

Admissions, Remissions and Exclusions Policy –

NAS Schools

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Purpose

- To ensure there are planned and robust systems in place to support an efficient and consistent approach to referrals, admissions, remissions and exclusions.
- To ensure initial assessments are conducted consistently and in a manner that will ensure needs can be effectively met through the curriculum

Scope

Applies to all NAS schools and services.

Policy Summary

Each management system included in this policy forms part of a systematic and planned approach to ensure each pupil is treated appropriately in all aspects of their placement and in a manner consistent with the individual's contract/statement of terms and conditions.

The following sections of this policy document set out broad statements and procedures for each element covered within this policy.

1. Referrals

Plans must be in place to allow the NAS to discharge its obligations towards those clients and authorities having responsibility for placements, in accordance with the contract or other documentation.

Referrals will be accepted from pupils who have an autistic spectrum diagnosis identified on their education, health and care plan (EHCP) or a Scottish Child's Plan/additional support needs (referred to as EHCP throughout). This need must be recognised through appropriate funding through the relevant statutory authority. The school must be satisfied that the parents are supportive of the placement. The pupils needs will be assessed and the school will determine whether they can be accommodated within the school's current resources.

Referral – Procedure

1. All referrals should be made directly to the school. We accept referrals from Local Authorities (LA) only.
2. All referrals are logged on the school's system
3. Referral papers will be scrutinized by members of the school's team with delegated responsibility
4. An assessment will be made to include consideration of the following:
 - Can we offer a compatible peer group?
 - Can we meet complex behavioural and learning needs?
 - Can we provide an appropriate curriculum and learning environment?
 - Is there a suitable vacancy in the school and class?
5. Parents are encouraged to visit the school. If they wish to continue with the process, they should contact the relevant Local Authority and request that admission procedures are initiated. Parents will also be given a copy of the schools prospectus and guide to admissions leaflet.
6. The Local Authority (except in the case of tribunals) will send information about the pupil to the school. At least two members of the schools admissions panel will read the pupil's papers and determine whether given the current information it is likely that the pupil's needs could be met by the school.
7. Schools may decide to consult internally prior to admission.

8. The NAS cannot undertake assessments at the request of parents/carers.
9. The National Autistic Society reserves the right to recoup reasonable costs incurred for travel and assessment.
10. All decisions relating to the proposed placement of any individual are confidential. There will be open communication with relatives, carers and advocates, which acknowledges and respects the needs of each user.
11. Schools must inform Business Services, Bristol Office of vacancies each week. Head of Contracts/Customer Care monitor vacancies.

2. Admissions

Admission processes will be planned and agreed with parents/carers to ensure all needs and expectations can be met.

Whilst parents are welcome to visit the school and can be provided with information about the school, the school cannot proceed to the admissions stage without local authority support.

All pupils must have an EHCP. The EHCP must contain a diagnosis of autism or autism related condition.

Criteria for admission:

- Compatibility with peer group
- Compatibility with curriculum and learning environment

Admission will not be detrimental to the needs of pupils already on the school's roll. It is essential that admissions are properly planned and allow for smooth transition from their previous educational establishment or provision.

Admissions - Day and Residential Procedure

1. We are able to give parents information regarding our assessment and admission process on enquiry. We encourage parents to engage in a dialogue with their Local Authority and to make a joint application.
2. **Note:** the school will take referrals and organise admissions assessments at any point in an academic year. Intake is not restricted to September only. If during the referral stage the school assesses (based on reading the pupil's papers and any pre-admissions information sought) that it may be able to meet the pupil's needs and has a suitable vacancy then the school's admissions panel will in most cases be able to make a decision over the following few days. Members of the panel may also undertake an assessment visit to the school or home.
3. The decision will be made in line with the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and in view of the following questions:
 - a. Special Educational Needs – can the school meet the pupil's needs?
 - b. Resources – would the placement be an inefficient use of resources?

- c. Current pupils – would the placement be compatible with the efficient education of the other young people with whom the pupil will be educated? Has the impact and well-being of pupils in the new pupil's peer group been evaluated and determined as concordant?

The school must also be satisfied that the parents / carers of the pupil are supportive of the placement.

