

Ormiston Academies Trust

Ormiston Queensmill Academy Admissions policy

Policy type	Mandatory OAT policy
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Date	June 2026
Review	Annually – Next reviewed June 2027

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1. Aims

1.1. This policy aims to:

- Explain the academy's admissions criteria and admissions process
- Provide statement for how the academy will avoid discrimination when assessing and admitting new pupils in line with its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010
- Clarify the expectations around involvement from parents/ carers and current setting (if applicable) in supporting a pupil to transition successfully.

2. Admissions criteria and process

- 2.1. All admissions to the academy are via the Local Authority (LA). As the academy is situated in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, the majority of consultations sent to the academy are for children residing within the local community of Hammersmith & Fulham.
- 2.2. Prospective parents/ carers are welcome to visit the academy by appointment. Visits can be requested by contacting the academy on info@oqma.co.uk or 020 8740 8112. A visit to the academy includes tour and conversation. Prospective parents/ carers will be shown shared spaces such as lunch hall and playground and can spend a short amount of time observing a lesson in a classroom. While prospective parents/ carers are encouraged to visit, parents/ carers cannot apply directly to the academy for a place for their child. All admissions are strictly via the child's LA. Parents/ carers who wish their child to join the academy are encouraged to discuss their parental preference with their child's EHCP Coordinator.
- 2.3. The academy collaborates closely with the Hammersmith & Fulham SEND Team (i.e. SEND Placements Commissioner, EHCP Casework Service Manager, EHCP Coordinators) to ensure all pupils meet the school's admissions criteria.
- 2.4. All pupils considered for admission are required to be in receipt of an autism diagnosis, have an Education Health Care Plan (or be undergoing an EHCNA which will result in EHCP), and be working at an academic level that is significantly below age-related expectations for typically developing pupils of the same chronological age.
- 2.5. Although Hammersmith & Fulham is the home borough, the academy considers consultations from neighbouring LAs including (but not limited to): Ealing, Hounslow, Brent, Camden, Wandsworth and the Royal Borough Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC).
- 2.6. The admissions process works over three parts: consultation, assessment, outcome.
- 2.7. Consultation: The admissions process usually begins by the LA identifying a child whose needs they believe can be met by the academy and the relevant EHCP Coordinator sending formal consultation via email. The formal consultation includes the pupil's EHCP and other relevant paperwork such as diagnosis letter and therapy reports.

- 2.8. The Principal is required to respond to the consultation for the proposed admission within the statutory timeframe of 15 calendar days; therefore, appropriate assessments are completed by the academy to assess suitability prior to the Principal submitting their response.
- 2.9. Assessment: A senior or middle leader is assigned to process and assess each specific case; this ensures relevant summative information is collated for the Principal so the Principal can respond to the consultation accurately but without needing to complete assessment themselves.
- 2.10. The senior or middle leader will read the prospective pupil's paperwork, make notes and share preliminary feedback about suitability. A senior therapist will check if the academy can or cannot meet the pupil's therapy provision as stated in the pupils EHCP. If it is considered from paperwork that the academy can meet the pupil's needs, the pupil's parents/ carers will be contacted by the senior or middle leader leading the admission. Contact is via email or phone call. The purpose of contacting the parent/ carer before arranging the next step in the assessment process (observation) ensures that the academy can check-in with parents/ carers directly to a) understand parents' viewpoint about potential placement at the academy b) gain consent for an observation to take place and c) provide the parent with opportunity to ask any questions and/or arrange a visit to the academy. If the parent/ carer does not consent to observation, the Principal and the LA are informed.
- 2.11. Should parents be happy to proceed, a visit will be arranged to the pupil's current setting (i.e., school, nursery or home if the pupil is out of, or not yet in, education). Observation allows opportunity to assess the pupil in situ and verify information in the paperwork. A visit to current setting involves short observation and conversation with key others (e.g. SENDCO, teacher, LSA) who know the pupil well.
- 2.12. Outcome: Information is triangulated and feedback promptly shared with the Principal. If the academy determines that it cannot adequately meet the pupil's needs (based on assessment), the LA is notified and placement is not offered. If the academy determines that it can meet needs and the pupil will benefit from placement at the academy, a place is offered. The principal's ability to offer placement depends on available spaces. If the academy is at full capacity, a placement cannot be offered: admitting another pupil would compromise the safety and quality of education for other pupils already enrolled.
- 2.13. The [Equality Act 2010](#) prohibits discrimination against an individual based on protected characteristics, which include age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief. Decisions around placement offers are made solely on the basis of whether the academy can/ cannot meet need and whether there is/ is not space for the pupil to attend. It is unethical for any admissions decision-making to be informed by anything other than pupil need and academy space.
- 2.14. If the Principal determines that the academy cannot adequately support the pupil's needs, the LA is informed and there is no placement offer. If the Principal determines that the academy can meet needs and there is space, placement offer is communicated to the LA. The LA propose the placement offer to the parent/ carer. The LA update the academy about parental response and whether placement is confirmed or rejected. If placement is confirmed, a preliminary start date is discussed with parent/ carer and communicated to LA following transition visits.

