

POLICY: Admissions and attendance policy

COMPILED	IMPLEMENTED	COORDINATED	REVIEWED
26/10/2020	26/10/2020	Andy Joynson	15/10/2025

The Potteries School

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The Potteries School: Culture – Ethos - Mission

The Potteries School is one of the key elements in an integrated, tripartite model of care, education and therapy for learners experiencing social, emotional and mental health

difficulties (S.E.M.H.) based in mid-Wales. All our learners are Looked After Children and present complex needs with regard to interpersonal, emotional and social issues.

The Potteries School provides a positive, supportive and child-centred educational environment for all its learners. Through a process of creating a safe learning space, building effective teacher-learner relationships and precision identification of individual learning need, the School supports learners to achieve and attain and prepare for the next steps on the educational ladder.

Many of the learners have a history of school exclusion or had limited access to learning prior to admission. Most have been unable to manage in a formal educational setting and often the risks their behaviours present has impacted on their ability to be educated alongside large peer groups.

The education offered at the Potteries School seeks to reengage learners in a creative and meaningful curriculum, assisting them to catch up on missed learning and an assessment programme that identifies their learning needs accurately. All learning is offered in an inclusive environment and delivered by education professionals with an understanding of the needs of the learners, working to build self-esteem and learning confidence, develop peer relationships and progress independent learning skills.

At the Potteries School we would like our learners to restart their educational experience with confidence and establish a pattern of learning so they can progress, attain and achieve.

Our aspirational aims are to ensure that every learner is able to:

- Experience bespoke learning in a safe and secure environment
- Access opportunities to compensate for missed school experiences
- Develop positive social interaction skills with their peers and adults
- Be supported in managing their behaviour to progress and achieve
- Establish patterns and routines of learning for their next step in education
- Successfully become part of the school and wider community

The learners, teachers, therapists and education support staff believe that our school can and should provide:

- Sensitive but assertive care to prepare learners for school
- An integrated approach to care, therapy and education
- Excellent teaching and learning across the curriculum
- A framework that promotes reengagement and participation
- Strategies to assist learners with regulating their own behaviour
- Individual learning planning tailored to the needs of learners
- A learner-focussed approach to formative assessment
- Education activities that provide transferable skills

- Positive role-modelling to prepare learners for adult life.

THE RIGHT WAY

The Right Way PRINCIPLE	THIS MEANS:	ORGANISATIONS WILL:
EMBEDDING	Putting Children's Rights (UNCRC) at the core of planning and the delivery of services for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make links to Children's Rights (UNCRC) in their plans. ○ Agree on a structure of how they make sure children's rights are taken into account at all levels of decision making. ○ Make sure that leaders and staff have a good knowledge of children's rights (UNCRC), and help them understand how it can benefit their work.
Equality and NON-DISCRIMINATION	Ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to be the best they can be and that no child has to ensure poor life chances due to discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make sure staff have up-to-date knowledge of the Equality Act and receive training to increase their awareness of different groups of children and young people's needs. ○ Give information to children in a language or format appropriate for their age, culture, or ability. ○ Analyse data and consider which groups of children are not accessing your services, and why - can use our a children's rights impact assessment.
EMPOWERING children and young people	Giving children the knowledge and confidence to use their rights and hold organisations and individuals that affect their lives to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Give children the information they need to influence decisions that affect them (e.g. simple language reports). ○ Involve children and young people by giving them the opportunities/ training/ information they need to influence decisions that affect them. ○ Build relationships with groups of young people to allow them to regularly give ideas and feedback. E.g. youth groups/forums.
PARTICIPATION	Listening to children and taking their views seriously (as guaranteed by Article 12 — UNCRC).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop clear targets to listen to children and young people from marginalised groups. ○ Involve children directly in the design, monitoring and evaluation of services they receive (this can include involving children in recruitment of staff). ○ Adopt Wales' National Participation Standards for Children and Young People, to make sure when children participate, their experience is a quality one.
ACCOUNTABILITY	Organisations and individuals should be accountable to children for the decisions and actions which affect their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Publish an accessible annual update showing how they've worked towards making children's rights a reality. ○ Feedback regularly to children in a suitable format. ○ Provide children with accessible information on how to provide feedback about services or to how to make a complaints and hold staff to account.

