



Referrals and Admissions Policy

R.E.A.L. Education Ltd
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Section 1: The Policy

1.1 The Introduction

The Directors of R.E.A.L. Education Limited and R.E.A.L. Independent Schools (hereinafter referred to as `the Company`, or R.E.A.L. Education) place great importance on, and are committed to, ensuring the equity and equality of access and outcomes for all young people. This policy will set out the procedures and practice for managing internal and external referrals for commissioners of our services. The company is committed to ensuring the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults and this policy has due regard to the Data Protection Act 1998, School Admissions Code 2014, R.E.A.L. Independent Schools admissions policies.

1.2 The Referrals and Admissions Policy Statement

The purpose of our policy is to provide commissioners with clear information about our services, costs, processes and procedures so they are able to make an informed decision, dependent on the individual needs, regarding the educational provision on behalf of the young people and their families.

1.3 Statutory Guidance & Legislation relating to this Policy

- Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, as amended by section 3A of the Children, Schools and Families Act 2010;
- Section 29A of the Education Act 2002;
- Sections 6A and 100 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Sections 1C and 4 of the Academies Act 2010 (as amended);
- The Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Application of Enactments) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Management Committees etc.) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) Regulations 2010;
- The Education (Short Stay Schools) (Closure) (England) Regulations 2010;
- The Pupil Referral Units (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2012; and
- The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

