

The Lotus Academy Trust



Supporting children to find opportunities in every difficulty

The Damara School



Specialist SEMH Independent School

Approved by: Trust Board

Initial Ratification: 31 August 2019
Sep 2026

Review: October 2020; Oct 2021, Sept 2023, Sep 2025,

Next review due by: September 2028

Vision

Our vision is to provide every pupil with safe, rewarding, personalised education and support to improve their life chances, prepare them for life and the world of work.

The school is a co-educational day school, providing specialist education for up to 32 pupils, aged 5-16 years with a primary diagnosis of social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH). The school is non-denominational and has a secular ethos but respects the cultural needs and religious beliefs of all.

Aims

The purpose of this policy is to set out the school's admission procedures and to demonstrate that pupil admissions will be fair, open, and transparent.

Legislation and guidance

The Admissions Policy is in accordance with:

- Regulation 5 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- Departmental guidance on school attendance (page 7)
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance 2016
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006: regulation 15
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006: regulation 10

Admission Criteria

- The pupil will be aged between 5 and 16 years
- Pupils have a primary diagnosis of social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH)
- Pupils must be referred to the school by Local Authority Commissioners and not directly by parents or carers
- Pupils may have Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) however this is not a requirement for a referral
- The pupil may have learning difficulties and/or low attainment that are associated with their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Difficulties are often the cause or the result of other special educational needs
- Difficulties may arise out of difficult life experiences or be the result of some medical condition. Some pupils may have a long history of disturbed, difficult or delinquent behaviour of a serious kind that may include violence towards peers and/or adults
- The pupil must express a commitment to the placement
- The pupil's parents/carers must express a commitment to the placement
- The admittance of the pupil will not be detrimental to other pupils already on the school roll
- There is a space available in the pupil's academic year group

The LA will:

- Provide the school with all current advice and information concerning the pupil
- Name the school in Section I of the EHC Plan
- Agree contractual arrangements for transporting the pupil to and from school

The Consultation Process

Stage 1

Consultations made to the school will normally be made by the Local Authority through their individual systems or processes.

The CEO will assess whether or not the school can meet the pupil's needs and if so, arrange for an initial visit to the school.

Stage 2

The visit to the school will include:

- a tour of the school
- an introduction to key staff
- a discussion with senior staff concerning school policies and procedures and the assessment programme

Visitors will also receive relevant information or be directed to the website.

Stage 3

If, following the visit, we believe we can meet the needs based on stage 2 and that the pupil and parents/carers are committed to the placement, then the CEO will respond to the commissioner's request to offer a place and arrangements will be made for admission.

Stage 4

Once the pupil walks through our doors, the pupil will engage in an intensive assessment programme, which can take up to two weeks to complete. During this time the pupil will attend some lessons. The assessment programme includes the use of evidence-based diagnostic and personality assessments to determine the pupil's academic levels, strengths, skills, prior knowledge, concerns, and aspirations. All data produced during the assessment programme forms the benchmark or starting point from which progress is measured and informs personalised planning and interventions.

Information provided to parents on offer of a place

The following information will be provided to all parents and prospective parents of pupils:

- a. the school's address and telephone number
- b. name of Deputy Head and CEO
- c. information relating to the proprietor
- d. contact details of the Chair of Trustees
- e. the school's aims and ethos

Completing the Admissions Register

The school admissions register contains an index, in alphabetical order, of all the pupils at the school. (see Appendix 2)

A pupil is classed as a pupil at the school "from the first day they attend the school"

It includes the following details for each pupil:

- Full name
- Sex
- The name and address of every known parent and an indication of the parent(s) with whom the child normally resides
- Emergency contact details of the parent with whom the pupil normally lives (include at least 2 emergency contacts)
- Day, month and year of birth
- Day, month and year of admission (or re-admission) to the school
- Name and address of the school last attended, if any

Pupils with multiple addresses, or whose address will change

If a parent tells the school that the pupil will live with a parent at another address in the future (either as well as, or instead of, the pupil's current address), the register must include:

- The full name of the parent with whom the pupil will normally live
- The pupil's new address
- The dates from which it is expected the pupil will live there

This information is only required where it is reasonably practicable for the school to obtain it.

Dual-registered pupils, or pupils moving to another school

If a parent tells the school that the pupil is also registered at another school, or will be attending another school in the future, the register must include:

- The other school's name
- The first date on which the pupil attended or is due to attend that school

Again, this information is only required where it is reasonably practicable for the school to obtain it.

Establishing a pupil's 'full name'?

This would normally be the same as the name on the pupil's birth certificate or other official identity document. However, it may also be the full name by which the pupil is generally known.

