

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Name:	Student Recruitment Policy
Policy Ref:	L805
Type of Policy:	Learning
Owner of document:	Principal
Date approved by CEO:	Date: 11.11.2025
Date approved by Quality Learning Care Committee:	Date: 27.01.2026
Date approved by Board	Date: N/A
Privacy Impact Assessment	Date:
Equality Impact Assessment	Date:
Circulation (highlight as appropriate):	Signature by all staff on People HR, Website, Core Docs, Staff Intranet and Trustee Portal.
Review cycle:	Every 3 years
Next review date:	Term: Spring Term 2029

Alternative formats: Large print (18pt) or audio (mp3) format of this document is available by emailing moiraclifton@orpheus.org.uk

Student Recruitment Policy

Policy statement

This document sets out, in summary form, the Student Recruitment Policy.

The policy is designed to ensure consistently high standards of recruitment, to ensure that the needs of each learner can be met and progression achieved, in a safe and stimulating learning environment, whilst fully meeting the requirements of the EHCP and learner aspirations.

We are committed to ensuring that the Orpheus student recruitment procedures are carried out in a manner that is non-discriminatory, efficient and effective and have a commitment to improve diversity within the college, including racial diversity and people with disabilities thereby meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of Orpheus student recruitment procedures and is closely linked to other learning related policies, including:

- Teaching, learning and assessment policy
- Additional learning support policy

Together these policies enhance the opportunities for our learners and their prospects for progression and success.

Definitions and explanation of terms

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms are defined as:

Document definitions:

- EHCP Education, Health and Care Plan
- SENCo Special Educational Needs Coordinator
- SMT Orpheus Senior Management Team (which includes CEO & Principal)

See Glossary for additional terms / details

Roles and responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer ('CEO')

The CEO will ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and that adequate resources are made available to implement it.

Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring that staff and learners are aware of this policy and the process of implementation as required. The Principal will ensure that any necessary remedial action or amendments to this policy are completed.

Assistant Principal - SENCo

The Assistant Principal - SENCo has overall responsibility for day-to-day management of the student recruitment function, incorporating the following roles:

- Student Funding Officer
- Student Recruitment Coordinator
- Curriculum & EHCP Administrator
- Digital Transformation and Data Manager

It is the SENCo's responsibility to ensure that this policy is followed.

Employees Responsibilities

The Student Funding Officer and Student Recruitment Coordinator are required to collaborate together and with others from across the Learning team and wider college, as necessary, in order to implement this policy.

This will include close liaison with:

1. Assistant Principal - SENCo
2. Deputy Head of Care
3. Student Support and Wellbeing Manager
4. The Principal
5. Assistant Principal – Curriculum and Quality
6. Student Wellbeing Officer

7. LSCA Support Lead

It is the responsibility of all those involved in the recruitment and admissions process to have a thorough understanding of this policy and to ensure that the principles detailed herein (as they may be amended from time to time) are adhered to, in so far as they relate to each of the respective roles.

All employees within the Learning team should be aware of the Student Recruitment Policy as it relates to the recruitment criteria and admissions process.

Aims of Policy

The Student Recruitment Policy aims to provide a framework for the recruitment and admission of new learners. It ensures that high standards of recruitment are achieved and consistently maintained by adopting a set of principles that ensure fairness and equality of approach to all applicants.

Adherence to the student recruitment principles is of paramount importance as any deviation has the potential to disadvantage applicants. Ultimately this could harm the reputation of Orpheus and could therefore adversely affect the volume of future applications and success of the organisation.

Principles:

General admissions process

1. Orpheus is a day college for young disabled people aged 18 to 25 years. Whilst there are a limited number of supported housing units on-site, Orpheus is NOT a residential college.
2. The college has a current capacity of 66 day students. However, this number may be reduced to ensure safety and success of learners in the context of total cohort needs. The maximum capacity will be reviewed by the Principal, taking into account issues related to learner needs, staffing and premises, plus any regulatory issues (Ofsted / CQC etc.).
3. The Student Recruitment Coordinator aims to respond to all admission enquiries within 3 working days of receipt.
4. To ensure fairness, applications will be processed in the order that they are received by the Student Recruitment Coordinator, provided that all requested documentation has been received. Thereafter, individual applications will move forward through the student recruitment process once each stage is complete. An exception to this approach will be local authority '*Consultations*' which have legally defined timescales for response. Siblings of existing learners / alumni and

family members of staff and volunteers will not have any priority in the admissions process.