1.4 Provision and Services offered by R.E.A.L. Education

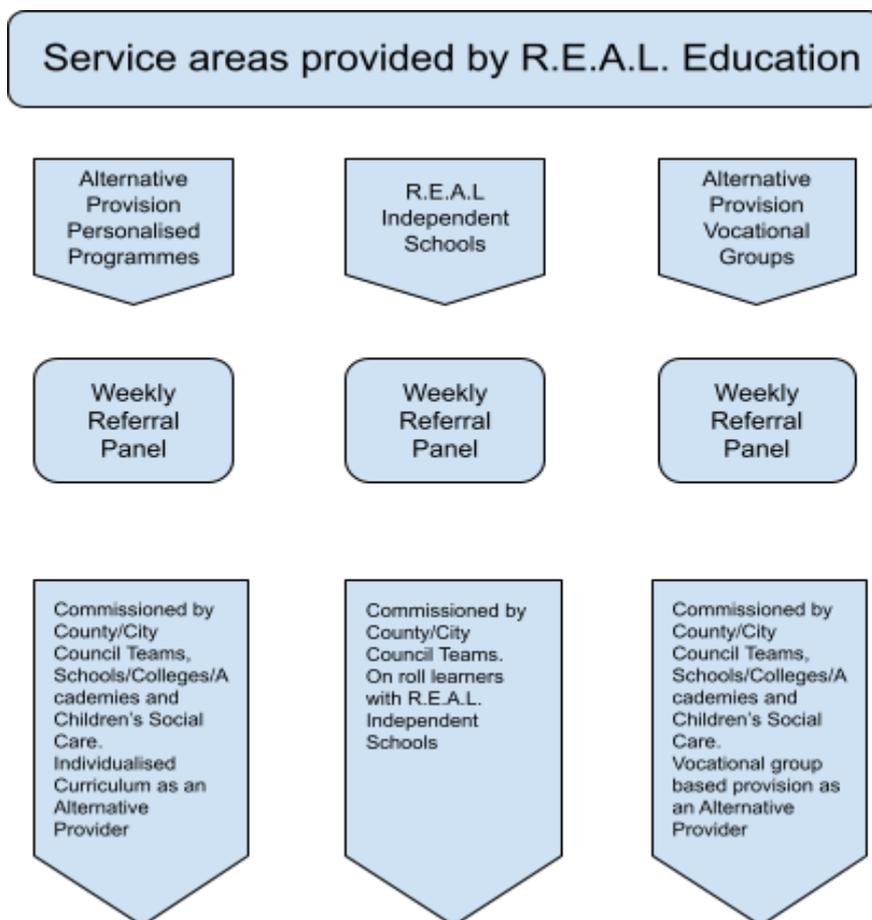


Diagram 1

Section 2: Referrals

2.1 An overview of the referral process

All referrals to R.E.A.L. including on roll school requests are initially dealt with by The Referrals & Intervention Team, the single point of access to all education services provided by R.E.A.L. Education Limited and R.E.A.L. Independent Schools. The team comprises of the Head of Referrals and Commissioning who has the overall responsibility for all referrals and enquiries to R.E.A.L. Education and a Hub Manager who is responsible for the implementation of the overall Referral Policy. The Hub Manager also coordinates and manages the work of the whole team, a team of Specialist Team Assistants who work on a one to one and small group basis with young people delivering planned and agreed assessment activities and interventions.

The referral process sometimes begins with an initial enquiry from a range of commissioners and parents, including; individual schools or academies, children's social care, independent social care, County/City Council officers with a lead in fair access protocols or education,

health and care pathways, and other agencies with the responsibility for commissioning additional educational provision. A referral is made through the completion of the relevant referral information form, a pupil pen picture and a risk assessment and this is usually emailed to us. Other information may also be given at this stage, and can include:

- A copy of the most recent Education, Health and Care Plan
- Details of the child's social history and current circumstances.
- Copies of any psychiatric or other recent assessments e.g. Asset, AIMS assessment, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy
- An outline of the child's medical history if the referral is health related
- Any other reports which give additional information, e.g. placement reports, current care plan, risk assessments, review reports etc. medical information or core assessments.

At this point, the referral is logged and checked as to what is being requested and actioned if possible, especially if the request is for a placement in the vocational group provision. A Referral Tracker is maintained to log and track the progress of all requests for support and the responsibility for this sits with the Head of Referrals and Commissioning.

All information is then discussed at a weekly referral panel to review the progress of referrals and to allocate new ones to be actioned. The Head of Referrals and Commissioning and the Provision Services Team will respond to requests for support and will allocate between the whole team, requests to be actioned. Requests for support/provision will be responded to in the following way;

- There is usually a response date attached to the requests from a County/City Council officer and these will be adhered to. Response forms will be completed by the Head of Referrals and Commissioning and the Provision Services Team.
- Once we have been notified that our written response to a request has been successful, we will contact the commissioner wherever possible within 24 hours to acknowledge their acceptance and a Learning Manager will be allocated who will then arrange a home visit to meet the learner and their parents/carers.
- If the referral has come directly just to us, the commissioner will be contacted by telephone no later than 48 hours after the Referral Meeting. The commissioner will be offered a meeting to discuss our provision and offer, their referral in more detail and this will take place as soon as possible depending upon their availability but it is hoped that the meeting takes place within 4 - 5 working days. A meeting between the learner and their parents/carers is agreed by the commissioner, again to take place as soon as possible depending upon the availability of the parent.
- The allocated Learning Manager will attend the home (or at a venue suitable for the family) visit to discuss the offer of provision, complete the risk assessment and consent forms and if needed, arrange visits to venue's. The Learning Manager assumes responsibility for the learner.
- If an assessment type package has been agreed with the Referrals and Intervention Team, these sessions will be timetabled and will usually be for a maximum of 6 weeks, up to 5 sessions per week. At this point, if required, the main timetable team is informed of the potential timescales for transfer of the learner to the main timetable, again to avoid delays in provision in the future.

- The Referral and Intervention Team can also work with learners for longer periods of time as determined by the commissioner at the point of referral.
- If the referral is for a vocational placement only, this will be forwarded immediately to the Vocational Provision Manager for action. The referral will still be logged on the Referral Tracker.

