

# ADMISSIONS & ASSESSMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES

Company Operations

ADO Services C.I.C.

Incorporating ADO River Valley

Version 2.6 ©2024

2023-2026

Last Ratification By Management Committee	March 2024
Next Review By Management Committee	March 2026
Latest Update	March 2024

## 1. Policy and Procedure Overview

To ensure a smooth, efficient process when dealing with children and young people (CYP) through the admissions and assessments to confirm places into ADO River Valley, this document addresses the key processes at each stage.

## 2. Admissions Process

Although our school is for Year 10-Year 14 (ages 14-19) we do reserve the right to support early transitions of students who are outside of our year groups, as per the **Ashton Checklist** and the **School Admissions Code (2014)**. For more information on this, see section 4 of this policy.

### Step One

The first step within this process is the receipt of a referral form or formal consultation, completed by multi agency organisations such as the current School, Local Authority, Fair Access Panel or CAMHS.

Documents must be attached including an up-to-date EHC Plan, attendance, relevant therapeutic intervention reports or previous educational provision reports/ assessments that will be relevant for review and planning of the child or young person's (CYP) learning programme and assessments with us.

The information requested within the referral form covers the following areas:

When a potential student is referred to us, we ensure that the relevant professional completes a Referral Form/ Consultation. Within the referral form we request information which includes previous educational reports, attendance reports, and specific questions relating to the individual students interests and attainment. All of this information combined enables us to form our own baseline assessments on the individual students and provides us with more information to determine if we can offer an assessment, and if so which (if any) access arrangements will we need to have in place to accommodate this.

### Step Two

An ADO River Valley representative will make contact with the referrer to discuss the requirements. If ADO River Valley staff require a short call after reviewing the paperwork, they will organise this directly with the individual caregiver, or referrer.

### Step Three

An initial site assessment visit will be arranged for the applicant, parents - carers and/or stakeholders as deemed appropriate. This is known as the Practical Assessment. The practical assessment is a two-day process, and it is a fact-finding experience for all stakeholders. It also allows ADO River Valley to conduct our risk assessments with the individual in mind. Within the first two hours of the first practical assessment day, ADO River Valley staff will ask questions relating to the potential student and relevant caregiver

(maximum two adults) whilst providing a thorough tour and explanation. In the first two hours, we cover off what is included within the two practical assessment days, especially relating to exposure of the wide range of lessons we teach, and day to day life at the school. Applicants must have the cognitive ability to keep themselves and those around them safe, and be prepared to follow our **Behaviour for Learning Policy**. We try to expose the potential student to our robust curriculum as much as possible, because we are so bespoke it is important to determine the right pathway for that individual if they were to start with us. Relevant adults leave the young person with us from 11am for the rest of the school day, and on the second day the individual attends independently. Within the first two hours of the first day ADO River Valley staff will talk to all stakeholders about the assessment processes of the in relation to assessments and baselining as per our **Curriculum Policy**.

### Step Four

The Senior Leadership team will discuss and review the existing assessment information.

### Step Five

Dependent on the presentation of the individual, we reserve the right to request more assessment days to ensure our setting is suitable, however in most cases we will have considered all of the information and provided our assessment feedback form to the professionals by the end of the assessment week.

### Step Six

If ADO River Valley feel they can meet the applicant's needs, a place will be offered subject to availability. If ADO River Valley do not feel that they can meet the applicants needs, the option of discussing options within our separate therapy company which can be a suitable setting for students who are unable to manage a full-time education setting. ADO River Valley as standard have to carry out the above process in order to make their decision on each individual consultation.

## 3. Our Assessment Process

We are student centred and the views and wishes of each student play a central role in the admissions process.

Through our referral and assessment process, the school can obtain information to understand the needs of the CYP. In conjunction with the family and professionals that have worked with the CYP to date, we would then prepare their individual programme applicable to the school's curriculum. This information enables our staff team to prepare a baseline to effectively track and measure achievement, progress and development.