The school should be satisfied that it is "reasonably practical" for the local authority (LA) to identify the pupil and match up the name on the admission register with information held by other public bodies.

There is no requirement to see a copy of a child's birth certificate, nor is there any other mandatory documentation that parents have to provide to confirm their child's details.

So long as the school's admission authority is satisfied that the information supplied on a child is correct, they can enter this into the admission register.

Holding the register electronically

The admission register will be kept by means of a computer, provided that:

- A back-up copy is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic, micro-fiche or printed copy
 - The admissions register is held electronically in cloud-based storage
- Inspectors (both Ofsted and any LA officer authorised) are allowed access to the electronic register and back-up copies
- Any amendments, their dates, the reasons for them, and the name or title of the person who made the amendments are made clear
- Back-up copies are retained for a period of 3 years after the end of the school year to which they relate

Point of contact

The point of contact for commissioners is CEO: Sandra Govender (07860537119)

Pupil Admission Numbers

The school has a pupil admission number of 32 full-time equivalent (FTE) places.

Pupil registration and information sharing

The school will make sure that all pupils are registered accordingly in line with section 434 of the Education Act 1996.

Equal Opportunities

The school is committed to equal opportunities and admits pupils across the full spectrum of academic abilities. All pupils have equal access to the holistic curriculum and additional therapeutic support. We are committed to meeting the duties set out in The Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

The Damara School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children throughout the admissions process and beyond. We recognise that effective safeguarding begins before a pupil joins our school.

Our Commitment

All admissions processes and procedures comply with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**. We are committed to:

- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all prospective pupils
- Following safer recruitment practices for all staff involved in the admissions process
- Creating a culture where children feel safe to share concerns
- Working in partnership with parents, carers, and other agencies to protect children

Safeguarding During the Admissions Process

Pre-Admission Information Gathering

When considering a consultation, we will review all information, including any safeguarding information.

Information Sharing

We recognise that effective safeguarding requires appropriate information sharing. During the admissions process:

- We will share relevant safeguarding information with appropriate professionals involved in the child's care
- All information sharing will be conducted in line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023** and **Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners 2018**
- We will be transparent with parents/carers about what information we need to share, except where doing so would place the child at risk of harm
- We will maintain detailed records of all safeguarding information received and shared

Disclosures During Visits

During school visits, staff may become aware of safeguarding concerns. If this occurs:

- Staff will respond appropriately and sensitively to any disclosures
- All concerns will be reported immediately to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- The DSL will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Where necessary, referrals will be made to children's social care and/or the police
- The safety and wellbeing of the child will be the paramount consideration in any decision about whether to proceed with the placement

Assessing Our Ability to Safeguard

Before offering a place, we will assess whether we can meet the pupil's needs and keep them safe. This includes considering:

- Whether we have the expertise, resources, and support systems to manage any identified risks
- Whether admitting the pupil would compromise the safety of other pupils or staff
- What additional safeguarding measures or support may be required
- Whether a multi-agency approach is needed to keep the child safe

Safer Recruitment

All staff involved in the admissions process will have:

- Enhanced DBS checks with barred list information
- Completed safer recruitment training
- Read and understood Part One and Annex A of KCSIE 2025
- Received training on recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns

Key Safeguarding Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Julie Cox (Assistant Headteacher) jcox@lotustrust.org.uk
01842773673

Deputy DSL(s): Sandra Govender (CEO) ceo@lotustrust.org.uk

Safeguarding Governor/Trustee: Lucy Evans, levans@lotustrust.org.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): LADO@suffolk.gov.uk / 0300 123 2044
LADO@norfolk.gov.uk / 0344 800 8020

Children's Advice and Duty Service: 03448008021

Data Protection and Privacy

The Damara School is committed to protecting the privacy and security of personal information in accordance with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

Our Role as Data Controller

The school is the data controller for the personal information we collect during the admissions process. We are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

What Information We Collect

During the admissions process, we collect and process the following categories of personal data:

About the Pupil:

- Full name, sex, date of birth
- Contact address and any additional addresses
- Current school year, last school attended, date of last attendance
- Information about EAL status, pupil premium eligibility, looked after status
- Medical needs, known allergies, dietary requirements, accessibility issues
- Educational attainment data and attendance information
- Exclusion history and behaviour information
- SEND profile including primary and secondary needs, diagnoses, professional reports
- Social, emotional and mental health information
- Details of agency involvement (YOT, police, CAMHS, social care)
- Stakeholder views including pupil and parent views

- Safeguarding information including child protection records

About Parents/Carers:

- Names and addresses of all known parents
- Indication of which parent(s) the child normally resides with
- Emergency contact details (at least 2 contacts)
- Telephone numbers and email addresses
- Family overview information
- Information about parental responsibility and court orders

Special Category Data

We will process special category personal data (including health information, information about disabilities, and information about ethnic origin) only where we have a lawful basis to do so. Our lawful bases include:

- **Article 6(1)(c)**: Processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation (e.g., meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010)
- **Article 6(1)(e)**: Processing is necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest (e.g., providing education)
- **Article 9(2)(b)**: Processing is necessary for carrying out obligations under employment, social security or social protection law
- **Article 9(2)(g)**: Processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest

Why We Collect This Information

We collect and use this personal data to:

- Assess whether the school can meet the pupil's needs
- Determine whether the pupil meets our admission criteria
- Comply with our legal obligations under education and safeguarding legislation
- Plan appropriate support, interventions and personalised provision
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and others
- Communicate with parents/carers and other professionals
- Maintain accurate records as required by law

Who We Share Information With

We may share personal data collected during admissions with:

- **The referring local authority** - to confirm placement decisions and arrange funding
- **Previous schools** - to obtain educational records and safeguarding information
- **Local authority children's services** - where there are safeguarding concerns or the child is looked after
- **Health professionals** - including CAMHS, school nurses, and medical practitioners involved in the child's care
- **Other agencies** - such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, and youth offending teams where relevant to the placement
- **The Department for Education (DfE)** - we are required to share certain pupil information with the DfE under statutory data collections
- **Our regulatory body** - Ofsted may request access to pupil records during inspections

We will only share personal data when we have a legal basis to do so, and we will ensure appropriate safeguards are in place.

How Long We Keep Information

Successful Applications:

Once a pupil is admitted, their information becomes part of their educational record and will be retained in accordance with our Data Retention Policy and the Information and Records Management Society (IRMS) guidance:

- The admissions register and back-up copies are retained for a period of 3 years after the end of the school year to which they relate

- Pupil files are retained until the pupil's 25th birthday
- Safeguarding records are retained until the pupil's 25th birthday (or longer if serious concerns)

Unsuccessful consultations:

For pupils who are consulted but not offered a place, or who are offered a place but do not take it up:

- Consultation information will be retained for 6 months after the decision, then securely destroyed
- If safeguarding concerns were identified, relevant information will be retained and shared appropriately with the referring authority

Your Rights

Under data protection law, parents/carers and pupils (where appropriate) have rights including:

- **Right of access** - you can request a copy of the personal data we hold
- **Right to rectification** - you can ask us to correct inaccurate information
- **Right to erasure** - in certain circumstances, you can ask us to delete information (though this may not apply where we have a legal obligation to retain it)
- **Right to restrict processing** - you can ask us to limit how we use information in certain circumstances
- **Right to object** - you can object to processing in certain circumstances
- **Right to data portability** - you can request a copy of certain information in a portable format

To exercise any of these rights, please contact our Data Protection Officer (see below).

Privacy Notice

We will provide parents/carers with a full privacy notice at the point of referral, which contains more detailed information about how we process personal data. This is available:

- On our website at www.lotustrust.org.uk
- On request from the school office
- As part of the new pupil pack

Data Security

We take the security of personal data seriously. We have appropriate technical and organisational measures in place to protect personal data, including:

- Secure cloud-based storage for electronic records
- Regular back-ups of electronic data
- Restricted access to personal data on a need-to-know basis
- Staff training on data protection and confidentiality
- Secure disposal of paper records
- Encryption of sensitive data

Contact Information

Data Protection Officer: Sandra Govender

Email: ceo@lotustrust.org.uk

Telephone: 07860537119

Address: The Damara School, The Maltings, Raymond Street, Thetford IP24 2EA

If you have concerns about how we handle personal data, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

ICO Helpline: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk

Removing a pupil from roll (cessation of placement)

1. Pupils of compulsory school age

We will legally delete a pupil of compulsory school age from our admission register if they:

- Are registered at more than one school and have ceased to attend our school, and the proprietor of any other school at which they are registered has given consent to the deletion
- Have ceased to attend our school and we have received written notification from the commissioner that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school
- Have ceased to attend our school and no longer usually live at a place which is a reasonable distance from our school
- Are certified by a medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and the commissioner has indicated to our school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- Have been continuously absent from our school for a period of 20 school days and:
 - At no time was their absence during that period authorised by our school; and
 - We do not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend our school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and
 - Both us and the LA have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is
- Have been detained as a result of a final court order or order of recall for 4 months and we do not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to school at the end of that period
- Have died
- Will cease to be of compulsory school age before our school next meets and they have indicated that they will cease to attend our school
- Have ceased to be a pupil of our school
- The placement has been ceased from our school

This is explained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and its 2013 and 2016 amendments.

