

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Indie Education is a specialist post-16 alternative provision offering tailored education and support for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The purpose of this Policy is to outline our admissions process, eligibility criteria, and communication protocols with parents/carers as well as Local Authorities (LAs).
- 1.2 The Policy has been written in alignment with:
- (a) The Children and Families Act 2014
 - (b) The SEND Code of Practice (2015)
 - (c) The Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance (2013)
 - (d) The Equality Act 2010

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all Indie Education (**Indie**) learners and employees (including full time, part time, permanent, fixed term and casual).

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 3.1 Admission to Indie Education is for learners who:
- (a) Are aged **16 to 19**
 - (b) Have an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** or are in the process of assessment
 - (c) Require a bespoke, flexible curriculum that cannot be met in mainstream or traditional further education settings
 - (d) Present with needs such as autism, communication and interaction difficulties, or social, emotional and mental health challenges
- 3.2 We also consider referrals for learners without EHCPs where there is clear evidence of unmet need and where alternative provision is deemed appropriate by the commissioning body.

4. REFERRAL AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 4.1 Referrals may be made by:
- (a) Local Authorities
 - (b) Parents/carers
 - (c) Schools, colleges, or other professionals (e.g., SENCOs, social workers)
- 4.2 Upon receiving a referral, Indie Education will:
- (a) Review the learner's EHCP (if applicable) and supporting documentation
 - (b) Conduct an initial assessment, which may include interviews, observations, and trial sessions
 - (c) Determine whether the provision can meet the learner's needs effectively and safely

5. DECISION AND OFFER

5.1 If Indie Education can meet the learner's needs:

- (a) A formal offer will be made to the commissioning LA or parent/carer
- (b) The offer will include a proposed start date, programme outline, and funding requirements
- (c) Confirmation of placement must be received within a specified timeframe (typically 15 working days)

6. OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

6.1 If capacity is limited, priority will be given to:

- (a) Learners who are looked-after or previously looked-after
- (b) Learners whose needs most closely match the provision's specialism
- (c) Learners residing within a reasonable travel distance

7. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

7.1 If a referral is declined:

- (a) The LA or parent/carer may appeal via the SEND Tribunal (if EHCP-related)
- (b) Complaints about the admissions process should follow Indie Education's published Complaints Policy

8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

8.1 Indie Education is committed to inclusive practice and will make reasonable adjustments to support learners with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, or other additional needs, where feasible.

9. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS AND LAS

9.1 We ensure transparency by:

- (a) Publishing this policy on our website
- (b) Offering open days and transition visits
- (c) Providing written feedback following assessments

10. POLICY REVIEW

10.1 In accordance with Indie's policy review protocol, this Policy will be reviewed annually. If there are material changes to circumstances before the 12-month review period, the Policy will be reviewed immediately to ensure its contents remain effective and up to date.

11. AUTHORISATION

11.1 This document has been authorised by the Chief Executive Officer and Indie Board of Trustees.