

ADMISSIONS AND REFERRAL POLICY





ADMISSIONS AND REFERRAL POLICY

Thrive Lincs Ltd

Organisation	Thrive Lincs Ltd
Policy writer	Mark Haggis
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Approved by	Director

1. Policy Statement

Thrive Lincs Ltd is committed to providing safe, inclusive and appropriate alternative education provision for children and young people whose needs may not currently be met within a mainstream educational setting or who require additional or alternative support.

Every referral will be considered individually. Decisions about whether Thrive Lincs can accept a placement will be based on the needs of the child or young person, the proposed outcomes of the placement, safeguarding and risk considerations, the suitability of the provision available and Thrive Lincs' capacity to meet those needs safely and effectively.

Thrive Lincs will work collaboratively with commissioning local authorities, schools, academies, parents/carers and relevant professionals to ensure that placements are appropriately planned and that the child's education, welfare and safeguarding needs remain central to decision-making.

Acceptance of a referral is not automatic. Thrive Lincs will only accept a placement where it is satisfied that it can provide suitable and safe provision and that appropriate staffing, resources, information and arrangements are in place.

2. Scope

This policy applies to referrals and placements made with Thrive Lincs Ltd by, or in agreement with, local authorities, schools, academies, education trusts, other educational establishments and other authorised commissioners.

It applies to children and young people accessing Thrive Lincs services including individual tuition, mentoring, therapeutic or wellbeing support, community-based learning, home-based tuition and other alternative education programmes.

3. Principles

- child-centred and focused on the individual needs and intended outcomes of the learner;
- fair, transparent and consistently applied;
- inclusive and non-discriminatory;



- informed by appropriate safeguarding and risk assessment;
- responsive to special educational needs and disabilities;
- based upon the suitability and capacity of Thrive Lincs to meet the learner's identified needs;
- developed in partnership with commissioners, parents/carers and relevant professionals; and
- regularly reviewed throughout the placement.

The welfare and safety of children and young people will remain the paramount consideration.

4. Equality, Diversity and SEND

Thrive Lincs welcomes referrals for children and young people with a wide range of needs and backgrounds. No child or young person will be unlawfully discriminated against because of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Thrive Lincs recognises that many learners accessing alternative provision have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), social, emotional and mental health needs, neurodevelopmental differences or other barriers to accessing education.

Where a learner has SEND, Thrive Lincs will consider the support required and any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary. Where an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is in place, relevant information from the plan should be considered when assessing the referral and planning provision.

Having SEND or an EHCP will not, in itself, prevent a learner from being accepted. However, Thrive Lincs must be satisfied that it can safely and appropriately meet the learner's needs within the provision being commissioned.

5. Referral Information

Before accepting a placement, Thrive Lincs will seek sufficient information to understand the learner's needs and determine whether the proposed provision is appropriate. Depending upon the circumstances, this may include:

- the reason for referral and intended outcomes;
- the learner's age, educational background, current placement and attendance information;
- proposed hours, duration and location of provision;
- academic attainment and learning needs;
- SEND information and any EHCP;
- safeguarding information and relevant risk assessments;
- medical or health information relevant to safe delivery;
- behaviour, emotional regulation, communication and sensory needs;
- known risks to or from the learner;
- previous or current professional involvement;
- transport arrangements, where applicable;
- details of other provision forming part of the learner's educational package;
- emergency contact details; and
- any other information reasonably required to plan safe and suitable provision.

Commissioners should provide relevant information before the placement begins and notify Thrive Lincs promptly if circumstances or known risks change. A placement may be delayed where essential information required to assess suitability or safeguard the learner has not been provided.



6. Assessment of Referrals

Each referral will be considered individually. Thrive Lincs may discuss the referral with the commissioner, parent/carer, school or other professionals and may arrange an introductory meeting or assessment before confirming the placement.

When considering a referral, Thrive Lincs will take account of:

- the learner's individual needs, strengths and interests;
- the purpose and intended outcomes of the placement;
- safeguarding considerations and identified risks;
- SEND and reasonable adjustments;
- staffing requirements and the skills and experience of available staff;
- the proposed location and learning environment;
- compatibility with other learners where group or shared activities are proposed;
- availability, capacity and resources; and
- whether Thrive Lincs can provide an appropriate quality of education and support.

Decisions will not be based solely upon a learner's diagnosis, disability, previous exclusion, attendance difficulties or other individual characteristic.

7. Capacity and Staffing

Thrive Lincs will only accept referrals where it has sufficient appropriately skilled staff, resources and capacity to deliver the proposed provision safely and effectively.

Staffing arrangements will be determined according to the individual learner, activity, location and identified risks rather than through a fixed staffing ratio, unless a particular activity, risk assessment, contractual requirement or applicable regulation requires one.

Where additional staffing or specialist support is necessary, this will be discussed with the commissioner before the placement begins or as soon as the need becomes apparent. Thrive Lincs will not increase learner numbers or reduce staffing arrangements where doing so would compromise safeguarding, supervision, education or wellbeing.