5. All applications are carefully reviewed and individually assessed against a standard set of admissions criteria, which is consistently applied to all applicants.
6. The purpose of the admission will be: (i) To keep the learner safe (ii) To meet needs, including those documented in the EHCP for the learner, and (iii) To be able to provide the learner with opportunities to develop and enhance independence skills.
7. To ensure that details contained within the applications are current, they should be submitted to Orpheus no more than 18 months in advance of the proposed admission date. Applicants should note that Orpheus reserves the right to request additional / updated information from time to time, as part of the admissions process.
8. The decision to offer a place at The Orpheus Centre will be made by the Student Recruitment Team, usually comprising the SENCo, Deputy Head of Care, Student Support and Wellbeing Manager, Student Wellbeing Officer and LSCA Support Lead. However, input from other staff will be obtained as and when required, including (without limitation) the Principal, Curriculum Managers, Assistant Principal - Curriculum & Quality and SMT.
9. The placement decision will be reached after extensive consideration of all documentation provided (which as a minimum must include the latest EHCP and learner application form) and other information provided by the applicant & / or parent(s) / carer(s). It may also include observations and assessments of the learner undertaken on-site, at current placement, or virtually, as part of the admissions process.
10. The decision to offer a place, or decline, will be promptly communicated to the applicant / parent(s) / carer(s) in writing. In the case of a decline decision, the reasons for the decline will be clearly stated, with reference to the SEND Code of Practice.
11. All 'Offers' of an education placement and / or supported housing will be subject to a number of conditions as will be stated on the offer letter. This will include acceptance of the offer by parent / carer / applicant, plus funding confirmation in writing from the relevant local authority. It will also be subject to sufficient places being available at the time the funding confirmation is received.

12. Orpheus reserves the right to withdraw its 'Offer' in the event that subsequent adverse information regarding the applicant comes to light, that in the sole opinion of the Student Recruitment Team means that the admission criteria cannot / will not be met.
13. Offers may also be withdrawn in the event that Orpheus is oversubscribed and has no places available at the time the funding confirmation is received. In such cases, applicants may be placed on a waiting list, or invited to defer their placement for a further year. However, further terms and conditions may be imposed, including the requirement for additional written confirmation of funding in respect of the relevant academic period.

Funding / Confirmation of placement:

1. It is expected that learner placements for both education and supported housing will be funded, in full, by the relevant local authority and/or DFE.
2. Learners with a current EHCP will require education funding confirmation in writing from their Local Authority SEN team / department.
3. Learners seeking places in supported housing will require funding confirmation in writing from the Adult Social Care team of their local authority, unless jointly funded with education.
4. All places (whether for education, or supported housing) will be allocated subject to the terms advised in the offer letter and on a 'first funding confirmed' basis as advised in writing by the relevant local authority.
5. Supported housing cannot be provided without a funded education placement. Therefore, supported housing places will only be allocated once written funding confirmation has also been received in respect of education funding from the relevant local authority.
6. With regards to the allocation of supported housing, there is no priority given to learners who are unable to attend Orpheus as a day student only.
7. It is important to note that, in the event that funding is declined by a local authority (whether for education, or supported housing) and the parent(s) / carer(s) / learner indicate that they are going to take legal action to appeal the decision, the placement may, or may not, be held or 'reserved' by Orpheus whilst awaiting the appeal outcome. Any decision to hold, or reserve a place pending appeal will be at Orpheus' sole discretion and may be for a limited time period and may be subject to additional terms & conditions.

8. The learning programmes at Orpheus are typically for a three-year period. However, local authority funding is usually committed for one year at a time and is subject to an EHCP annual review / continuation of funding approval. Consequently, there is no guarantee that funding for learners will be available from one year to the next. Therefore, learners may be unable to stay for the full duration of the course.
9. Private funding (in any form) will only be considered on an exceptional basis and, for reasons of fairness, cannot be used to obtain priority ahead of applications from other learners.
10. In the event of a privately funded application being received, the matter will be considered by a panel, comprising the following: Director of Finance, Principal & Assistant Principal - SENCo. In certain circumstances, a manager from outside the learning team may be invited to join the panel. A unanimous decision of the panel is required and the decision will be final.
11. In the event that private funding is approved, it will be subject to satisfactory due diligence, to include the source and reliability of the funds. It is expected that separate terms & conditions will also be applied, including the requirement for payment up-front.
12. Placements that are privately funded will not benefit from a cost reduction as a result of any monies that may be received from DFE funding allocations.
13. In all cases of private funding the Student Recruitment Team need to ensure that offering a place at Orpheus is appropriate and fair and that a local authority funded learner is not disadvantaged.
14. Tenants can only remain in supported housing as long as they are current learners on the Orpheus learning programme and their education and care continues to be funded by their local authority, or other agreed source.