4. If the school believes they can meet the needs of the pupil they will contact the local authority and parent to offer a place. Then the LA and/or parent/carer will be notified in writing of the outcome of the assessment within 10 working days of completion of the assessment process.
NB: The process is deemed complete when all information has been gathered.
5. If the school is able to meet the pupil's special educational needs, an offer of a place, a start date and the proposed fee will be suggested to the LA. When the LA confirms that the offer of a place is going to be taken up, the school will send contracts to the LA.
6. After this, the school will send out an admissions pack, which will include information about the school for both parents and pupil and detailed pre admission questionnaires. The admission pack will include procedures for introducing the pupil to school, staff and other pupils, daily routines and expectations. This will all be in a suitable format for the pupil and personal guidance and support will be provided as appropriate. The parents / carers and if appropriate the pupil will be invited to an admission interview.
7. The admissions interview will typically consist of:
Two members of the senior leadership team meeting with parents / carers to obtain up to date information, including but not exclusive to the following areas:
 - Previous placement experiences / previous provision perceptions
 - Communication needs
 - Behaviours and attitudes of the pupil
 - Academic ability based on previous provision's assessment and our own if deemed useful by the school
 - Life skills / self-help skills
 - Religious and cultural needs
 - Parents' aspirations for the future / what they want the school to do
8. The parent or LA is responsible for making transport arrangements with the parents and will inform the school accordingly.
9. Transition plans will be made with the LA, the current school placement and the parent/carer.
10. Prior to admission the Principal will ensure that the following information has been collected:

- a) Communication Profile and / or previous communication reports,

- b) Whether the pupil is looked after and if so the name of the contact person and key personnel in the placing authority.
- c) Name and contact details of the pupil's parents or guardians,
- d) EHCP
- e) Current care, health, educational plans or relevant personal needs if available,
- f) Details of any matter which makes the pupil particularly vulnerable or a danger to others.

10. Where parents are considering complementary or supplementary treatments this must be discussed with the Principal. (See the NAS Supplementary Treatments Guidance policy – SO-0175.)

11. A baseline assessment will commence as soon as a pupil starts school. This baseline should add to the pre-admissions documentation that our school receives from the pupils' predecessor placement (where applicable).

(see appendix 1)

Emergency admissions

These are extremely rare and should only take place with the permission of the Director of Education. A review meeting is initiated as soon as possible (and never longer than four weeks) after any emergency admission to consider whether the placement is appropriate.

Admissions Panel – Schools

Following an assessment of a young person who would like a placement at one of the NAS Schools or children's services, the Principal or Registered manager can seek advice and support from the panel if it is felt there is a significant risk, or if advice is required from the panel or by others within the NAS who hold the expertise.

(see appendix 2)

The panel for NAS Schools and Children's Services is made up of:

- Director / Deputy Director of Education
- Nominated Individual (Chair)
- The lead assessor of the individual
- Expert guest (area manager/principal/other within the NAS who has expert knowledge around the areas of risk presented)

NB - The chair of the panel reserves the right to ask additional experts or NAS managers onto a panel at any time to support the process of admissions.

A panel review of a placement will be held after 8 weeks to ensure that risks have been met.

Residential Placements

The following are additional points of procedure for residential placements only:

1. Pupils are encouraged to bring favourite and cherished possessions when they move into the home. A list of items will be made and updated with every home visit. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of bringing items of high value. Any item brought into the home will be subject to the approval of the Principal/designated deputy to ensure compliance to health and safety regulations and the safety of all pupils.
2. Pupils will be given appropriate assistance in settling, and information about bedroom policy and daily schedule will be provided in a suitable format.
3. Pets are only allowed by rare exception and solely at the Principal's discretion, subject to risk assessment.

3. Baseline Assessment

Individual needs will be measured through baseline assessment prior to support being offered. In all NAS schools, the baseline assessment period runs from the date of admission to the end of month six. Our admissions assessment is the process by which we decide whether to admit a pupil/young person or not.

Baseline Assessment - Procedure

Baseline assessment will be undertaken on all pupils new to NAS schools. The intention is to provide data on attainments and abilities so that future progress can be ascertained.