The Potteries School: Admissions criteria for the home and school

The criteria for the home (from the Statement of Purpose 2024)

The Potteries provides a specialized provision for young adolescent males between the ages of 10-17 upon admission. Many of the young people referred to The Potteries have extensive unmet needs, troubled individual and family histories and significant experiences of placement instability. Our criteria covers individuals who have experienced significant

neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The Potteries cannot not provide accommodation for:

- Children with severe learning disabilities;
- Children with physical disabilities;
- Children with a conviction for arson;
- Short-term emergency placements;
- Children who require invasive medical treatment;
- Children with severe autism that impacts on communication and functioning;
- Children with significant self-harming profiles;
- Children with behaviour that may cause a serious threat to themselves or others.

The criteria for the school (from the Estyn Registration document 2013)

The Welsh Government, as the registration authority of Wales, is satisfied that the documentation provided under Section 160 of the Education Act 2002 meets the required standards and has determined under section 161 of the same Act that the Potteries should be entered into the register of independent schools in Wales. The school is registered to provide an assessment centre for education for up to 4 boys and girls who are residents at the children's home and are aged 10 -18 years. The School will cater for pupils who are looked after and may have statements of Special Educational Needs, specifically emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The Potteries School: Referral processes and admission

The starting point at the senior management level for the referrals process lies with the **Referrals Manager** who is based at CareTech's offices in Branas Isaf, Corwen. Approved providers (of which CareTech are one) are able to access an online, local authority-wide CLA database that serves to brokerage placements and match the needs of looked-after young people with services that can meet those needs. Another avenue of referrals is direct from a local authority where previous placements have been successfully accommodated at a CareTech provision.

At the home and school level, the referrals process becomes an integrated one between care, education and therapy with the decision-making a collaborative effort to ensure individual need can be met adequately. Initial documentation is scrutinised by the Registered Manager, Headteacher and appointed therapy practitioner for:

- Quality of referral information... often, essential elements of the necessary documentation are absent, more often than not reflecting the disjointed chronology of the young person as opposed to administrative inefficiency;
- Matching of the admissions criteria with the needs analysis of the young person particularly with regard to behaviour presentation and consideration of risk;
- Compatibility with currently accommodated young people principally to ensure that the safeguarding frameworks in place can keep **all** involved safe;
- The precise nature of the Education, Health and Care Plan (England) or Statement of Special Educational Need (Wales) to ensure the needs of the young person fall with the remittance of the registration;
- Discount historical linkage with previous or current young people so as to not repeat previous placement failures.

The Potteries School: Enrolment - Information gathering - Induction

Learners are entered onto the Admissions Register at the onset of their placement at the Potteries. The data collected includes: learner number; gender; UPN; parent contact details; placing authority; last school attended; school year; keystage; DOB; dates of admission and exit; transition address; care and SEN status.

There is no education for young people during the **first week** of placement at The Potteries. This time is dedicated to **five** different processes that serve to ease the young person into their new surroundings and allow them to meet all of the staff team who will support them:

