

14. Admissions Policy

Guidance for this policy has been taken from:

EYFS Statutory Framework (DfE, effective from 1 September 2026), Childcare Act 2006, Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 Years, Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Signed by (Trustee): Diane McVey

Date: 31.05.2026

Next review date: 31.05.2027

Review date	Description	Proposed by	Approved by
18.12.25	Updated section re termly check ins	Sadie Clarke	
31.05.26	Updated guidance sources Changes to admission priority wording Added statement from Equality Act 2010	Kirsty Perry	Diane McVey

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Fee Policy and Parent Agreement.

Review of Policy

The Centre Manager will review the content of this policy every year or earlier in the event that there are changes in legislation or as a result of a change in good practice.

Admissions Criteria

At the Peter Pan Centre, we provide specialist care and support for children aged 0-5 with special educational needs and disabilities from Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, and Cheshire East.

As a registered charity, we are committed to ensuring that our services reach the children who will benefit most from our expertise. Referrals can be made by parent carers or professionals working with a family, with the parent carer's wishes being our top priority.

Placement availability is subject to capacity, and admissions are determined based on the specific criteria and priorities of each session model. The final decision rests with the Centre Manager.

We understand that some children may not yet have a formal diagnosis, therefore, priority for places on our waiting list will be determined using the criteria. All session offers will be made based on our Entry and Exit Pathway Tool.

The Peter Pan Centre is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. Admissions decisions will not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

We have 3 models of support:

- 1) Stay and Play groups in the community and other social activities (Family Support)
- 2) Little Adventurers group (Peter Pan Centre)
- 3) Little Explorers group (Peter Pan Centre)

Little Adventurers Sessions

We provide 15 hours of education per week during term time, spread across five morning sessions. Children attend for three hours each day.

Session Times:

 **Monday – Friday**

 9:15 AM – 12:15 PM (*For detailed feedback from your child's Key Person please arrive at 12:00 PM for pick-up.*)

Admissions Criteria

Our admissions process prioritises children with Communication and Interaction or Cognition and Learning as their main area of need, based on the four broad areas outlined in the SEND Code of Practice.

Child Progress Consideration

Eligibility is assessed in line with Staffordshire SEND Inclusion Funding Levels. Children attending for 15 hours must be developing within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Tier 3 in at least two of the three prime areas of learning. These criteria are reviewed annually against current Staffordshire guidance.

Admissions Priority

Admission decisions also consider family circumstances and additional factors, with priority given to:

1. Looked After Children (LAC)
2. Children preparing to start school
3. Children not attending another setting
4. Children with a Child Protection Plan
5. Length of time on the waiting list
6. Children from Traveller or Armed Forces families

Priority groups do not override consideration of individual need and suitability

Little Explorers Sessions

Our Little Explorers sessions provide 2.5 hours of specialist support during the afternoons, running Monday to Friday for 48 weeks of the year.

Admissions Criteria

Sessions are carefully grouped to ensure the safety and well-being of all children. Children attending may have needs across any of the four broad areas outlined in the SEND Code of Practice:

- ✓ Communication and Interaction
- ✓ Cognition and Learning
- ✓ Physical and/or Sensory Needs
- ✓ Social, Emotional, and Mental Health

Child Progress Consideration:

Eligibility is assessed in line with Staffordshire SEND Inclusion Funding Levels. Children attending for 2.5 hours must be developing within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Tier 2 or Tier 3 in at least two of the three prime areas of learning.

