

**POLICY NO 1
ACORN SCHOOL
AIMS, ADMISSION, CRITERIA AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Aims

The primary aim of Acorn School is to provide appropriate and relevant learning opportunities to Students who, prior to referral, have had consistently disrupted education, characterised by frequent non-attendance at mainstream schools, failed placements at other specialist institutions or periods in detention centres or secure units. Students referred will normally have a new term, education and healthcare plan of Special Educational Needs. Whilst Students may, or many not have, some level of learning difficulty or a specific difficulty (for example dyslexia), the majority of Students display severe emotional and/or behavioural difficulties with associated social interaction problems. The School provides individualised learning programmes in order to improve each Young Person's chances of re-integrating into and taking advantage of mainstream educational resources, be this on a part-time or full-time basis.

The intention is to create and maintain a learning environment which is organised to provide an enabling, non-threatening, non-judgemental atmosphere for very vulnerable Young People. The School is particularly valuable for the following Students:

1. Students who may need to withdraw or be withdrawn temporarily from the learning environment in order to address emotional, behavioural or social interaction problems.
2. Students whose family relationships and other social networks have become strained, or even untenable. We recognise that such situations vary greatly in the causes and degree of difficulty. Wherever possible, the School and its related services work, collaboratively with parents or those with parental responsibility and other agencies to manage such relationships. The school will provide each student and family/carers with clear expectations of the young person's school career
3. Students whose adjustment and development has been, or continues to be, impeded by their impairment and/or external factors.
4. Students whose educational and social integration are/have been impaired or hindered through neglect, emotional and psychological abuse, physical and sexual abuse, substance misuse and criminal activity, depression and peer group relationship problems. The development of individual responsibility will be achieved by enabling young people to develop an understanding of their own behaviour, through the development of relationships and a provision of a wide range of learning opportunities

5. Key professionals and the student will be involved in a process of continuous assessment of progress and the curriculum offered will be developed to meet the assessed needs. Through family work parents/carers will be involved in this process.
6. The school will provide an environment, which is safe and comfortable, offering privacy, quiet areas, positive images, positive role models and personal individual attention. This will take into consideration the ethnic, cultural and religious needs of individual students.
7. Our emphasis upon the involvement of families/carers in the education and care of their children is supported by our commitment to producing regular reports, reviews and frequent contact by teaching staff and key workers.

Admission Criteria/Process

1. The majority of Students will be the subject of a new term, education and healthcare plan of Special Educational Needs.
2. The School, in liaison with referring professionals, and wherever possible in conjunction with the potential Student and their parents/carers, will enter into an agreement which will be deemed to be in the best interests of the Student. This will form the initial basis of the Student's Individual Learning and Support Programme.
3. Recommendation and agreement for admission will be obtained from the respective authority, usually the referring authority.
4. Students and those with parental responsibility (ie, local authority representative for any looked after children) must visit the School before admission.
5. Students will receive information, either written or in an alternative form if required, either on their pre-admission visit or on arrival, with a copy to parents or those with parental responsibility. The preadmissions interview and assessment will help assess the needs and wishes of the Student and the views of the family, where applicable, taking into consideration the previously identified special educational and non-educational needs and the ability of the School to meet these identified needs. An individual Education Plan will then be negotiated with each Student and implemented by the School team to meet these needs and assist the Student.
6. Referring authorities must provide the School with all pertinent details, in order that the needs of the Student can be fully understood and addressed.
7. Funding arrangements must be determined and agreed prior to the Student attending the School.

Function

The School is a co-educational, independent specialist educational provision for Students aged 11 – 16 years, placed by referring Local Authorities. Students receive specialist help through the School and other external specialist support services. The need for the latter may be identified by the Student, parents, the School or other agencies; any additional support services will be provided only after all relevant parties have been consulted and agreement reached over the arrangements for such provision. Some Students may attend local main stream schools on a part time or sessional basis, often with individual support from our staff; this reflects the School's aim on working towards re-integration into mainstream services, either whilst the young person is at Acorn School or post-statutory education period.

The School currently serves a maximum of up to 7 Students. The period of placement is determined by the individual needs of each Student, linked to their age at placement. There are regular conferences held at the School, whereby the progress of each Student is reviewed; reports are presented concerning the Student, from the Students themselves, from School staff, consultants, social workers, Careers Officers, and other interested parties. Wherever appropriate, the views of the parents/carers form an essential and integral part of the review.

Additional Information

Name of Registered Provider:	Acorn School is part of Phoenix Learning and Care Group,
Registered Provider Address:	Rolle Quay House, Rolle Quay, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 1JE
Directors:	Executive Directors; Keith Burley, Jon Pain, Francois Delbaere, Non Executive Directors; Michael Buckingham, David Sherratt,
Head Teacher Details:	Abigail Heard BA (Hons) Education (QTS)
Teachers:	Christine Thomas, Robert Kemp
Teaching Assistants:	Tess Thornton, Mike Watkins