



Castle School

Admissions Policy 2021 - 2022

Policy Preface

Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is a Christian learning environment at the heart of its communities. We promote care and respect, and expect high standards in all aspects of our Trust life.

As a Church of England Academy Trust, we aim to build communities clearly based on the Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, integrity and the unique value of each individual. We aim to build self-esteem, model conflict resolution, protect the weak and are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central within the Academy Trust.

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

Lead Person:	Principal
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Latest edits (please give brief overview)	
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Approved by:	LGB – Awaiting Formal Approval
Statutory Requirement:	Yes



Admissions Policy 2021-22

Castle School is a specialist provision for children and young people aged 2-19 years with a wide range of special educational needs (SEN), including those with learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties (SLD), sensory impairments, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD). All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The school's catchment area is primarily South East Northumberland, however, occasionally Northumberland Local Authority do request places for pupils from outside the area.

Parents/carers are welcome to contact the school to arrange a visit and talk with a member of the Senior Leadership Team about the provision available at the School.

New admissions to our school will usually have an Education Health Care Plan in place prior to admission. Northumberland County Council commission places for Castle School parents/carers interested in a place for their child should consult with the SEN Section at County Hall, Morpeth to request a place.

The Local Authority is responsible for writing the Education, Health and Care Plan and retains responsibility for deciding whether to name Castle school as the pupil's school, based on the individual needs of the child and any representations made by parents. The Local Authority is required to consult with Castle School prior to naming the school in a child's Plan.

Northumberland County Council has commissioned 102 places at Castle School for the 2021 – 2022 school year. (In 2020 – 21, there were 95 commissioned places)

The majority of pupils join the school during the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) but we also admit pupils into other age phases.

Once a pupil has been allocated a place, we will discuss with parents/carers a transition programme to make the transfer to Castle School as smooth as possible.

Admission is always to Castle School as a whole, not to an individual classroom or provision. Allocation to specific provision is decided on an individual basis by senior school staff, in consultation with parents. Teaching and learning strategies for pupils will be decided by Castle School, in consultation with parents and other professionals.

The school will not agree to admission where admitting the child would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for other children and no reasonable steps can be made to secure compatibility. This will apply in individual circumstances, following an assessment by the school of the potential impact of admission, and it will apply where our agreed and preferred maximum number of students in any one class is exceeded. Those maximum numbers will change depending on the needs of the current population.

Maximum Numbers

The School has 102 commissioned places for pupils in 2021-22; the number of places that the School has available may be greater than this depending on the specific needs of the pupil population at any one time or the resources awarded to it by the Local Authority.

Decisions regarding final place numbers rests with the NCEA Trust Board who delegate this process to the Chair of the LGB/CEO/Castle Principal. Any decision to take pupils additional to the number of commissioned places when requested by the Local Authority will only be made when it is agreed that the school has the capacity to do so while maintaining the health and safety of the quality of education for all pupils.

Admissions Process

Prior to a placement being confirmed, parents/carers are encouraged to make an informal visit to the school. It is intended to provide the parents/carers with the necessary information required to make an informed choice regarding their child's placement.

- Parents/carers may visit the school with or without their child and are given a tour of the school and the opportunity to discuss their child's needs with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. They may be accompanied by a key professional or a friend.
- Parents/carers may wish to indicate to their child's current school staff their views of Castle School as a suitable placement. The Local Authority needs to be informed also, usually through the Annual Review process.
- Pupil papers are sent to the education department from the child's current placement for a decision/view on a referral to Castle School.
- After consideration of the papers in consultation with appropriate staff Castle School agree the place is appropriate and confirm place to the Local Authority or notify them that they feel unable to meet the pupil's needs with clear reasons for this action or say yes 'in principle' but state that a place is currently unavailable at that time.

Once Castle School has been named in an EHC Plan, Castle School must admit the child or young person. An admission date will be given and a transition process, appropriate to the needs of the child or young person (as applicable), will commence. In-year admission transition arrangements are made with the family or carers as appropriate. Transition may include representation on behalf of Castle School at the child or young person's annual review meeting, visits to their current school and visits to Castle School.

Admissions Appeal Procedure

If you have a child or young person with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) you may need to know about the SEND tribunal process. This is part of a process that can help to resolve disagreements including decisions by the local authority not to carry out a statutory assessment of your child, not to issue an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan, what's in the plan, a proposal to stop the plan, or the named school identified in the plan. Further information on the mediation and tribunal process can be found here: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Northumberland-Local-Offer-SEND-0-to-25-years/Education-Schools.aspx#righttoappealandtribunal>