

Admissions Policy (Academy21)

2025-2026

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Policy Aims and School Vision

The Inspired Philosophy

As part of the Inspired Group, we are also guided by the philosophy of the Inspired Group:

- *A child's education is the single most important consideration for any parent or carer.*
- *At Inspired, we believe that it is an individual's total educational experience that instils the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values that they will carry with them for life.*
- *We believe that this set of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values, instilled by education, will form the basis of how we approach the future.*

Inspired schools believe that these are the foundations on which we build and plan our lives. At King's InterHigh and Academy21, we welcome students with varied plans, including attending university, or college, obtaining an apprenticeship, or going into the workplace. Being part of Inspired allows us to cater for our rich and varied student community through an inclusive and positive approach that maintains high expectations for all our students.

Admissions principles

- Academy21 as an alternative provision is committed to welcoming students from all backgrounds, and with all needs and prior experiences. We admit students who are on roll with a physical school, Local Authority (LA), alternative provision or other educational provider and who are seeking online alternative provision to re-engage them with education and ensure educational consistency. Students commissioned to join Academy21 will remain on roll with their physical setting whilst accessing our provision. All commissions must come from a school, authority or other education institution. We ensure equal consideration for all potential admissions under the Equalities Act, fulfilling our duties to safeguard against discrimination related to protected characteristics.
- Our students typically come from schools across England and Wales. We offer a curriculum for Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 & 6), Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) and Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11). Our typical age range is 9-17, however, we can admit students outside of this age range on application following our Out of Year Admission Procedure outlined further in this policy. We can also admit students to the sixth form at our sister school, King's InterHigh following their admission procedures.
- To comply with safeguarding regulations, we seek to identify whether there are any adjustments required in relation to protected characteristics; for example, we check the preferred name for young adults.
- Upon admission, we seek to identify any children/young adults who may be particularly vulnerable due to safeguarding concerns, additional needs, mental and physical health concerns or other needs and circumstances. Our enrolment procedure expects commissioners to alert us with a notification from physical schools when a student is potentially in greater need: for example, a young person looked after by the LA, a care leaver, a child or young person with a social worker, a young carer or a student residing in private fostering arrangements would all be flagged to us. At the point of registration, we ask mentors to state their child(ren)'s particular interests and any medical or special educational needs so that we can plan for admission and how we might look to meet those needs.
- We are fully flexible in terms of the timing of admissions and accept admissions all year round, often at short notice if that is of benefit to the commissioning organisation and student. Upon receipt of all required details from the school or LA, we process enrolments in under 48 hours, unless unforeseen issues arise. We aim to provide a swift and effective enrolment process to provide the alternative provision young people, and their schools need as quickly as possible.
- Students for whom English is an additional language should please note that our courses are all taught in English and delivered by English-speaking, UK-qualified teachers. We are fully inclusive but draw attention to the implication this has for students whose proficiency in English may be limited.
- Every commissioner must assign 'mentors', who oversee the supervision and monitoring of their students whilst enrolled with Academy21. Per national guidance, the commissioning organisation remains responsible for this oversight, but Academy21 provide a range of tools and processes to support, including daily reporting, welfare and safeguarding reporting and access to a 'mentor portal' that provides attendance and engagement details for every lesson. Commissioners are responsible for ensuring online

learning is appropriate for the young person prior to enrolment and that adequate supervision is in place relative to the student's needs, age, circumstances.

- At enrolment, we will ask if there are safeguarding or welfare concerns for the student. In such cases, the commissioner is expected to provide details of how the student is being supervised in the relevant section of the enrolment form to support the Academy21 team in managing any welfare concerns that arise.
- Our Primary Year 5 and 6 provision also requires additional arrangements from the commissioner to use our provision. Given welfare considerations for younger students, any students accessing our primary provision must be seen physically by an appropriate individual from the commissioning organisation each week. This may be achieved by studying some of their Academy21 lessons on site, coming into school for a check-in whilst studying at home or having home visits. The details of the arrangements are requested at enrolment to support effective safeguarding. If studying off-site for any of their sessions (e.g. at home), students in our primary setting must be supervised by an adult known to the school or authority during lessons (e.g. parent, carer, guardian). Academy21 reserves the right to end any placements where there are concerns about supervision from the commissioner.
- Academy21 is an inclusive provider and can admit students who, for a number of reasons, are unable to find or be admitted into school provisions elsewhere. Our starting position is always to seek to admit. However, Academy21 reserve the right to not proceed with the admission of a student if, on careful review from a safeguarding perspective, the admission may be deemed detrimental to other students, or it is clear that online learning is not in the best interests of the individual. We would always communicate our process of decision-making to the prospective client to ensure all factors are considered.
- Any organisation commissioning a placement at Academy21 agrees to abide by our General Terms and Conditions of Service, which can be found on our website and are communicated at the point of commission. This includes acting in accordance with the Academy21 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Admissions process