- Direct work between support staff and learners to establish the structure and routine of the house, complete inventories, undertake a keyworking session and interact with their peers;
- Completion of care placement documentation to ensure compliance with standards and regulation. These documents include: LA care plan; Needs and responses; Compatibility profile; Risk management; SONAR; MISPER and Positive handling plan;
- Contact with previous education provision to glean additional qualitative information to compliment the quantitative data that is usually available pre-placement. Both these information sources include:
 - Statements of Special Education Need (S.E.N.);
 - Education, Health and Plans (E.H.C.P.);
 - Personal Education Plans (P.E.P.);
 - School reports (collective and individual);
 - Educational psychology reports;
 - ALN information to inform curriculum access;
 - Risk assessments and behaviour management plans.
- Completion of education documentation to ensure compliance with standards and regulation. The documents include: Admissions register; Attendance register; school pack for social workers; Health and wellbeing matrix; individual learning planner; Transition analysis; Individual target summary; Pupil premium report; ALN baseline; Potteries Passport;
- An initial education interview at the end of the first week following risk assessment and behaviour planning with care staff. The interview lasts about 1 hour and the aim is to additional background information. This process means allows for idiosyncratic detail that is often missing from formal assessment information comes to light and assists in informing the learner's profile. The areas discussed are:
 - Previous schooling: chronology and transitions;
 - Educational experience: relationships, teachers and extra-curricular;
 - Difficulties and behaviour: triggers, patterns and solutions;
 - Curriculum considerations: likes, performance and qualifications.

The Potteries School: Admission – Formative and summative monitoring

When all the necessary documentation is populated, risk assessments are in place and the learner has attended the initial education interview, the admissions process is complete.

The School works in collaboration with the home to review learner progress as part of an ongoing assessment process:

- **Week 8:** Formative interim education report (1)
- **Week 18:** Formative interim education report (2)
- **Week 26:** Summative assessment report with care and therapy
- **Week 39:** Summative education progress commentary

The Potteries School: Attendance – legislative considerations

This policy is a dynamic document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- Education (School Attendance Targets) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Penalty Notices) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- All Wales Attendance Framework (2012)
- Advice on School Attendance (DfE)
- Improving Attendance at School (DfE)
- School attendance parental responsibility measures: Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police (DfE)

Young people cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting the regular attendance and punctuality of learners. All school support staff are expected to actively promote school attendance by role modelling punctuality and being positive about learning environment, curriculum and learning.

The school has the responsibility of monitoring and recording attendance and to take appropriate action for non-attendance. The school will keep an attendance register in which, at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session, learners are marked present or absent. This register will show whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised and lateness will be recorded. The school will report to the Education Welfare Service, Welfare Call or the Virtual School of the learners to advise on continuous unauthorised learner absence of two weeks or more for other than medical reasons. The school will make an annual return to the WAG containing information about authorised and unauthorised absences for learners of compulsory school age.

Absence

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. Requests for a learner to be absent from school must be made in advance to the Headteacher. On days when a learner has a LAC review, P.E.P., annual review of S.E.N., professional visit or other important meeting, the attendance is recorded as authorised absence as experience shows us that learning on these days may be adversely affected by anxiety over the outcome of these events.

Registration procedure

Each morning the Headteacher registers all learners using the school registration system. The system is electronically-based and a back-up is made each day of the attendance data. The Virtual School may employ an online portal for attendance tracking that is completed each day to ensure correct data information is recorded for monitoring purposes.

Absence and attendance codes

- **Present in school:** / = am \ = pm
- **Code L:** Late arrival before the register has closed
- **Code B:** Off-site educational activity
- **Code D:** Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
- **Code J:** Interview with prospective employers or educational establishment
- **Code P:** Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- **Code V:** Educational visit or trip
- **Code W:** Work experience
- **Code C:** Leave of absence authorised by the school
- **Code E:** Excluded but no alternative provision made
- **Code H:** Holiday authorised by the school
- **Code I:** Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
- **Code M:** Medical or dental appointments
- **Code R:** Religious observance
- **Code S:** Study leave
- **Code T:** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- **Code G:** Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period agreed
- **Code N:** Reason for absence not yet provided
- **Code O:** Absent from school without authorisation
- **Code U:** Arrived in school after registration closed
- **Code X:** Not required to be in school
- **Code Y:** Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where
A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel
The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months.
- **Code Z:** Pupil not on admission register
- **Code #:** Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

Guidance for action to be taken in the event of non-registration

In the event of non-registration, it is important that the reason for absence is promptly established and appropriate action taken. The proximity of the school within the home ensures that the Headteacher is immediately informed of learner absence by either the incumbent team leader during handover or by the Registered Manager on arrival.