A Guide to the Student recruitment process is appended at the end of this document

External Reporting

- The Student Recruitment Policy and general admissions process are available to view by the public via the Orpheus website and Prospectus
- Learner details will be reported on the ILR returns as required by DFE from time to time
- The collation of data of applicants (whether successful, declined, or withdrawn) may be held by Orpheus for the purposes of data scrutiny and trends observation. Any

such data so retained will be subject to the requirements of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Training

The Principal in conjunction with the Assistant Principal - SENCo shall ensure that all staff involved in the student recruitment process will receive appropriate training to ensure sufficient knowledge as needed to fully comply with, and implement the requirements of, this Student Recruitment Policy.

Glossary

- **CQC** – The Care Quality Commission
- **EHCP** - The EHCP, which means the Education, Health and Care Plan, is a document which sets out the educational, health and social care needs of a child or young person for whom extra support is needed in school, or college
- **DFE** – Department of Education being an executive agency of the government and provision of funding allocation
- **ILR** – Individualised Learner Record being a collection of learner data
- **SENCo** – A qualified person (usually a teacher) who coordinates the provision for children or young people with special educational needs or disabilities

APPENDIX I

Admissions Process – Overview

This process may be subject to amendment from time to time and therefore acts as a 'guide' only

Admission enquiries may come to Orpheus as a result of:

- Approaches from local authorities (including legal Consultations)
- Referrals from feeder schools & colleges
- Awareness through word-of-mouth, from the parents of current & past learners
- Attendance at recruitment fairs and other events
- External publicity, including the Orpheus website, social media & publications (prospectus etc.)
- Other organisations that our learners may typically attend

The enquiries typically come to Orpheus via one of the following methods:

- Website generated Email / Student Recruitment Email
- Telephone
- In-person

In each case the enquiry is logged by the Student Recruitment Coordinator, who will then follow the procedure as outlined below, from initial enquiry through to placement.

1. Having logged the enquiry, the Student Recruitment Coordinator will signpost the enquirer to the [Orpheus website application page](#). However, if the enquirer requires this in an different format for access requirements, the Student Recruitment Coordinator will provide this as required.
2. Interested parties will make arrangements via the Student Recruitment Coordinator to attend an Information Event in person, or online. Student Recruitment Coordinator will co-ordinate and arrange this.
3. It may be possible for the Student Recruitment Coordinator to arrange for parents / carers of prospective learners (and the applicant) to visit Orpheus for a personalised tour.

4. Following the visit, or Information Event, applications may be made digitally, or on paper, following which a desk-top assessment will take place with input from: SENCo / Deputy Head of Care & the Student Wellbeing and Admissions Coordinator.
5. If (after consideration of all information provided) a decision is reached that we are likely to be able to meet the needs of the prospective learner and keep them safe, arrangements will be made for the applicant to attend an assessment meeting. If not, the decision is conveyed by the Student Recruitment Coordinator to the parent / carer / applicant in writing, clearly setting out the reasons for the decline decision.
6. The next stage in the process is for the prospective learner to attend an assessment meeting onsite, or virtually, usually accompanied by parent(s) / carer(s). The assessment will be attended by representatives from the student recruitment assessment team, usually including the Student Recruitment Coordinator, Assistant Principal - SENCo, Deputy Head of Care, Student Support and Wellbeing Manager, Student Wellbeing Officer and LSCA Support Lead.
7. The student recruitment assessment team will be mindful of the following criteria when assessing whether it is possible to offer the applicant a place: (i) The ability to keep the learner safe (ii) To meet needs, including those documented in the EHCP for the learner, and (iii) To be able to provide the learner with opportunities to develop and enhance independence skills.
8. If all involved are agreed that these criteria can be met, the Student Recruitment Coordinator will send a letter to parents / Carer(s) and the applicant offering a place at Orpheus subject to funding and other terms & conditions.
9. No further action will be taken until the offer letter is returned as 'accepted' by a parent / carer / applicant.
10. Thereafter, the Student Recruitment Coordinator, Student Funding Officer, Assistant Principal – SENCo and Deputy Head of Care will calculate individualised costings for education and supported housing / domiciliary care as appropriate. The Student Recruitment Coordinator or Student Funding Officer will promptly send such costings to the local authority and await their funding decision. Regular contact will be made with the local authority pending their written response.
11. Once a new learner's funding has been confirmed in writing by the local authority (and there being sufficient places available), the Student Recruitment

Coordinator will provide confirmation of the placement to the learner / parent(s) / carer(s).

12. The Student Recruitment Coordinator will work with the wider student recruitment team to provide the learner with all necessary information as preparation for enrolment.

Policy update review:

Date:	Updated by:	Section updated:	Update:
11.11.2025	CS	General admissions process	Point 6 updated
11.11.2025	CS	Various references to Department For Education	Updated and added
11.11.2025	CS	Appendix I - Enquiries section page 9 to 11	Various updates referring Student Recruitment enquiries