- Admissions to Academy21 are handled on a rolling basis throughout the year. Commissioners can enrol new students through the *Admin Centre* accessed through the Mentor Portal. Our Client Services Team is available to support enrolment queries. When enrolling a student they are required to complete three key stages:

Stage 1 Student Details

Including: Student information, contact information, prior learning, additional requirements

Stage 2 Assign Mentors

Every student requires a mentor to be assigned to them from the school/LA. Mentors can access students' records within their Mentor Portal. They can be assigned to a single student or multiple students within a school. Each student must have a designated Lead Mentor, a Child Protection Mentor, and if in Key Stages 4 or 5, an Exam Mentor. A single individual can fulfil different roles if necessary.

Stage 3 Preferences and Subjects

Start date, study preferences, further prior learning and other information to support building the student's programme.

- Once all the above is completed, the information supplied is reviewed by the Client Services Team and login details for the student(s) are issued to the nominated mentor, subject to acceptance of the contract terms.
- Occasionally, enquiries may lead to admissions to King's InterHigh via Academy21, for example, a school or LA wishes to place a child in King's InterHigh as opposed to Academy21. All such admissions are processed using a specific registration form that shares details between King's InterHigh and Academy21. King's InterHigh leaders then review the potential admission, often a student with additional needs, so the appropriateness of their chosen timetable can be explored and information on their needs can be shared to ensure an effective induction into King's InterHigh is possible.

Admission of students with SEND including those with an Education, Health, and Social Care Plan (EHCP)

- At Academy21, we may be asked to admit a student who has or is in the process of being issued, an EHCP. All requests for admissions should come from an LA, school or other education institution, including those for students with EHCPs. We are a proudly inclusive school and have a number of students with EHCPs or undergoing assessment for an EHCP with additional SEND support. More detail on our support for students with EHCPs can be found in our Educational and welfare provision for students with EHCPs on our website.
- Students with an EHCP typically present with a range of complex needs that may involve one or more of communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional, and mental health difficulties, and sensory, physical, and medical needs. Consequently, schools and LAs are asked to declare whether the student has an EHCP via the enrolment process and share the plan and any other documentation with us for reference. This may include details such as specialist teaching, counselling, personal assistants, therapies, mentoring, medical interventions, and multi-agency working to aid and monitor student progress. Academy21 expects that the client can assure that this additional provision outlined in the personalised plan is in place via other providers so that the online learning element of the plan can be as successful as possible. The LA or school commissioning the place at Academy21 must retain overall responsibility for the delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the personalised plan.
- At enrolment, we ask physical schools to share information about a student's specific interests, aptitudes and needs. This includes any details of any special circumstances relating to the student's health, allergies, disabilities, or special educational needs which may be relevant to their participation in the education provided by Academy21. Early notification of any additional needs or disabilities is of great value, as it will enable all staff to consider whether reasonable adjustments are needed during the admissions process and what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made to support the pupil's future education. In order that Inspired Online Schools is fully compliant with the Equality Act, all staff are made aware of the duties towards children who are disabled and the 'reasonable adjustments' needed for particular children.
- We are a completely inclusive and welcoming provision, which enrolls students from varied backgrounds and with varied need profiles. Our setting allows us to support students so that they can thrive. As a responsible institution, we check our provision is right for each child to ensure that we can support them fully. It needs to be a good fit for them to ensure success. The nature of our provision means that in all but a few circumstances, we are a good fit for a young person and can offer them a place in our alternative provision.
- It is important to note that we cannot be a named provider on an EHCP (section I): this must be the physical school or authority with statutory responsibility for the outcomes of that EHCP, as this gives protection and continuity to a child with SEND. We are an alternative provision engaged by a named provider in concert with the family to help achieve outcomes on an EHCP – in many cases by providing a full taught curriculum. Academy21 is not eligible to be a named school or provider as we are not listed in section 38(3) of the Children and Families Act 2014. A named provider can use funding agreed with their LA for an EHCP to pay for our provision and we are commonly used to meet the outcomes of an EHCP.
- We are guided by the principles and practices of the SEN Code of Practice 2014, applying them where they are relevant to an online independent school. However, we are not bound by the SEN Code of Practice that relates to the statutory responsibilities of Local Authorities and state-funded schools.
- Information regarding a student's special educational needs, especially where they have an EHCP, will be made available to staff. The EHCP and related information will be stored securely on our student management information system for access by relevant staff.
- Academy21 can offer students access to the teaching of the National Curriculum through an online learning platform. Our teachers make adaptations to their day-to-day practice that benefit individual students with specific needs. We also protect and promote the health and well-being of each student, ensuring sensitivity to the welfare of those learners with an EHCP. Our school environment is accessible and inclusive educational practices feature in our development plans.

