

Caring for young minds

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

Date Approved by Governors	8 September 2016
Review Date	September 2017
Coordinator	HT
Principal Signature	Stephen Taylor

**At the heart of all policies at The Family School are the following principles:**

- Every young person in our school, whatever his or her personal circumstances can learn and achieve.
- Every young person in our school, whatever his or her self-perception and previous experiences, has academic and creative potential to become a valuable member of society.
- The key to learning at The Family School lies within the quality of the relationships between pupils, family members, staff and the intermediate agencies with whom we work.
- The success of our school is based on high expectations, mutual trust, caring for each other and taking responsibility.
- Every young person in our school is capable of becoming an agent for change in his or her local community.

Our vision is to provide our pupils with the confidence, academic progress, and ambition to take the next steps towards a successful and productive life and to be able to contribute positively within their local community and wider society.

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## Introduction

Our vision is for the Family School to become a centre of high quality and innovative education for children, families and our commissioning schools. The school will predominantly serve the schools and families of inner London. In addition to a high quality curriculum our Alternative Provision will provide evidence-based therapies and psychological interventions, delivered in the classroom as well as in confidential therapy suites, which will support children and young people to become resilient and independent learners, have pride in themselves and succeed in their education. We will provide personalised learning and an appropriate curriculum for children and families working together, an approach that has been shown to be effective.

Pupils and families may be referred to us through many different routes. They will largely be pupils who are psychologically vulnerable and who are having problems managing successfully in mainstream school settings. Some of these difficulties may present themselves as behavioural issues although they may also manifest themselves in a number of other behaviours that slow down their progression in school. Our pupils will be between the ages five and fourteen and placements will sometimes be full-time and some part-time. The primary aim of The Family School is to provide early intervention for schools and pupils and help re-engage children with their learning in a mainstream setting. Due to this the majority of placements at The Family School will be short-term and many pupils will be dual registered with their mainstream school so that they continue to receive the very best educational input alongside the expert support provided by their placement with us. All pupils and their families will participate in regular reviews of their progress so that a return to mainstream school remains the focus. Full-time or longer term placements will be available where it is clear that an early return to mainstream school would not be appropriate but remains the desired outcome.

A central feature of our programme will be that children will remain pupils in a school context that is non-stigmatising. Treatments, whether individual, family or multi-family in nature will, for the most part, be delivered either in the Family School itself or in the mainstream school. As a result, the focus will remain on learning, and ensuring that each pupil makes measurable progress.

Pupils will be referred to The Family School at various times of the school year usually when there is a behavioural crisis in their mainstream school and exclusion, including permanent exclusion, is likely. There will be three main entry points during the school year which will coincide with the beginning of the school term in September, January and April. For pre-commissioned places there will be access to places as they become available. We will respond to requests for places as quickly as possible so we can offer the most effective support to pupils and their families. Schools should contact the SENCO/Inclusion Manager or Principal in the first instance. The process is described below. The Family School does not accept applications from parents/carers or self-referrals from potential pupils.

Any questions regarding our referral procedures should be directed to the Principal, Stephen Taylor at [head@thefamilyschoollondon.org](mailto:head@thefamilyschoollondon.org)

## Pupil Admission Number

The Family School is an Alternative Provision Free School with students from 5-14.

The Family School has a published pupil admission number of 48 full-time equivalent (FTE) places. Pupil numbers will increase over time from 2013 – 2017 as set out below.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Admission Numbers FTE	12	24	36 *	48

Pupils will not be admitted above the published admission number unless there are exceptional circumstances.

At full capacity, The Family School will support a maximum of 48 pupils, aged 5-14 years, at any one time.

\* Please note that our intended intake of 36 may not be possible at our current temporary site.

## Related Documents

- DfE Equality Guidance & Equality Act 2010
- School Admissions Code 2014
- SEND Green Paper: *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability*
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations

## Admission and referrals

We anticipate that some schools, as well as LAs, will commission places in advance, on an annual basis, in anticipation of having students within their own school community who will benefit from our provision. They may not know who these students are at the time of commissioning but they want the assurance that when the need arises they will be able to meet the complex needs of their students and families.

