the learner's voice is important in deciding how admission and transition should be managed. The extent of direct learner involvement will depend on age, communication profile, anxiety levels, capacity and preference.

Where appropriate, Gateways will adapt the admissions and transition process by using visuals, shorter visits, remote introductions, familiarisation resources, reduced demand approaches or parent/carer-supported contact.

8. Communicating with parents/carers

Gateways will communicate openly and respectfully with parents/carers throughout the admissions process. Where a referral comes through a school or local authority, Gateways will still seek to ensure that parents/carers understand the process, are kept

informed of significant developments and have opportunities to share relevant information.

Parents/carers should respond to reasonable requests for information and documentation in a timely manner. Where information provided by another professional or commissioner appears incomplete, unclear or inconsistent, Gateways may seek clarification before progressing the referral.

9. Liaising with schools, local authorities and professionals

Gateways will work cooperatively with commissioning schools, local authorities and relevant professionals in order to make informed admissions decisions and plan suitable placements.

Gateways is not under a duty to accept every consultation or referral and will only engage with consultations or offer placements where it considers that doing so is appropriate, lawful and in the best interests of the learner.

Information sharing during admissions will be carried out in line with data protection requirements and Gateways' safeguarding duties.

10. Offers of places, funding and trial arrangements

A place will only be offered where Gateways is satisfied that the learner's needs can be met safely and suitably within the provision available. Any offer is subject to place availability, staffing capacity, risk assessment and funding being agreed or otherwise secured.

Where funding is delayed, under review or subject to tribunal or panel processes, Gateways cannot guarantee that a place will remain available indefinitely. Gateways will act fairly and transparently but must also manage capacity responsibly.

Gateways may make an offer subject to a phased start, individual risk controls, additional meetings, receipt of outstanding documentation or a time-limited initial review period where this is considered necessary and reasonable.

Where appropriate, placements may begin with a review period so that Gateways, the learner, parents/carers and the commissioner can assess whether the placement is suitable, safe and effective. During any review period, Gateways will monitor engagement, wellbeing, risk, compatibility with the provision and the effectiveness of agreed strategies.

A placement may be reviewed, amended or ended where significant information was withheld, where risks become materially different from those presented during

admissions, where funding is not secured, or where it becomes clear that Gateways is not the right provision for the learner despite reasonable adjustments and support.

11. Prioritising applications and waiting lists

Gateways aim to allocate places fairly. As a general principle, referrals will be considered in the order in which sufficient information is received to allow a decision to be made. However, the timing of any placement will also depend on suitability, risk, staffing, compatibility with the existing cohort, funding and the nature of the provision requested.

Where no suitable place is currently available, Gateways may operate a waiting list. A learner who joined the waiting list later may be offered a place before one who has waited longer where this is justified by compatibility, place type, staffing, timing, funding or safety considerations.

Gateways will manage waiting lists in good faith and expects parents/carers and commissioners to respond promptly if a place becomes available or if the learner no longer requires the placement.

12. Transition into provision

The aims of transition are to help the learner start feeling safe, welcomed and understood; to ensure staffing and support arrangements are clear; and to establish a manageable starting point for attendance, engagement and learning.

Following an offer and funding confirmation, Gateways will work with the learner, parents/carers and, where relevant, the commissioner to plan a transition process that is proportionate to need. This may include introductory visits, visual supports, social stories, shorter sessions, staggered starts, transport planning, home visits, outreach contact or other reasonable adjustments.

Transition planning will ordinarily include confirming the proposed timetable, start arrangements, staffing, communication methods, known triggers, helpful strategies, medical information, risk controls, safeguarding contacts and the arrangements for early review.

13. Data protection and records

Personal information obtained during the admissions process will be processed in accordance with Gateways' data protection and confidentiality arrangements, the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Information will only be requested, shared, retained and deleted to the extent that this is lawful, necessary and proportionate.

Admissions records may include enquiry details, referral paperwork, professional reports, communications, risk information, meeting notes and decisions. These records will be stored securely and access will be limited to those with a legitimate need to know.

Where a referral does not proceed, records will be retained and disposed of in line with Gateways' retention arrangements and legal obligations. Where further contact is requested by the family or commissioner, limited information may be retained for this purpose where lawful to do so.

14. Policy approval

Approved by: CARLY MASON

Role: Director

Date: 22/04/2026

Next review due: 22/04/2027

Gateways Education and Wellbeing Limited