

Admissions Policy (TOG)

Current version:	V1
Business Area:	Pillar Director
Owner:	Pillar Director
Author:	Shev Pring
Date effective from:	05/08/2024
Date of last review:	05/08/2024
Date of next review:	05/08/2027

Record of changes

Version	Date	Changes
V1	05/08/2024	Published as an 'all-company' policy to cover all pillars

Contents

Introduction	3
Definitions	3
TOS Admissions.....	3
TOS Admissions Criteria	4
Attendance.....	5
Appeals Procedure	5
Legal guidance	5
AOP Admissions Criteria and Process	6
Forest School and Training Admissions	7

Introduction

The Outdoors Group Admissions Policy refers to:

- The Outdoors School (TOS)
- Alternative Outdoor Provision (AOP)
- Forest School and Training (FST)

TOG is an inclusive organisation that strives to allow everyone to access to our provision. The organisation considers the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the rules of natural justice, when implementing the admission policy and procedure. This policy works in conjunction with the following TOG policies:

- [Complaints Policy](#)
- Payment and Cancellation Policy
- [Access to Fair Assessment Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- Attendance Policy

Definitions

Acronym	Definition
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
KS	Key Stage
LA	Local Authority
PAN	Published Admissions Number
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
TAF	Team Around the Family

TOS Admissions

The admission procedures of The Outdoors School fall outside the two 'Codes of Practice' for maintained schools.

The Outdoors School is designated as an Independent Special School with a focus on SEMH and ASD provision. Currently our Published Admissions Number (PAN) is 90 places across the school sites, and these are for KS2, KS3 and KS4 learners.

TOS Admissions Criteria

Admissions to The Outdoors School will be based on referrals from the Local Authority (LA) and subject to the commissioning agreement held between the 0-25 team and The Outdoors Group Ltd as the proprietors of the school.

Parents wishing to request placements with The Outdoors School are welcome to visit the school and where appropriate will be signposted to the LA to make a request for a place. Typically, the LA will commission places for learners who have EHC Plans and/or SEN and who have not been able to cope within a mainstream setting.

Priority will be given to Local Authority referrals when places are agreed, however this does not mean the school will not consider private arrangements with parents.

Priority will be given to learners with EHC Plans, identified SEN or ASD and/or who have presented within the mainstream setting with school phobic tendencies, high anxiety or other SEMH attributes such as behavioural issues.

There is no priority given to school places based on age or ability.

Although all learners will be considered, it is important that The Outdoors School has a clear understanding of the learners needs and abilities prior to a place being accepted. This will require our referral forms to be completed, as well as a review of any relevant paperwork, such as TAF Review paperwork, Risk Assessments SEN Reports and EHC Plans.

It is also important for learners and parents to visit the site to ensure that it is going to be suitable for the learner. The school operates almost exclusively outdoors and often from varied terrain meaning it may not be suitable for all learners if mobility is difficult. For a comprehensive idea of the site conditions and practical steps taken in line with the Equality Act please refer to TOS [Accessibility Plan](#).

Start dates

The Outdoors School operates a termly start date process, where learners who accept a place will be able to start at the school on the first day of any given term.

Process of admission

The process of enrolment is as follows.

1. Learners and parents visit the school (either prior to speaking to their Local Authority or because of speaking to the LA)
2. If learners and parents are happy with the school, they will speak to the LA to let them know they would like to request a place at the school
3. LA will go through the commissioning criteria and agreement regarding allocating funding for a place
4. LA will liaise with TOS to provide all relevant documents
5. The learner will be accepted if funding is agreed and will be provided with a start date ([see start date information](#))

If funding is not agreed, then the parents may enter the appeals process to try and receive funding for the place from the Local Authority.

Attendance

Attendance is critical to successful learning; our attendance criteria and policy are contained within TOG Attendance Policy.

Appeals Procedure

The appeals procedure is contained within the '[Complaints Policy](#)' for The Outdoors Group Ltd and sets out the procedural steps to follow should any complaint or appeal be made against the setting or company.

Legal guidance

If an independent school or college discriminates against a potential learner on the grounds of disability, a complaint can be made by the parent or guardian to the [First Tier Tribunal \(Special Educational Needs and Disability\)](#).

Before making such a complaint, the potential complainant should exhaust any appeals procedure set out in the school's own admissions policy and, preferably, make a formal complaint using the school complaints policy.

If there is a possible breach of rights under the Human Rights Act 1998 or non-compliance with the rules of natural justice, the complainant should seek legal advice as to the possibility of a judicial review in the High Court.

AOP Admissions Criteria and Process

AOP accepts referrals for alternative provision placements from schools and local authorities. The referral form includes:

- Information about personal data,
- Information about current behaviours that the learner's display,
- Safeguarding information, and
- Professional or parental permission to make the referral.

Once this referral is received, it will be reviewed to determine initial suitability of the learner to AOP provision. If the learner is deemed suitable, they will be invited to a site visit to which parents, carers, and professionals are welcomed to attend. Following the site visit, a report will be filled out by an assigned staff member and signed off for a placement to be offered to the referrer if suitable.

Suitability requirements are determined by factors such as:

- Age & level of need,
- Skills set and experience of staff,
- Ability to work with peers and adults,
- Safeguarding and behaviour information provided
- Environmental suitability to learning goals

If a learner is unsuitable for the provision, the referrer will be informed of this and the reasons behind this decision. This is a collaborative process which is open to conversation.

Start Dates and Waiting Lists

Start dates will be issued to the referrer and then the professional, parent or carer once a suitable placement has been agreed. All relevant paperwork must be completed before the learner starts on site.

There is often a waiting list associated with provision which is kept in chronological order; however, placements may be offered out of this chronological order depending on which sites and which staff places become available first.

Forest School and Training Admissions

The learners must be:

- Within the designated age range for the session (as advertised on the session's FAQs or in accordance with the awarding body criteria)
- TOG must be able to meet their needs with confidence.

For regular sessions, learners need to be registered with TOG provision through the designated booking systems and accurate records should be maintained detailing:

1. Learner's age
2. Learner's address
3. Medical information
4. First aid consent
5. Next of kin
6. Any additional requirements or needs
7. Payment information

For group sessions, such as birthday parties and school groups, we would expect the organiser to be responsible for accurate records of attendees.