2. Pupils at special schools

As The Damara School is a specialist provision, a pupil who is registered at a special school under arrangements made by an LA cannot be removed from our school's admission register without the consent of that LA, or if that LA refuses to give consent, without a direction of the Secretary of State.

3. Pupils not of compulsory school age

We do not accept any consultations from pupils not of compulsory school age.

This is explained in the DfE's guidance on children missing education (pages 12 to 14) which also includes a list of actions which it's "reasonable to expect" that the LA and the school complete and record one or more of, in the event of a child's whereabouts being unclear or unknown.

Monitoring arrangements

This admissions policy will be reviewed by the Head of School and ratified by the full trust board every 2 years. At each review, the policy will be approved by the CEO.

Appendix 1: Pupil Admissions Form

Pupil Admission Form

UPN:

Name of pupil		
Surname	Middle Names	First Name
Prefer to be known as (if different):		

Sex and Sexual orientation	
At birth	☐ ☐ ☐ Female Male Prefer not to say
Is your gender the same as the sex you were registered at birth?	☐ Yes No Prefer not to say ☐ ☐
Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	Straight/Heterosexual Gay or Lesbian Bisexual ☐ ☐ ☐ Other sexual orientation Prefer not to say

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Ethnicity		
White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British - Irish - Gypsy or Irish Traveller - Any other White background	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean - White and Black African - White and Asian - Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background	Asian or Asian British - Indian - Pakistani - Bangladeshi - Chinese - Any other Asian background
Black, African, Caribbean or Black British - African - Caribbean - Any other Black, African or Caribbean background	Other ethnic group	Prefer not to say
Religion and Belief		
What is your religion, even if you are not currently practising? - Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations) - Buddhist - Hindu - Jewish - Muslim - Sikh	- Any other religion (please describe) - No religion - Atheist	Do you consider that you are actively practising your religion? - Yes - No
Disabilities		

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

☐ ☐

Yes, limited a little

Yes, limited a lot

☐ ☐

No

Prefer not to say

If you answered 'yes', please indicate your disability:

Date of Birth		
Day	Month	Year (in full)

Admission Date		
Day	Month	Year (in full)

Vulnerable group	
☐ ☐	
Looked after children (CLA)	Free School Meals (FSM)
☐ ☐	
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils	Asylum seekers, refugees and new migrants
☐ ☐	
Young carers	Young offenders

Last School Attended		
Name of school	Address	Date off roll

Parent 1

Full Name:	Relationship to pupil:	Does the pupil normally reside with this parent? Yes / No
Address:	Telephone Number: Landline Telephone Number: Mobile	Email address: Can all pupil information be shared with this parent? Yes / No
Parent 2		
Full Name:	Relationship to pupil:	Does the pupil normally reside with this parent? Yes / No
Address:	Telephone Number: Landline Telephone Number: Mobile	Email address: Can all pupil information be shared with this parent? Yes / No

Emergency Contact 1		
Full Name:	Relationship to pupil:	Does the pupil normally reside with this parent? Yes / No
Address:	Telephone Number: Landline	Email address:

	Telephone Number: Mobile 	Has parent agreed for this contact to pick up pupil, if required? Yes / No
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Emergency Contact 2		
Full Name: 	Relationship to pupil: 	Does the pupil normally reside with this parent? Yes / No
Address: 	Telephone Number: Landline Telephone Number: Mobile	Email address: Has parent agreed for this contact to pick up pupil, if required? Yes / No

Medical information		
Name and address of GP 	Medical Conditions (Diagnosed) 	Medical Conditions (Undiagnosed)
Care Plan: Yes / No 	Allergies and Food Intolerances 	Any other medical concerns?
SEND Categories (please provide evidence)		
☐ ☐ Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) ☐ ☐ Severe learning difficulty (SLD) ☐ ☐ Moderate learning difficulty (MLD) ☐ Profound and multiple learning difficulty (PMLD)		

☐	Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)	Visual impairment (VI)
☐		
☐	Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)	Hearing impairment (HI)
☐		
☐	Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)	Multisensory impairment (MSI)
☐	'SEN support' but no specialist assessment of type of need (NSA)	
☐	Physical disability (PD)	
Date off roll (official)		
Day	Month	Year (in full)

Appendix 2: Admissions Register

This is electronically captured within our SIMS.

[illegible]

Appendix 3: Off rolling form

We will use the LA template.