### 1. Pre commissioned and partnership referrals

These referrals take the form of annually reviewed Service Level Agreements and allow individual schools and academies to secure a place / places at TFS. The contract agreements usually run from September to July but students can be referred throughout the year. Usually student start dates will correspond with the start of a half term.

#### Local Authorities

When the commissioner is a local authority, it will be purchasing places at The Family School on behalf of schools under its control. The contract agreement will be negotiated and drawn up for The Family School to provide a number of places under an agreed Outline Service Specification. The Specification will set out the obligations of The Family School, the commissioning authority and the child's host school so that all parties are clear about:

what will be delivered; how; when; at what price; the responsibilities of the parties to the agreement to maintain the highest level of support to the child; and what monitoring arrangements will be agreed to review the contract performance. The Family School will seek and welcome contractual arrangements with key local authorities proximal to the school. The contract monitoring review process will be on a six weekly basis in agreement with the commissioner. The Family School will collate demographic and outcome data gathered in relation to the pupils' needs, attendance, academic performance and behavioural presentation in the school. This will be reviewed jointly with the local authority commissioner on an agreed schedule.

### Schools and Academies

The Family School will also provide similar contracting procedures for individual schools and academies

## **2. Reactive Referrals**

We anticipate that some schools / commissioners will contact our school as and when they require a place for a particular student. Given the level of expected demand it is likely that our admission number will be reached through pre commissioned places as above but where places are available referrals will be taken on a first come first served basis and in line with the waiting list procedure, below.

### Suitability of Referrals

Alternatively schools can commission places in an ad hoc way. Commissioners and The Family School will work closely to ensure the best outcomes for individual pupils. Transition arrangements are designed to encourage incoming pupils to settle quickly and confidently into their new environment and to ensure their needs are identified and comprehensively met from the outset. Potential new commissioners will be advised of the suitability of The Family School provision via marketing and information dissemination on the school's website.

The referral pathway to The Family School is thorough and responsive to pupil need. The process starts with discussions with the individual commissioner, and moves on to discussions with parent/carers; with parents and child; with visits to the school; baseline testing and assessment; right through to the drawing up of a detailed Personalised Care and Learning Plan (PCLP) which sets out targets for change and academic progress. Monitoring against these targets is ongoing.

The severity and nature of the child's difficulty will determine the duration of provision offered. Some children will require intensive full-time provision over many weeks before commencing a supported and gradual reintegration programme into mainstream school. Others, particularly those requiring early intervention, may benefit from part-time provision whilst still attending their mainstream school. Regardless of the type of provision agreed it is essential that appropriate staff from the referring school maintain regular contact with the child and family. This will form an obligation under the contract with the school. The ultimate goal of a referral to The Family School is to work towards a successful reintegration into mainstream school. On-going interaction between the child and an identified member of staff from the school is crucial to this. Progress will be reported to schools and parents/carers on a weekly basis and regular reviews will take place to assess readiness for

reintegration. Once a pupil is deemed ready for reintegration into their school a 'Reintegration Plan' will be written up and implemented.

## **Pupils with Special needs**

Following the admissions code and SEN Code of conduct pupils with statements of special needs and learning disabilities will be fully included. Programmes will be differentiated to meet the needs of these pupils. Where pupils with a statement or EHC Plan are eligible for a full-time placement they are given priority over all other pupils.

## **Commissioning and Registration**

The majority of pupils will be referred directly to The Family School by other schools and academies and will be dual registered, that is registered at both the Family School and their home school.

Steps in the admission process are summarised in the table below (numbers in brackets).

Applicants must be referred by a school, Academy or local authority. The Family School's Principal has overall responsibility for the referral process with the day-to-day management delegated to the SENCO/Inclusion Manager. The Family School's pupil referral form will be completed at this stage (1).

The Family School staff consider the application in consultation with a range of agencies and, as appropriate, the Anna Freud Outreach Team if the child is already receiving support (2).

Once the referrer makes contact with The Family School, the Principal will arrange for a discussion with the prospective pupil and their parents, carers or another significant family member(3), an appropriate commissioning representative, and the Anna Freud Schools Service Mental Health Director. The Family School will agree the funding for the placement with the referrer (3) and a formal contract outlining the responsibilities of all parties for the ongoing care of the child will be drawn up.