1. Baseline Assessment should, for the majority of pupils, cover the following areas:
 - a. **Cognitive ability** assessed by qualified educational or clinical psychologists using standardised assessments and observations.
 - b. **Communication skills** assessed by qualified specialist speech and language therapists
 - c. **Social skills and independence** assessed by psychologists, education and care staff using standardized tests and observation
 - d. **Educational attainments** assessed by teaching and psychology staff using school assessments.
 - e. **Sensory sensitivities** assessed by specialist Occupational therapist, education and care staff.
 - f. **Behaviour** assessed by all relevant staff including the transdisciplinary team.

Parents and carers will be invited to contribute to any baseline assessment meetings as partners to agree and discuss the assessments and plans as appropriate.

Copies of the reports that form the baseline assessment will be given to parents and carers and will present the information in a format that is understandable. This will be in the form of a baseline report, which will be shared at a baseline review meeting. Professionals of outside bodies who have a professional interest in the pupil's wellbeing and education will be invited to the meeting and / or provided with a copy of the report.

The baseline review meeting will review all information collected and planned programmes. It will also review the suitability of the provision for the coming year, staffing levels and whether the statement is appropriate and being met.

The Baseline Assessment will normally be completed within 3 months of the pupil commencing / attending an NAS school.

At the end of the assessment period, any change in fee or service provision will be notified to the Purchaser in writing.

Following the baseline assessment. All pupils undergo annual reviews as laid down by the SEN Code of Practice and Transition Review meetings from year 10 or through negotiation with the Purchaser at the most appropriate time in special circumstances.

All records will comply with the Data Protection Policy and Record Retention Policy.

4. Remissions

1. In principle, we seek to avoid scenarios where a placement breaks down resulting in a pupil no longer attending our provision.
2. Should parents or the funding authority wish to remove a pupil, the requisite termination notice will be in line with individual contractual agreements.
3. If this notice is not given, the funding authority will be liable for paying fees for the appropriate notice period.
4. If the pupil does not appear to be benefiting from attendance at the school, and all strategies have been tried, the school will give the funding authority the appropriate notice as agreed in the individual contractual agreement.
5. The Principal is entitled to exclude a pupil from the school if there is a risk of the pupil endangering him/herself or other pupils or members of staff and, in some cases, property in line with the Exclusion section of this policy.

Additional Support

Where a pupil has a clearly identified need that cannot be adequately met by the current agreed level of support, an enhancement to provide the individual care needed should be sought, subject to agreement from the funding authority. Should the pupil's needs improve, a corresponding reduction in the enhancement should be similarly considered.

(see appendix 3)

Recording and documentation process

Prior to any additional support being requested from the placing authority, the existing level of support for the pupil needs to be specified. This will include the *base staff to person we support ratio* and the programme of support/activities already agreed. This should be discussed, reviewed and documented at each annual review and Transition Review meetings from age 15.

A sudden deterioration in health or a change in support due to an accident should be recorded and reported within 48 hours to the relevant purchasing agency through the care management process.

Additional Support - Procedure

1. If a need has been identified to vary the contractual arrangements regarding any additional support, the Head of Contracts/Customer Care must be notified.
2. Additional support should be requested at the pupil's annual review. If there is not an annual review due then the school should contact the local authority to organise an interim review of Placement meeting.
3. If the decision is to accept, the requirement of additional funds to support the pupil all relevant documentation should be completed and sent to the Business Unit on receipt of the confirmation. No invoices for additional costs will be sent to the purchasing agency without their express agreement. If the local authority / commissioner accept the decision, the school must ensure they each receive a written agreement and forward this to the contracts team.
4. The purchasing agency should also be advised that should the identified needs of the pupil improve and the requirement for additional staffing reduces, then any reduction in costs will be reflected in the agreement with the purchasing agency.

5. Exclusion

It is to be expected that NAS schools will be best able to manage pupils who present with challenging behaviour as a consequence of their autism or related condition. Exclusion from a NAS school is very rare and only happens in

exceptional circumstances and as a disciplinary measure, not a substitute for another process. In line with the government's statutory guidance for maintained schools and the SEND Code of Practice 2015, every effort is made to avoid excluding a pupil who has an EHCP (which covers every pupil in an NAS School).

