



Admissions Policy

Issue No. 8
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Introduction

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this.

Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular, it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its beliefs and core values as shown on our wheel of culture.





Our Purpose

We want to unleash the potential we know exists in all of our pupils.

Our Mission

We strive to empower our pupils to be the best version of themselves.

Our Beliefs

- **Healthy Mind and Body:** We prioritise wellbeing, healthy lifestyles, and active participation.
- **Care and Respect:** We show kindness, empathy, and respect to everyone.

Our Values

- **High Standards:** We aim for excellence in everything we do.
- **Personal Responsibility:** We take ownership of our choices and actions.
- **Professionalism:** We show respect, reliability, and pride in ourselves.
- **Integrity:** We act honestly and do the right thing, even when it is difficult.

Arco Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Arco Academy.

Statement of Intent

At Arco Academy, we believe that all students have the right to an inspirational and aspirational education that supports their needs. We recognise that choosing the right school is an important decision. We work closely with parents, carers, local authorities and other professionals throughout the admissions process to ensure that placements are in the best interests of each child.

Our assessment procedure has been developed to take into account that many students with SEND face challenges as a consequence of a lack of appropriate support. Our admissions assessment process is designed to assist us in ensuring that we can meet the needs of every student at Arco Academy and that they will thrive and progress within our provision.

Arco Academy seeks to offer places to students for whom we are confident that our ethos, vision, educational approach and school community will provide an appropriate and supportive environment.

As part of our admissions process, we will consider information relating to a prospective student's previous behaviour and conduct, including any history of serious criminal or harmful activity. This may include, but is not limited to, involvement in the possession or use of illegal drugs, violence, sexual harassment or misconduct, exploitation, or other behaviour that may present a safeguarding or risk-management concern.

Where such information indicates that a prospective student may pose a significant risk to the safety, wellbeing or educational environment of other students or staff, and where the Academy is unable to manage that risk through appropriate support and safeguarding measures, we may determine that admission to Arco Academy would not be appropriate.

Arco Academy aims to facilitate the overall development of every student who joins us and to tailor our teaching to meet individual needs. It is important that we endeavour to ascertain if prospective students have the underlying academic, social, emotional and communication needs to access our curriculum and take part in our wider school community at an appropriate age level.

Admission Overview

The suitability of students for admission is determined by a multidisciplinary approach, as detailed below.

Arco Academy is able to accommodate a variety of needs and provisions through our specialist approach within a mainstream styled school. We cater for students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, autistic spectrum condition, SEMH, social communication difficulties and other associated needs. Arco Academy is appropriate for students with or without EHC Plans, as well as private or Local Authority funded, with each application being considered individually. We follow the National Curriculum and are unable to support students who have severe learning difficulties.

We are also able to support students on short-term placements referred by their home school. Placements are designed to provide targeted support and reintegration opportunities, with ongoing collaboration between our school, the student, and their home school. Placement duration, review arrangements and intended outcomes will be agreed collaboratively between Arco Academy, the home school and other relevant stakeholders before placement begins.

We are firmly committed to inclusivity, high expectations and aspirations for all of our students. Irrespective of their special educational needs or disability, we consider all students for admission to the school who have the ability and aptitude to access the academic curriculum and social environment, and hence to thrive within that. Students whose special educational needs are suited to the curriculum are welcome provided that we have the appropriate resources and facilities to provide them with the support that they require.

The Criteria for Admission is that students would benefit from the education and resources on offer at Arco Academy. We individualise our approach to each student and are able to support students who can access an adapted National Curriculum, including those working below age-related expectations.

There is no main point of entry into Arco Academy. Application for entry is considered depending on availability of places and appropriate suitability of child/young person's needs to school setting. To ensure proper transition for both our new students and prospective students, we aim for entry to the school to be at the start of a school term, although we recognise that this may not be achievable in all situations.

Admissions Criteria

Arco Academy treats every applicant in a fair, open-minded way where decisions are based on whether the school can meet a student's needs safely and effectively, rather than on diagnosis, attainment level or the presence of an Education, Health and Care Plan. Our admissions procedure consists of a number of stages that are set out below:

Local Authority Referral

- Local authorities initiate the referral process, by sending a consultation package to Arco Academy. This will include an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and where available accompanying documents.
- The SENCo may request additional relevant documents from the Local Authority, including, Educational Psychology reports, prior annual reviews, Personalised Education Plans, safeguarding concerns, therapeutic reports, panel reports, and other professional reports.
- Arco Academy will review each student's EHCP as part of the referral process to determine if we can meet their specific needs.
- The SENCo will contact the student's previous school to complete key information forms and assess academic and social needs.