Regular Formative and Holistic Assessments are conducted with students work to establish levels of attainment and also for future planning. Summative assessments are conducted at the end of each term and or school year dependent on the course layout. Due to the nature of our students, we do not benchmark against mainstream provisions as otherwise progress would always be limited and not show the 'True Progress' a student is making. We provide

bespoke tracking for each individual student, setting 'Next Steps' in line with SMART Targets.

We set our students targets and then carefully monitor the progress of each individual throughout the school year, intervening if we observe a potential difficulty.

Staff have regular meetings and discussions about student progress/updates and difficulties.

Student reports are sent out at a minimum of twice within the school year, for parents/ caregivers and professionals to read and review. We focus heavily on what students have achieved, with developmental advisories throughout. This approach promotes positive self-worth for our students, helping them to have a sense of pride when reviewing their reports and motivating them to try harder when required. We have bespoke tracking systems in place to highlight student progress however small.

Regular twice-yearly meetings are held for parents to discuss their students' progress, although parents are welcome to make an appointment to see relevant ADO River Valley staff if and when required.

#### **4. Education of students outside of our normal age groups**

Although DfE guidance states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group, with the curriculum differentiated as appropriate, and that they should only be educated out of their normal age group in very limited circumstances." That said, The School Admissions Code (2014) states the following with regards to 'admission of children outside of their normal age group.'

*"Admission authorities must make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned".*

With the above in mind, when we are advised that a stakeholder would like us to consider a young person who is younger than our minimum entry age joining our school, we will review such requests on a case-by-case basis. This will include taking account of the caregivers/ young persons' views; information about the individual academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group, and lastly the feedback of the current school of which the individual is on roll.

To support us with making such decisions to consider whether a young person should be educated outside of their normal age group, we utilise the 'Ashton Checklist'. The Ashton checklist was developed by Rebecca Ashton and Colleagues in Blackburn and is being increasingly used by other Local Authorities when considering placement outside a child's chronological year group.

We feel it is ethical to enable assessed entry to suitable young people who are turning 14 years old in the first half term/term of other students who are starting year 10. Those who are turning 14 shortly after the academic year starts (oldest in their year group), are disadvantaged due to currently having to wait for another academic year before they can start at ADO River Valley and often these individuals are out of education. In cases where it

is felt that a young person could benefit and succeed from attending our school early, we will follow the same assessment process and reserve the right to enrol them into ADO River Valley.

## 5. Use of Alternative Provisions

As an Independent Special School for students who have Social, Emotional, Mental Health issues, and being based within 6.4 acres of woodland surrounded by animals and nature, ADO River Valley do not currently utilise any external Alternative Provisions for students who are on roll with us. This is not to say we would not do this in the future, we would consider all requests or scenarios on a case-by-case basis. We do however, utilise ADO Therapy our sister company when required.

In some instances, a young person may be referred to us and the stakeholders around them may feel that they will need an extended transition process to ensure a placement at ADO River Valley is successful. To ensure that placements are successful, we do offer a staggered timetable to increase from three days, to five days, or shorter days to full days within the 8-12 weeks. When this is needed, students are required to engage in hybrid learning and submitting work from home. Some students we assess may have been out of education for a prolonged period of time, that even the proposal of three days study is too much. Whilst our school is unable to offer part-time timetables, we do have a separate sister company named ADO Therapy which is situated on the same site, on the opposite side of the school. ADO Therapy are able to offer two services which can provide pathways into our school at a later date. These services are:

- The Re-engagement Model
- The Therapy Day Service Model

Both of the above models can act as stepping stones to help young people to build the social, coping and resilience skills to potentially attend ADO River Valley school (subject to having over 70% attendance as a minimum, and being within the correct age range for the school).

ADO Therapy may also be used for a student on roll at our school, to access specialist support as required on a case-by-case basis.

In other instances, ADO River Valley students are able to access ADO Therapy too. Examples of when this happens is usually if a person is experiencing a mental health crisis and needs targeted support, or if they reach the age limit of the school and yet still need input from our site (ie if a student needs to leave as they are 19, they can enrol at ADO Therapy up until the age of 25, pending funding approval). ADO Therapy provided us with a **Letter of Assurance** which can be found as an appendix at the end of this policy.