Where a NAS school has concerns about the behaviour, or risk of exclusion, it should, in partnership with others (including the local authority as necessary), consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This should involve assessing the suitability of provision for a pupil's needs. The school will consider requesting an early annual review or interim/emergency review.

The school will liaise with parents and the LA to review the EHCP following incidents where a pupil's behaviour is severe enough that the school is considering exclusion. Exclusion will only then be considered as a last resort if alternatives should prove unsuccessful.

A pupil may **only** be excluded by the Principal. Before a pupil is excluded, all other alternatives/strategies should be considered. The safety, education and welfare of **all** pupils and staff is of paramount importance and therefore exclusion may be appropriate.

Exclusions from NAS schools will reflect the principles contained within the Department for Education's statutory guidance on Exclusions for maintained schools and academies (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>) and the most recent Scottish Government guidance (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-2-positive-approach-preventing-managing-school/pages/2/>), as applicable to each territory.

Exclusion - Procedure

1. A decision to exclude a pupil will only be taken in response to serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy or if allowing the pupil to remain in light of their behaviour in school would harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.
2. A decision to exclude must be carefully considered based on the information available and by adopting the civil standard or proof i.e. on the balance of probabilities.
3. Exclusion will not be appropriate for minor incidents such as failure to complete homework, poor academic achievement, lateness or truancy, pregnancy, breaching uniform or jewelry policy or punishing parent(s) for the behaviour of pupils.
4. Exclusions will not be appropriate where the pupils' behaviour, which calls into question the need for exclusion, is evidently a consequence of the child's autism, as described in school and other documentation e.g. risk assessment, annual review, internal behaviour information

5. Before deciding the type of exclusion (fixed term/period or permanent), a full investigation will take place to enable the Principal consider all facts available at the time. This will take into account the NAS policy on Equal Opportunities (SO-0240), checking whether the incident appears to be provoked by discriminatory practice and, if necessary, consultation with others but not involving anyone who may later take part in the review of the decision. The pupil should be enabled to participate to give their version of events where possible.
6. Permanent exclusion is an extreme measure made if the pupil's behaviour meets the following twin test:
 - a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and
 - where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.
6. A fixed period exclusion shall not exceed a total of 45 school days in any academic year. A fixed term exclusion may last for part, a whole or multiple days. If the fixed term exclusion is determined to last for more than 5 days then the local authority will be notified. Fixed term exclusions will not last for more than 10 consecutive working days.
 - 6.1. the pupil shall be returned to the care of the parent or placing Authority as appropriate;
 - 6.2. the school will provide work for the pupil to undertake and/or guidance with regard to activities and occupation of time during the period of exclusion up to the end of the fifth consecutive day;
 - 6.3. a meeting will be convened at the earliest opportunity with the LA. The outcome of this meeting will be a strategy plan to be adopted for the pupils return;
 - 6.4. In the case of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority the Principal will convene an urgent review meeting to agree the next steps.
7. If a pupil is to be temporarily excluded for more than 15 school days in one term, the Principal must plan how to enable the pupil to continue their education; how to use the time to address the pupils problems, and in conjunction with the LA, what arrangements will best help the pupil to re-integrate into the school at the end of the exclusion.
8. A meeting will be held following any fixed term exclusion to outline the conditions for return, emphasising the need for appropriate behaviour, taking into account the degree of control the pupil has to modify their behaviour and their understanding of why they were excluded (dependent on the pupil's level of understanding).

9. Fixed term exclusions cannot be extended or ‘converted’ into permanent exclusions. In exceptional cases, usually where further evidence has become known, a further fixed-period exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the first period ends; or a permanent exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the end of the fixed period.
10. The Principal will inform the LA immediately of all permanent exclusions, and all exclusions that result separately or in total of the pupil missing more than 15 schools days in any one term, or which deny the pupil chance to take an examination. Short fixed period exclusions of one to five school days should be reported each term unless the LA requests more frequent reports.
12. The Principal who excludes must notify the parent(s)/carer immediately themselves by telephone as soon as possible, followed by a letter within one school day.
13. The letter should explain:
 - why the decision was taken
 - steps to enable the pupil to continue their education
 - the parent/carers’ right and method of appeal
 - the right to see their pupil’s school record
 - If the exclusion is permanent, the date the exclusion takes place and details of any relevant previous warnings, exclusions or measure before the present incident and how this incident meets the twin test outlined above
 - If the exclusion is fixed term, the date and time of return and reintegration meeting
 - The name and telephone number of the LA Officer for parent to contact.