Admissions Priority

Admissions decisions take into account family circumstances and additional factors. Priority is given to:

1. Looked After Children (LAC)
2. Children preparing to start school
3. Children not attending another setting
4. Children with a Child Protection Plan
5. Length of time on the waiting list
6. Children from Traveller or Armed Forces families

Priority groups do not override consideration of individual need and suitability

Admissions Process

1. **Referral Submission:** Parent carers should complete a referral form as the first step. Once received, we will contact the family to invite them to a Stay and Play session.
2. **Stay and Play Session:** Families are encouraged to bring their child along with any relevant paperwork (e.g., medical letters). A professional who knows the child well (e.g., family support worker, play and learning practitioner) is also welcome to attend.
3. **Discussion & Assessment:** We will discuss the child's needs, session structure, ratios, and any health or medication plans required. This helps determine the most suitable education session for the child.
4. **Placement Decision:** If the Centre Manager determines that a child would benefit more from a mainstream setting, they may decide that a place at the Peter Pan Centre is not necessary. The Centre Manager's decision is final.
5. **Waitlist & Placement:** If a child is eligible for a place, parent carers will be asked if they agree to be placed on the waiting list. The child will be added to the most appropriate session waitlist.

Session Allocation

To be considered for a 15-hour place or a 2.5-hour session, children must first attend a Stay and Play session at one of our venues, if this is not possible allowances can be made, however; we would need to either meet the child at a stay and play or during a home visit, before potential sessions are considered. During this visit, the Centre Manager, Family Support Manager, or Deputy Centre Manager will work with the parent or carer to complete a referral form, which begins the assessment process using our Entry and Exit Pathway Tool.

This process ensures that each child is placed on the most suitable waiting list for an education session that best meets their needs.

Once on the waiting list, we will contact parent carers when a suitable place becomes available. We cannot provide a fixed timescale for this, as session allocation is based on need, availability, and our admissions criteria. Children are placed in groups that support their learning and development, with an appropriate child-to-adult ratio.

We anticipate that most 15-hour places will be available from September, although limited spaces may open up during the nursery year.

At the start of the summer term, we review the waiting list to ensure that placements remain appropriate for each child's needs. During this review, we also reassess the family's situation to determine whether a session is still needed. We will consult with parents and involved professionals before offering places. Once priority groupings are established, a home visit will be arranged. This visit forms part of our Entry and Exit Pathway assessment, helping us allocate sessions that best support each child. Parent carers may notify the Centre at any time of a significant change in circumstances that may affect waiting list priority.

Some children at our Centre attend on a dual placement, combining our sessions with time in a mainstream setting such as a nursery or childminder. We fully support this approach and work closely with both parents and other settings to ensure consistency, including shared learning targets and important developmental updates.

Once a child has secured a school place with a start date, or following the use of the entry and exit pathway tool the session criteria is not met, discussions with the parent and carer will take place, and their place at the Peter Pan Centre will be closed within six weeks. This policy ensures that we can continue to support children who need our specialist services while also helping with smooth transitions. Our Entry and Exit Pathway Tool will guide this process.

Entry and Exit Pathway Tool (EEP)

The Entry and Exit Pathway Tool is initiated after the first contact and completion of the child's referral form. This tool complements our existing policies and procedures, ensuring that, as a registered charity, we prioritise children who will benefit most from our specialist support.

The pathway includes termly reviews of each child's progress on little adventurer sessions and twice a year during parent reviews for the little explorer sessions, assessing development from their starting point and celebrating their achievements. These reviews help determine whether their current session offer remains the most suitable.

Attendance at the Centre until school-starting age is assessed on an individual basis and is not guaranteed. If a child is making good progress and no longer meets the developmental criteria for either group, we will support them to:

- Transition to a mainstream setting
- Increase their hours in an existing mainstream placement
- Move to a Little Explorers session from the Little Adventurers group (if appropriate and subject to availability)

Session allocation decisions are made by the Centre Manager in accordance with this policy and the Entry and Exit Pathway Tool

Transport

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to offer short-term subsidised transport for families who are unable to access the Centre. If you experience transport difficulties, please speak to the Centre Manager or Deputy Centre Manager, and we will explore whether a subsidised taxi package may be appropriate. This is granted at the Chief Executive's discretion and is subject to the funding available to us.