The procedure to be followed in the event of a learner being unaccounted for during the academic day (9.00 a.m.-3.30 p.m. Monday – Friday)

Responsibility	Action
All staff	<p>Confirm with the Headteacher the learner is missing. Details from previous evening to be gleaned from daily log and learner points sheets.</p> <p>Inform Headteacher of likely absconding details and the actions taken by staff in terms of searching for missing learner.</p>
Headteacher	<p>Liaise with Registered Manager to commence a search immediate surrounding area by appropriate staff.</p> <p>Inform parent/Home Manager & Head of Service.</p> <p>Inform Police and support staff to be sent to local railway stations to request any information/ search for missing learner.</p> <p>If necessary, support staff to review any available CCTV footage.</p> <p>Follow MISPER protocol to inform support staff of necessary procedural path for absent learner.</p> <p>Record all actions in necessary documentation.</p>

<p>INFORMATION FOR POLICE</p> <p>Learner name; Learner age; Contemporary photograph; Learner height and physical profile ; Disability, learning difficulty or S.E.N. Risk assessment information; Learner home address and number Clothing description; Any relevant comments made by the learner concerning absconding.</p>	<p>RECORDS OF INCIDENT</p> <p>A written record of the incident including:</p> <p>Learner name; Relevant date and times; Action taken to find learner; Police involvement in outcome? Learner comments on the absence; Complaints about the incident; Record of the staff involved; A copy should be placed in the learner file and another sent to the Registered Manager and Social Worker.</p>
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The Potteries School: Alternative provision, dual registration and transition

The school very rarely uses offsite provision to add to the curriculum breadth. This reflects both the paucity of work-based learning in the surrounding rural area and the risks posed by the learners attending the school. For instance, the local college will not permit our learners to be supported by their care staff insisting that the learners either attend alone or utilise the college support staff, both of which is unacceptable and in the eyes of our school, highly discriminatory.

However, when we do access external providers the process for incorporation into the programme is straightforward:

- Pupil Premium funds are applied for through the learner’s local authority. On occasion, local authorities insist that additional provision is included in the care and education package which is not the case. PP is centrally funded and the local authority act as a conduit for those funds to meet learner need;
- A thorough risk assessment of the workplace is carried out by the Headteacher to ensure it meets the necessary standards and regulation;
- An introductory visit is held between the provider and the learner to check suitability and interest;
- A programme of study and assessment is formulated to pinpoint outcomes and how the learning meets the required learning targets;
- The placement is monitored by the learner’s support staff who provide the necessary scaffolding to ensure the learning works and the placement is suitable;
- The learner keeps a placement diary and works towards AQA Unit Award 105394 Taking part in work experience with support.

As the home and school offer a 26-week assessment programme, learners are often dual registered during this time as many return to their origin school following placement. On occasion, this arrangement is cross-border as learners come from throughout the UK. The school follows *The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010* in these

instances and the details for this can be found here:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2010/1954/made>

The Independent School Standards (Wales) 2024 states the school must provide details in the admissions register of the future provision for each learner when they leave the school. As The Potteries School provides a 26-week programme, the transition arrangements are key to successful learner outcomes. More often than not however, local authorities find it difficult to place learners within this time frame. However, the procedure for transition is straightforward:

- Once the new school has been identified and secured by the local authority, a liaison is set up by the LA Virtual School between the Headteacher at The Potteries School and the new provision;
- All assessment material is made available to the new provision alongside more anecdotal information from teaching staff;
- A school visit is undertaken with the learner accompanied by the Headteacher;
- Curriculum tutorials are held to prepare the learner for transition;
- All necessary documentation is completed before the move.

NOTE: Safeguarding concern arising out of a learner absence must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Andy Joynson) in line with the safeguarding policy.

Review

This policy and procedures will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure continued compliance with The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, the Independent School Standards (Wales) 2024 and relevant guidance issued by the DfE and Welsh Government.

This document will be next reviewed on 15/10/2026.