8. Safeguarding and Risk Assessment

Safeguarding forms an integral part of the admissions and referral process. Relevant safeguarding information must be shared with Thrive Lincs before a placement begins where necessary to protect the learner, staff or others.

Thrive Lincs will undertake proportionate risk assessments according to the nature of the placement. These may include behaviour and emotional regulation, risk to self or others, exploitation or vulnerability, missing or absconding risks, medical needs, transport, lone working, home tuition, community-based activities and specific activities or environments.

Risk will not automatically prevent admission. Thrive Lincs will consider whether identified risks can be appropriately reduced and managed. Where risks cannot be managed safely within the available provision, Thrive Lincs will discuss this with the commissioner and may be unable to accept the referral.



9. Learner and Parent/Carer Involvement

Where appropriate, Thrive Lincs will seek to involve the child or young person and their parent/carers in planning the placement. The learner's views, interests, strengths and aspirations should inform the planning and delivery of their programme wherever practicable.

Information should be provided in an accessible way so the learner understands who will support them, where sessions will take place, what they can expect, the purpose of the placement, expected attendance and behaviour, how to raise concerns and what support is available.

10. Starting a Placement

Where a referral is accepted, Thrive Lincs will agree appropriate arrangements with the commissioner. These should normally include the start date, location, hours and frequency of sessions, intended outcomes, communication and reporting arrangements, safeguarding responsibilities, attendance reporting, review arrangements, funding/commissioning arrangements and plans for transition or ending the placement.

Where appropriate, a gradual or phased introduction may be used to support learners who experience anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance, sensory difficulties or difficulties engaging with unfamiliar adults or environments.

11. Declining a Referral

There may be circumstances in which Thrive Lincs is unable to accept a referral. These may include where:

- Thrive Lincs does not currently have sufficient capacity or suitable staff;
- the learner requires provision or specialist support that Thrive Lincs cannot reasonably provide;
- identified risks cannot be safely managed;
- the proposed environment is unsuitable;
- essential safeguarding or risk information has not been provided;
- the proposed placement would not be educationally appropriate;
- accepting the placement could materially compromise the safety or quality of provision for the learner or others; or
- the proposed arrangement falls outside the services Thrive Lincs is able or authorised to provide.

Where possible, Thrive Lincs will explain the reason to the commissioner and may discuss whether an amended package of support could safely meet the learner's needs.

12. Review of Placements

Admission is the beginning of an ongoing process rather than a one-off decision. Placements will be reviewed according to the learner's needs and commissioning arrangements.

Reviews may consider attendance and engagement, educational progress, progress towards agreed outcomes, wellbeing, safeguarding, behaviour and risk, learner and parent/carers views, whether the level of support remains appropriate, changes to needs and transition or reintegration planning.

Where concerns arise, Thrive Lincs will communicate with the commissioner and other relevant professionals promptly rather than waiting for a scheduled review.



13. Changes in Need or Risk

If a learner's needs or circumstances change significantly after admission, Thrive Lincs will review whether the existing arrangements remain safe and appropriate. It may request additional information, an updated risk assessment, additional staffing, revised hours or location, specialist advice, an urgent multi-agency or commissioner review, or amendments to the placement.

Where there is an immediate safeguarding risk, Thrive Lincs will take appropriate action in accordance with its safeguarding procedures.

14. Ending a Placement

A placement may end because the agreed programme has been completed, outcomes have been achieved, the commissioning period has ended, the learner is reintegrating or moving to another provision, the commissioner ends the placement, needs have changed, risks can no longer be safely managed, or another significant reason makes continuation inappropriate.

Except where immediate safeguarding concerns require urgent action, Thrive Lincs will seek to work with the commissioner to ensure that ending a placement is planned and does not unnecessarily disrupt the learner's education.

15. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Information relating to referrals and admissions will be handled securely and in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2018 and Thrive Lincs' Data Protection Policy.

Information will be shared with staff and relevant professionals on a need-to-know basis where necessary for education, safeguarding, welfare, legal or contractual purposes. Safeguarding information will not be withheld where sharing is necessary to protect a child or another person from harm.

16. Responsibilities

The Director has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate systems are in place for considering referrals and that Thrive Lincs does not accept placements that it cannot safely and effectively support.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will provide safeguarding advice where referrals involve significant safeguarding concerns or risks.

Staff involved in assessing or delivering a placement must understand the learner's needs, agreed support arrangements and relevant risk and safeguarding information.

Commissioners are responsible for providing Thrive Lincs with accurate and sufficiently detailed information to enable an informed assessment and for informing Thrive Lincs of relevant changes.

17. Related Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Attendance Policy;



- Health and Safety Policy;
- Risk Assessment procedures;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct; and
- Safer Recruitment Policy.

18. Monitoring and Review

The Director will monitor the implementation of this policy and review admissions and referral arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate, safe and consistent with Thrive Lincs' services and commissioning arrangements.

The policy will be formally reviewed at least annually and sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, commissioning requirements or the nature of Thrive Lincs' provision.

19. Contact

Questions or concerns regarding admissions or referrals should be directed to Thrive Lincs Ltd at office@thrivelincs.co.uk.