Out of Year study admissions protocol

At Academy21 we will place students in their chronological age group but recognise that our cohort often requires flexibility as some students have missed parts of their education or have needs, which means studying out-of-year is required by the commissioner. Requests for a student to be admitted to study one or more years above or below the appropriate chronological age group can be made at the point of enrolment. Where the request is to study one year above or below chronological age but within the same phase (i.e. Secondary or Primary), this can be processed by our customer service team. Where commissioners are unsure of which level students are working at, the admissions team will allocate students to their chronological age group for teachers to assess levels.

Primary Key Stage 2 - Years 5 & 6

- Students must be in year 5 or 6 chronologically to be allocated to our primary classes.
- Students who in age terms would be in year 7 or above (secondary) will not be admitted into Primary classes. Academy21 has accessible Key Stage 3 class options for students requiring high levels of support and differentiation.
- Academy21 does not accept enrolments for students chronologically in year 4 or below currently. Our sister school, King's InterHigh has options for younger students if required.
- It is advised that students in year 5 or 6 enrol in classes that match their age, we can permit students to enrol in classes one year above or below in primary.

Key Stage 3 - Years 7-9

- KS3 students are usually placed according to their ability in English, mathematics, and science, which means that students may be in groups with students who are up to 2 years older or younger depending on need. For example, a student who is chronologically in year 9 may be in a year 7 class if required.
- Students will only be placed in classes up to 2 years outside of their age. Exceptions to this will be reviewed by the Executive Head. Students who should chronologically be in year 11, for example, will not be enrolled in year 7 or 8 classes.

Key Stage 4 - Years 10 & 11

- In English and science, Year 10s and 11s have separate groups, although sometimes students who are above or below the chronological age group may be allocated to these groups, particularly if they are taking their exams later than their peers or accelerating their learning.
- An exception is the *'Everyday Science Course'*, which is a mixed Year 10 and 11 group. Year 10s can do this course to progress to GCSE, whereas Year 11s can do the course in one year and get an entry-level certificate.
- KS4 mathematics groups are composed of Year 10 and 11 students as the group allocation is based on ability.
- Students who are currently aged 17-19 may be placed in GCSE groups. This enables students who would ordinarily be in college or sixth form to access Academy21 to support GCSE retakes.
- Students aged 18-19 will be placed in year 11 groups. Adults aged 20 and above are not permitted to join any Academy21 groups.
- For safeguarding reasons, any student already aged 18 at the time of enrolment or is yet to enrol and will be 18 during the academic year in question will also require a Basic DBS check. The student must agree to apply for a DBS check and agree to allow Inspired Online Schools to view the findings.
- The commissioner must process this check and provide Academy21 with the findings of their basic DBS check. The Admissions Panel, including the Executive Head or equivalent, will expect to view the findings of the DBS review. Where no disclosures are reported and the results of the check acceptable, Academy21 will then arrange for admission.

- Where a DBS identifies a disclosure, the Admissions Panel will assess risk.
The risk assessment would consider:
 - Whether the conviction is relevant.
 - The seriousness of the offence.
 - The length of time since the offence was committed.
 - Whether there is a pattern of offending.
 - Whether the pupil's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour was committed.
 - Whether there are any circumstances surrounding the offence that would explain the individual's actions.
 - The risk to others.
- The Admissions Panel would then make and convey its decision such that the student should either be admitted and granted access to live lessons or have the application for admission to Academy21 declined.
- Commissioners whose application for the admission of a child(ren) is turned down may appeal the decision, providing they do so in writing within 20 working days of receiving the decision.
- An Appeals Panel, none of whom reviewed the original decision, will consider the case within 10 working days. Their decision will be conveyed in writing to the family/mentor appealing and this decision will be final.

Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- E-Safety Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Behaviour Policy