ADO Therapy staff follow the same safer recruitment process as ADO River Valley staff, they adhere to the same policies and procedures, and lastly, they are familiar faces to the students providing them with a sense of safety.

ADO Therapy staff can act as agency support for absence management for our school, to minimise impact on our students. In order to do this, ADO Therapy provided a Letter of Assurance and as mentioned, follow all the same processes as the school.

## 6. Reference Documents and Guidelines

*[The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations, 2014\)](#)*

*[School admissions code - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)*

*[Guidance for schools: Education of children outside of their normal age group | Ealing Grid for Learning \(egfl.org.uk\)](#)*

*[Ashton checklist when considering to place children outside their normal year group.docx \(live.com\)](#)*

## 7. Review

All ADO River Valley policies and procedures follow ITIL guidelines to ensure version control, change control and release management of any documents. As a matter of policy, documents can be updated at any time to reflect changes to ADO River Valley procedures, legal changes, OFSTED directives or any other reason to ensure the policies and procedures are accurate and correct. This involves consultation with stakeholders, management Committee and approval from the directors. All policies and procedures are reviewed at the very least on an annual basis. Regular communication through newsletters, social media, text systems and through our website within the ADO River Valley Applicants must have the cognitive ability to keep themselves and those around them safe. Library is part of our Release Management.

## 7. Contact

This document was produced by the ADO River Valley Operations team. This version supersedes any previous versions and will be reviewed annually.

All correspondence with regard to this policy, or any other operational policy and procedure should be directed to the ADO River Valley by e-mailing [education@adorivervalley.co.uk](mailto:education@adorivervalley.co.uk) or calling 0208 855 6778, requesting to speak to the School Business Manager or in writing c/o School Business Manager, ADO River Valley School, 126 Upper Wickham Lane, Welling, Kent, DA16 3DP.

**Letter of Assurance Appendix on Next Page**



1<sup>st</sup> May 2024

To: ADO River Valley

**Re: Safer Recruitment Compliance Letter of Assurance**

I confirm that ADO Therapy complies fully with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice and Safer recruitment requirements along with your additional expectations which include the following:

- Right to work in the UK check;
- Identity check;
- Employment reference - to include minimum 2 employer references covering the last 2 years and including the most recent or current employer and the most recent school-based employer where applicable;
- Proof of certifications for qualifications;
- Satisfactory enhanced DBS check;
- Barred list check (where applicable);
- Prohibition checks for teaching staff;
- S128 check for management positions, where applicable;
- Further checks on individuals who have lived or worked abroad (certificate of good conduct);
- Online checks (Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023: *"In addition, as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview"*)

**Disclosure and Barring Service**

Staff have Enhanced DBS clearances which cover the following areas:

- any police records of convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings
- information from the list held under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002

*ADO Therapy, 19A Keats Road, Welling, Kent, DA163NB*



- Children's Barred List Information – this would show if an applicant is Barred from working with children
- any other relevant information disclosed at the Chief Police Officer(s) discretion. Under this section would be noted "soft information". This could be details of a household member (other than the applicant) who may have a record that would contain information that an employer would need to be aware of. An example of this may be a household member who has drug activity.

We strictly adhere to our policy and procedures on vetting of employees, which ensures that all people working with your students are appropriately vetted. To access our policies and procedures please see [www.adotherapy.co.uk](http://www.adotherapy.co.uk)

In addition, the following information can all be found on our **Single Central Record**:

- Identification
- DBS number and date of issue; and
- Confirmation of line manager at the supply (agency), contractor or education provider

All members of staff representing this organisation will wear an ID badge, which clearly shows identity and role. They will also be asked to sign a Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2023) Part 1 declaration upon arrival on site. All individuals must have suitable safeguarding and PREVENT training along with adhering to our policies and procedures. We understand that our staff would not be able to commence work until the aforementioned requirements are met.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Williams-Keeper', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Laura Williams-Keeper  
Business Manager

*ADO Therapy, 19A Keats Road, Welling, Kent, DA163NB*