



ADMISSIONS POLICY

2026-2028

Date Policy approved and adopted:	September 2025
Reviewed:	September 2026
Review due by:	September 2028

Contents:

Page

3 Introduction

3 Admissions

4 Transfers

4 Children missing in education

Introduction

Admission to Heron Academy will be by way of the school being named within an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The School Admission Code December 2021 and the Equality Act 2010 underpin the approach taken in this policy and Heron seek to comply with both, to the extent required by law and in order to ensure best practice in our admission arrangements.

This policy will be published on the Heron Academy Schools' website.

All statutory references below are to the Children and Families Act 2014.

As part of the EHCP the parents/carers will have the right to request the Local Authority that maintains the Plan to name the school of their choice (s.38 (2) (b) (ii)). The local authority will be required to consult with the proprietor of Heron Academy (s.39 (2)) and to determine if the proposed placement is:

- a) suitable for the particular needs of the child (s.39(4)(a));
- b) incompatible with the efficient education of other children (s.39(4)(b)(i)) and
- c) an efficient use of resources (s.39(4)(b)(ii)).

Admissions

The school is funded for 90 pupils with severe learning difficulties and associated disabilities in the age range 11– 19 years.

Before a child is admitted to school it is usual for the LA to have conducted a multidisciplinary assessment to assess a child's learning difficulty and determine the special education provision the child needs. The outcome of assessment results in an Education Health Care Plan.

Some parents may wish to visit the school informally. Details about the child and possible admission are not entered into. The visit is just to see the school.

Parents and their child are invited to the school to meet the Headteacher and see the school. At this meeting general information is shared as well as discussing the way in which the school is able to meet the needs of the child.

All communications both verbal and written are kept as jargon free as possible. The school is mindful that for parents for whom English is a second language the help of an interpreter will be necessary when visits take place.

Following the meeting with the Headteacher and a tour of the school from the Family Liaison Officer Heron may be named on the pupils EHCP. When families have accepted the placement, dates of admissions are indicated to parents and opportunities offered for parents and child to visit on a number of occasions for transition sessions, to share in school activities which allows for a smooth transition from primary to secondary school before the admission date. Home visits are carried out by staff if a visit to the child's previous setting is not possible.

It is usual for the Lambeth Special Needs Transition Team to have had considerable involvement with the child and parents. Regular discussions take place between the team leader of this service and the Heron admissions team to discuss ways to facilitate the transition of each child to school.

Providing places are available, the school is able to admit pupils at the beginning of the Autumn Term. Admission at any other time is negotiable depending upon individual circumstances. Disruption to the education of other pupils in the school is also a factor to be considered.

First contact with parents is considered crucial in promoting a Home/School partnership. Our school is a very welcoming community and we are all mindful of and sensitive to the concerns and anxieties of families.

Gender, Ethnic background or social status do not influence a child's admission to school. The school has no catchment area and may admit pupils from all areas of the borough of Lambeth and also from neighbouring Local Authorities if places are available.

Transfers

Transfer from Heron is planned very carefully with parents and the Local Authority. It is usual that pupils leave Heron at the end of Year 14 in the Summer Term, although there may be circumstances whereby a child may transfer at an earlier date, depending upon the outcome of the Annual Review of their needs.

Annual Reviews for transfer take place in the Autumn Term. At this point in time advice from all professionals is taken to help parents to decide on the next school. Advice from the Educational Psychologist is especially important as it is an objective assessment. At the review, information is given about possible schools for children and parents are encouraged to look at all schools recommended. We understand how difficult this time can be for families and full support is offered by school staff. If families would like staff to visit schools with them then this is possible.

When parents have visited schools and decided where they would like their child to transfer, a request is made to the Local Authority. When a place is awarded parents are notified and the new school is named in the child's EHC Plan.

Staff at Heron link very closely with other schools. When future placements are agreed the schools, pastoral lead approaches the new schools to arrange to share information about children and to organise visits for children in the Summer Term.

It is our aim that pupils will start their new school knowing their new classroom and teacher and having met their new classmates. School visits begin with familiar staff supporting, and this is gradually withdrawn as visits continue. The number of visits varies from school to school and each year depending on school calendars. Where necessary, individuals can have a very personal programme for transition where needs dictate this.

Children Missing Education

Any child starting or leaving school for whatever reason at whatever time of the year, will be in liaison with the LA SENSTART team. The LA will determine when a child needs to be added to the school register or off registered. This is to ensure that all children can be tracked and are not at risk of being 'missing from education'.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Equalities Policy and Attendance Policy.