On entry to the Family School the pupil will be placed on a five day initial assessment programme and baseline testing in numeracy/literacy. A profile of the pupil will be created during the assessment (4).

After the five day initial assessment the Principal presents the commissioner and parent/carer with details of the pupil profile and a recommendation for next steps. In most cases, the pupil then starts a full programme of study and care tailored to suit the pupil's individual learning and mental health needs (5).

The Personalised Care and Learning Programme (PCLP) will set out The Family School curriculum and supported access to the referring school's timetabled lessons. PCLPs are subject to on-going review. In exceptional circumstances, where the placement is deemed not in the best interests of the young person and/or other pupils and is a dual registered place, a pupil's place may be withdrawn.

The views and wishes of young people and their families are an integral part of the referral process.

## **Summary of the registration process**

<b>Step</b>	<b>Staff, Pupil and Family</b>	<b>Process</b>
1.	Referring school professional School Clinician, Commissioner	Discuss referral Gather pre-entry information Secure funding agreement Complete referral form
2.	Family School Principal / SENCo Family School Business Manager Anna Freud Schools Service Mental Health Director	Discussion at weekly case and intake meeting. Plan for initial engagement with the pupil and their parent(s) or carers.
3	Referring school professional Family School Principal/SENCo School Clinician Parent Graduate Anna Freud Schools Service Mental Health Director Commissioner Family School Business Manager Pupil Parent(s) or Carers	Invite pupil and parent(s) /carers to introductory meeting and to view the school, meeting staff and pupils  Sign SLA or Funding Agreement
4.	Family School Staff Family School SENCo Pupil Parent(s) or Carers	Five day assessment period
5.	Family School Staff  Pupil  Parent(s) and Carers	Full placement commences

## **Oversubscription / Waiting list**

Referrals will be taken on a first come first served basis up to our admission number

The Family School London will maintain a waiting list of student referrals. To be placed on the waiting list a conversation takes place with the commissioning school / LA to agree suitability of placement, in line with our admissions process above.

Students will be admitted from the waiting list in order of:

- Looked After Children & Previously Looked after Children
- Students with a statement of SEN
- In chronological order from the date of referral

## **Definitions**

### Looked After Child & Previously Looked After Child

A Looked After Child is a child who is (a) in the care of a Local Authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their Social Services functions (under section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). A previously Looked After Child is one who immediately moved on from that status after becoming subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order.

### **Objections**

As all types of referral involve case by case scrutiny, consultation and discretion from The Family School's Principal and SENCO/ Inclusion Manager, the offer (or not) of a place will usually be through mutual agreement during the referral process. However, in exceptional cases where agreement cannot be reached, the commissioner should write to the Principal outlining reasons supporting the referral and any supporting documentation. The Principal will consider this and reply within 15 days, stating the Family School's position. If a place is not granted after that process, the commissioner may make a final appeal and request a review from the governing body. A final appeal should be put in writing to the Chair of Governors. Cases will then be heard by at least 3 Governors (including the Chair) within 28 days of the final appeal being received and final outcomes notified within 5 working days of the hearing. Further objections will be referred to an independent panel.

In cases of SEN referrals where The Family School is named as the preferred school, the statutory processes set out in Annex C of the Funding Agreement will be adhered to.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Principal will report the effectiveness of all policies as a regular feature of the termly updates to governors. It is expected that governors will challenge the school to ensure policies are relevant, up to date and implemented appropriately and consistently. This reporting will be informed through monitoring and evaluation on a regular basis by the Senior and/or Extended Leadership Team. Views of stakeholders will also be sought through on-going consultation events, questionnaires, team meetings, training and informal discussion. The review of policies will be embedded within the school's self-evaluation process and will be related to the strategic development plans of The Family School. The review cycle will ensure that every policy is checked at least once in a 2 year period.

The effective monitoring of policies will involve each member of the Senior Leadership Team being allocated specific responsibility for reporting back the monitoring, evaluation and review of certain policies.