- Once the Admissions Team have assessed provisional suitability, they will contact the family to arrange our Pre-Admissions Assessment.
- This will consist of either an observation in the young person's current educational setting or where appropriate at Arco Academy - we refer to this as a 'taster day'.
- Observations consist of at least one lesson observation, observations of the student during unstructured time and a professional meeting with the team currently working with the young person.
- These observations and meetings will be conducted by either the Principal, Vice Principal or SENCo and members of the Therapy team.
- Following the Pre-Admissions Assessment we will meet and review our internal notes and will discuss whether we are able to offer the young person a place at Arco Academy.
- Admission decisions are based on whether we can meet the student's needs and if there is a suitable place available. The school will share an offer letter with the local authority, giving them fifteen-days to respond to the school's offer.

Self-Funded Referral

- Contact the Admissions Team to discuss possible admission. Parents are requested to offer as much information as possible to enable Arco Academy to best understand a prospective learner's needs. Families are welcome to arrange a tour of the school to take place with the admissions administrator at this time.
- If families would like to pursue a place at Arco Academy we will request them to complete our referral form.
- Should families wish to proceed with an application we will also request all specialist reports and EHCPs where applicable are shared with the school.
- We may request, at this stage, to see reports from the previous school or schools and will contact them for background information where necessary.
- Once the Admissions Team have assessed provisional suitability, they will contact the family to arrange our Pre-Admissions Assessment.
- This will consist of either an observation in the young person's current educational setting or where appropriate at Arco Academy - we refer to this as a 'taster day'.
- Observations consist of at least one lesson observation, observations of the student during unstructured time and a professionals meeting with the team currently working with the young person.
- These observations and meetings will be conducted by either the Principal, Vice Principal, or SENCo and members of the Therapy team.
- Following the Pre-Admissions Assessment we will meet and review our internal notes and will discuss whether we are able to offer the young person a place at Arco Academy.
- Families will be informed of the outcome of the trial via email or phone.
- A formal offer letter will be sent via email, this will include a copy of our Core Provision document and costing information.
- To accept an offered place parents/carers will be required to reply in writing.

Transition into Arco Academy

We recognise that starting a new school can be a significant change for both students and their families. Transition arrangements are therefore tailored to the individual needs of each student and may include additional visits, transition meetings, phased attendance, personalised timetables, and the sharing of relevant information to ensure appropriate support is in place from the outset.

Our aim is to ensure that every student feels safe, supported and prepared to engage positively with school life from their first day.

Ongoing Placement

At Arco Academy, we work closely with our students and their families, and report on progress in a variety of ways throughout the academic year. It is critical that we continually review their progress and ensure that the students are receiving the appropriate support and are progressing within our provision.

Where a student's SEND is identified, or develops, after the student has started at the school, we will continue to support the student as long as:

- a) we have the appropriate resources and facilities to provide them with the support they require, and,
- b) we believe it is in the best interest of the students and of the school community to remain at the school.

Where, in our judgement, either of these conditions no longer apply, we reserve the right to withdraw a student's place at the school. In such circumstances, we will make every effort to support parents in finding alternative arrangements.

Behaviour, Safeguarding and Placement Termination

Arco Academy is committed to providing a safe and caring environment for students, staff and visitors. Students are expected to uphold the Academy's values and behave in a manner that does not place themselves or others at unacceptable risk.

Where the Academy becomes aware of a student's involvement in criminal activity, or activity that presents a significant safeguarding risk, the continuation of the placement will be reviewed. Any decision to terminate a placement will be considered in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding responsibilities, risk assessment processes, relevant statutory guidance, and in consultation with the referring school, Local Authority and parents/carers where appropriate.

If a placement is terminated, the Academy will seek to ensure that relevant safeguarding, educational and transition information is shared with the appropriate agencies so that suitable next steps can be considered.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the board of advisors every year. Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the board of advisors will publicly consult on these changes.

If you have concerns around the process that was followed, please raise this in line with our Complaints Policy.