3. Transition to Ormiston Queensmill Academy

- 3.1. The academy recognizes that transition to a new school can be inherently stressful for autistic children who may struggle with change.
- 3.2. To support a smooth transition, the academy maintains flexibility to go at the pupil's pace. The academy does not expect an immediate start and may offer a series of transition visits building up to a few hours at the school, extending to half days and full days once fully transitioned.
- 3.3. An individualized transition plan is discussed and agreed with parent/ carer, current education setting (if relevant) and senior or middle leader overseeing the transition. The academy aims for one senior or middle leader to oversee the transition so that parents/ carers, and the child's current setting (if relevant), have a consistent named contact at every step.
- 3.4. If the pupil is transitioning from their current educational setting (e.g. school, nursery), we ask that familiar staff from that setting support the pupil to travel to/ from Ormiston Queensmill Academy and that they support the duration of the pupil's visit. If the pupil is not currently in education or is out of education, we ask that a parent or other family member supports the visit.
- 3.5. Transition visits are child-led. If the pupil is experiencing difficulty coming into the building, it is acceptable to spend a short amount of time at the school gates or in the reception area with motivators and other resources of interest (e.g. sensory toys). If the pupil is happy to explore the school more, they can spend time in the school's playground or join a class of similar-aged pupils for an activity.
- 3.6. Support strategies that may assist with transition include: child having access to favourite comforting items while completing a transition visit, child having access to favourite snacks (note these must be nut free) while completing a transition visit, social stories or photo book/ page to show new school, classroom, teacher etc.
- 3.7. Dependent on the pupil's in person response to their new school, additional visits may need to be arranged so that the new pupil can build their comfortability and confidence in their new setting over a short period. While most pupils can usually transition successfully within 1-2 weeks with up to 3 transition visits, some pupils may require more time. The main aim is to ensure all visits are positive for the child so they can begin to integrate seamlessly.
- 3.8. The new pupil's class is identified and the teacher and therapy team prepare for the new child by reading the EHCP and meeting the child on their transition visit(s). A full-time start date is agreed with parents/ carers and communicated to the LA without delay.

4. Governors

- 4.1.1. The governing body will review this policy to ensure it:
 - 4.1.1.1. Is appropriate for the academy's context
 - 4.1.1.2. Is implemented consistently across the school's various departments

4.1.1.3. Takes into account the views of parents and pupils

4.1.1.4. Offers an admissions process that is appropriate, fair and non-discriminatory for all pupils

5. Monitoring arrangements

5.1. This policy will be reviewed in line with OAT's internal policy schedule and/or updated as necessary. At every review, it will be approved by the governing body.

6. Links to other policies

6.1. This policy is linked to our:

- Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy.