



Rotherham Opportunities College Admissions Policy



Document Control

Title	Admissions Policy
Document Type	Policy
Author	Principal
Owner	Principal
Subject	Admissions Policy
Document Version	Version 4
Created	March 2023
Approved by	
Review Date	May 2027 (or earlier in line with any changes)

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Description of Change
1	March 2023	Principal	New Policy
2	March 2024	Principal	Review/Updates
3	March 2025	Principal	Review/Updates
4	May 2026	Head of Student Services	Review/Updates



1. Introduction

Rotherham Opportunities College is an independent specialist college. Our mission is to provide outstanding specialist education for young people with a range of learning disabilities, autism and communication difficulties.

It is the aim of Rotherham Opportunities College to deliver an educational offer tailored to fully meet the holistic needs of each individual student who successfully gains a place at the college.

Rotherham Opportunities College aims to provide an inclusive admissions process while ensuring that placements offered are appropriate, safe and compatible with the needs of the individual student and the wider college community. The college is fully committed to equality, diversity and inclusion for all students and staff.

The college will not unlawfully discriminate against any applicant on the basis of disability or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments will be considered throughout the admissions process to ensure accessibility and fairness.

The purpose of the college is to provide the stepping stones to support students to gain independence and, for many students, employment through work experience placements and supported internships.

The college provides a holistic curriculum based around the Preparation for Adulthood themes of:

- Healthy Lifestyles (Body and Mind)
- Employability
- Independent Living (Home and Community)
- Community Inclusion

Discrete maths and English sessions also form part of students' study programmes. Personal and Social Development (PSD) is taught to all students.

The approach of Rotherham Opportunities College towards allocating places involves identifying an applicant's individual needs, aspirations and long-term outcomes to ensure that the college can provide the most appropriate educational provision and support.

2. Scope and Responsibility

This policy applies to all applications for placement at Rotherham Opportunities College.

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring admissions procedures are fair, transparent and compliant with the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice and relevant funding guidance.



The Trustee Board oversees the implementation and review of this policy.

Information provided as part of the admissions process will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

3. Admissions Criteria

Rotherham Opportunities College will consider applications from young people aged 16–25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) whose primary needs relate to:

- Learning disability
- Autism
- Communication needs
- Physical disability
- Associated social, emotional or mental health needs

Places are usually allocated at the start of the academic year; however, in-year admissions may be considered where space is available and where the college believes it can safely and appropriately meet the needs of the young person.

Admissions decisions will take account of:

- The individual needs of the young person;
- Compatibility with existing students and provision;
- Staffing ratios and specialist support availability;
- Health and safety considerations;
- The efficient education of others;
- Funding arrangements agreed by the responsible local authority.

4. Initial Enquiries and Referrals

Initial enquiries and referrals are welcomed from individuals, parents/carers, schools, colleges and local authorities.

An appointment will usually be arranged for the young person and their parents/carers to visit the college.

If the young person and parents/carers decide the college may be a suitable option, an application form should be completed. This should normally be discussed as part of the young person's Annual Review process.

Parents/carers should inform their local authority that they wish Rotherham Opportunities College to be consulted in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice.

Reasonable adjustments will be made during visits, assessments and interviews where required.

5. Referral Process

Referrals may be made either as a self-referral or through the local authority.

All referrals should include:



- The young person's current EHCP;
- The most recent Annual Review documentation;
- Relevant professional reports and assessments;
- The completed college application form.

Once a referral has been received, a member of staff will liaise with:

- The young person;
- Parents/carers;
- The current educational placement;
- Relevant professionals.

The purpose of this process is to determine whether the college would be an appropriate placement capable of meeting the identified needs of the young person.

Where necessary, a placement assessment will be completed by college staff either at the young person's current placement, home or within the college environment. Assessments will consider:

- Educational needs;
- Communication needs;
- Therapeutic needs;
- Behavioural presentation;
- Health and safety;
- Social and emotional needs;
- Independence skills;
- Safeguarding and risk management considerations.

The views, aspirations and preferences of the young person will form an important part of the assessment process.

Taster days and transition visits may also be used to support decision-making and determine placement suitability.

The admissions panel, consisting of senior leaders and relevant professionals including therapists and pastoral staff where appropriate, will review all available information before making a decision.

Admissions decisions will be evidence-based, recorded appropriately and made in a fair and consistent manner.

Any agreement that needs can be met will initially be made in principle pending a full assessment and confirmation of funding arrangements.

6. Preparation for College

Once a placement has been confirmed, a transition process will be agreed in partnership with the young person, parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Transition arrangements may include:

- Additional visits;
- Phased transition plans;



- Travel training arrangements;
- Multi-agency planning meetings;
- Medical and therapy planning;
- Preparation for work placement opportunities.

Transition activity will usually take place during the summer term prior to the young person starting college. However, in-year referrals may also be supported where capacity allows.

A welcome pack will be provided containing:

- Transition arrangements;
- Key contact details;
- Consent forms;
- Relevant college information.

An induction programme will take place during the first two weeks of the young person's course.

7. Initial Assessment Review

An initial assessment review will take place during the first half term of the placement. This meeting will review:

- How the young person has settled into college;
- Progress towards initial targets;
- Support arrangements;
- Any further reasonable adjustments required.

A statutory Annual Review meeting will normally take place during the young person's first year at college.

8. Placement Refusal

Rotherham Opportunities College reserves the right not to offer a placement where it believes, based on the information contained within the EHCP, professional reports and assessment process, that it is unable to meet the needs of the young person safely or appropriately.

The college may also refuse or delay admission where:

- Appropriate staffing ratios cannot be maintained;
- Specialist facilities or resources are unavailable;
- Placement would negatively affect the education, safety or welfare of others;
- Funding arrangements have not been agreed;
- Significant safeguarding or health and safety concerns cannot reasonably be managed.

If a placement is not offered, the reasons for this decision will be communicated clearly to the local authority and/or parents/carers where appropriate.



If parents/carers are unhappy with a decision by the local authority not to name Rotherham Opportunities College within an EHCP, they may seek support from the relevant SENDIASS service:

Rotherham SENDIASS

<https://www.rotherhamsendiass.org.uk/>

Doncaster SENDIASS

<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/sendias>

Barnsley SENDIASS

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send/sendias-advice-and-support/>

Sheffield SENDIASS

<https://sheffieldsendias.org.uk/>

North East Lincolnshire SENDIASS

https://nelsendiass.org.uk/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Kirklees SENDIASS (KIAS)

https://www.kias.org.uk/contact-us/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

9. Placement Review

Where Rotherham Opportunities College believes it can no longer appropriately meet the needs of a young person, a placement review meeting will be arranged involving the young person, parents/carers, local authority and relevant professionals.

If a young person experiences difficulties engaging with college, the college will work collaboratively with the young person, family and professionals to identify barriers to engagement and implement supportive strategies before considering formal review procedures.

Where behaviours are significantly affecting the learning, safety or welfare of the young person or others, the college will implement appropriate support strategies in line with the Behaviour and Safeguarding policies.

The Senior Leadership Team reserves the right to implement a temporary suspension from site where behaviours present a serious risk to the safety, welfare or learning of the individual or others pending review.

If, after all reasonable adjustments and support strategies have been explored, the placement is no longer considered appropriate or safe, an emergency or annual review may be requested with the local authority. Placement termination may be considered as part of this process.



Where additional funding is identified as necessary to maintain a placement safely and appropriately, implementation of any agreed support plan may be dependent upon funding approval by the responsible local authority.

10. Appeals Process

Any student, parent/carer of an unsuccessful applicant wishing to appeal against a placement decision made by Rotherham Opportunities College should do so in writing to the Clerk to the Board within 10 working days of receiving the decision.

The Board will review:

- Relevant documentation;
- Assessment information;
- The admissions decision-making process.

The outcome of the appeal will normally be communicated in writing within 20 working days.

This concludes the college's internal appeals process.

Any refusal by a local authority to name Rotherham Opportunities College within an EHCP should be pursued through the relevant local authority appeals or SEND Tribunal process.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner in response to:

- Changes in legislation;
- Updated guidance;
- Operational changes;
- Feedback from stakeholders.