Correspondence should be in a format that the parent(s)/carer(s) can understand.

14. The decision to fixed term exclude is not subject to review panel or appeal. However, should parents or carers have serious concerns about the decision to fixed term exclude then they should discuss this with the principal within the first day of the exclusion.
15. When a pupil is excluded they should be referred to the appropriate sources of help and support. Effort will be made to welcome the pupil and strategies will be put in place to assist the pupil in returning to school. Advice and information is usually available to a parent(s) through the funding LA’s SEN partnership scheme.

16. If a parent/carer sends a pupil to school or refuses to collect him or her during an exclusion period, the school should have due regard for the pupils safety and contact the LA/Education Welfare Office for advice.

Exclusion Panel Review Meeting

17. In line with the statutory guidance for maintained schools and academies (Exclusions Statutory Guidance, 2017, Part 6), the (Executive) principal's decision to permanently exclude will be checked, challenged and if suitable ratified by the local governing body.
18. The principal should prepare a pack of information detailing information that provides a rationale for the decision to permanently exclude.
19. Parents/carers have the right to make representations for the panel to consider. The commissioning local authority may be invited to attend. The principal must attend.
20. The panel must consist of no fewer than 2 governors plus another person not directly involved in the decision to permanently exclude.
21. The panel review meeting must occur within 15 school days of the principal's decision to permanently exclude.
22. Where an exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test, there is a further requirement for a governing board. It must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consider the exclusion before the date of the examination or test.
23. The governing board must make reasonable endeavours to arrange the meeting for a date and time that is convenient to all parties, but in compliance with the relevant time limits set out above. However, its decision will not be invalid simply on the grounds that it was not made within these time limits.
24. Governors should refer to Part 6 of the statutory guidance referred to above to support their preparation for the panel.
25. The Director of Education will not be involved in the exclusion process unless and until receipt of a notification from purchasing authority and/or parent(s) wishing to make representation about or appeal through the panel meeting against a decision made by a (Executive) Principal to exclude.
26. If, after a permanent exclusion, the pupil returns to school prior to the review panel meeting, the Panel will consider whether or not the exclusion was objectively fair and appropriate and what (if any) note should be made to the pupil's record with respect to the exclusion.
27. Everything possible will be done to establish an environment in which all parties can present their cases effectively and at their own pace.

28. Decisions will be based on all relevant facts including whether or not the exclusion process was in accordance with policy and procedure and fairly implemented.
25. The needs and interests of all other pupils and staff in the school will be taken into account as well as those of the excluded pupil.
26. The panel hearing will consider whether or not there was consistency in terms both of other exclusions (if any) on similar grounds in similar situations and it terms of sanctions imposed on other pupils involved in that case (if relevant).
27. The Chair will welcome and introduce all parties, explain in which order the parties will be heard, and explain that there will be an opportunity for questions to be raised after each party has spoken.
28. The conduct of the proceedings is based on fairness and ensuring that the correct decision is made.
29. The meetings will not be audio or video recorded. Minutes will be taken.
30. The Chair of Governors or the governor chairing the review panel (if different) will notify the Principal, purchasing authority and parent(s) of the Exclusion Review Panel's decision, with reasons, within 5 days of the meeting. If it is not possible to give a final decision (for example if further investigation is necessary), an interim response will be given within 5 days giving an explanation of the delay and timeframe for a final decision.
31. A record of the Review Panels decision will be kept on the pupils file together with a copy of the Principal's exclusion letter.
32. The panel's decision is final as an independent school.

In considering the revisions to this policy, close attention has been paid to enabling access to it and the associated procedures, reflecting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Referenced external documents

Exclusions Statutory Guidance, 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Included, engaged and involved, Part 2: preventing and managing exclusions in schools (Scottish Government, 19 June 2017)

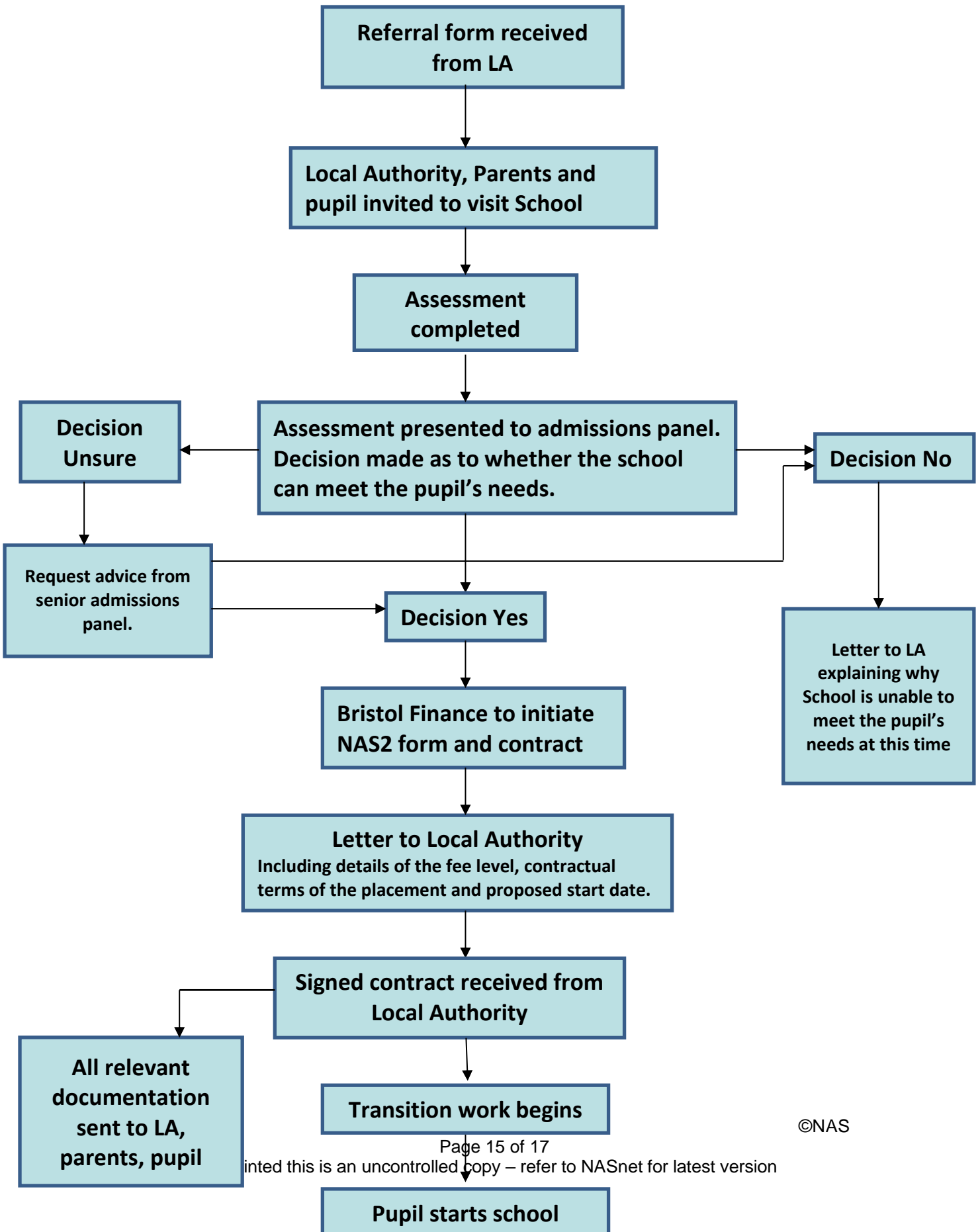
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-2-positive-approach-preventing-managing-school/pages/2/>

SEND Code of Practice 0-25

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Appendix 1

Referral and Admissions Processes flowchart





Appendix 2

ASSESSMENT PANEL SUMMARY REPORT

Name of person to be supported	
Potential Service	
Date of Panel	
Panel Members	

Risks Identified	Suggested Actions	Date & Person Responsible

Panel decision to offer placement Yes No

Conditions of offer:-

Completed by Job title..... Date.....

Appendix 3

Provision mapping