The admission of a child to the services provided by R.E.A.L. Education is a process that demands sensitive and skilful handling. It can be a stressful and anxious time for both the child and the parents or carers. An understanding of the underlying issues which have resulted in a young person being referred to a provision outside of mainstream education is essential to be able to offer the appropriate support. Therefore, in parallel to the practical and administrative issues which need to be dealt with, our procedures also endeavour to support the emotional needs of the child and his/her family. Therefore:

1. The allocated Learning Manager will take every step to ensure that the young person is supported during the initial assessment process and will take every step to help prepare all the identified staff on his/her individual timetable for the admission of the child.
2. The Learning Manager, with the support of the relevant business support staff, will ensure that information systems are set up for the child. This will include emergency details, risk assessments and pupil pen picture to be disseminated to the team around the child (e.g. the staff members allocated to the young person's timetable).
3. All initial sessions with the young person are carefully coordinated and are within pre-agreed venues with transport from their home. The Learning Manager will orchestrate meetings with the young person and all of the key staff they will be working with on their timetable.

2.2 Cost of provision

The cost of any provision is an integral part of the commissioning process. At R.E.A.L. Education there isn't a one size fits all approach to our work and our timetables are flexible to accommodate a bespoke curriculum for each individual young person. This means that costs can vary, depending on the menu of options chosen.

The menu of provision can include one or more of the following options:

1. half day or full day sessions across part of a week, or full time
2. 1:1 provision with a Teaching Assistant - usually as part of entry level courses such as functional skills, AIMS awards
3. 1:1 provision with a Specialist Teaching Assistant - usually as part of additional value subjects such as Personal & Social Development (PSD), and Well-Being.
4. 1:1 provision with a Teacher - usually as part of a GCSE pathway such as English, maths, ICT, or science
5. 2:1 provision where a risk assessment identifies a requirement
6. participation in small curriculum groups - usually as part of GCSE subject classes such as English or maths
7. participation in vocational group work pathways such as mechanics, construction, sports and public services, music, creative digital, catering, adventure and land based studies.
8. assessment based sessions

9. case management coordination including curriculum timetable planning, management of teaching staff, safeguarding, family liaison, transport coordination, attainment and progression tracking, attendance at meetings, quality assurance (including unannounced drop in and lesson observations) and end of term reports
10. transport to and from sessions
11. other specialist interventions including 1:1 dyslexia intervention teaching (including assistive technologies), career guidance interviews and counselling.
12. exam hosting facilities, or short term intensive sessions leading directly to functional skills assessments and tests

The cost of a bespoke package can vary, depending on the options chosen and the level of staff involved in the delivery. Costs include full case coordination through an allocated Learning Manager. The case coordination includes services such as: assessment, tracking and progression data, management of all timetabled sessions and curriculum (including the transportation of young people and risk assessments of venues), attendance at statutory meetings (e.g. Looked After Child Reviews, Child Protection Conferences, Education, Health and Care Plan reviews), attendance at other requested meetings and all elements of safeguarding young people, including the monitoring and reporting of concerns and disclosures. The Learning Manager is also integral to the quality assurance of teaching and learning providing unannounced inspection of venues and staff, termly work scrutiny exercises and annual graded lesson observations.

The role of the Learning Manager can be graduated depending on the needs of the commissioner, and the complexity of the learner, and the weekly fee can reflect the level of support required.

2.3 Receipt of a referral

As described above, referrals are predominantly received electronically. Any information relating to young people who do not go on to receive any services from R.E.A.L. Education is confidentially destroyed. However, decisions relating to allocating provision are recorded and stored securely in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018).

2.4 Allocation of a referral

Decisions are made based on the following criteria

- The current capacity and availability of staff and provision in the required locality.
- Whether the educational needs of the child can be met within our range of services.
- The potential risks the child would pose to other children and staff.
- The vulnerability of the child to risks posed by other children.
- The overall suitability of placement within the current pupil group and the likely impact of this for the new referral and existing learners.
- Environmental factors – some venues may have limited access for children with significant mobility problems, or children with serious visual impairments.
- Whether our services can meet the social, cultural and language needs of the child.
- Any other individual resources which might need to be provided to meet the specific needs of the child.

2.5 Referral priorities

The referral priorities are significant where capacity is limited¹. In these cases the following criteria will be used. The criteria below are in no particular order. We will always prioritise those most in need

- Looked After Child, Child in Care
- Child in Need/Child Protection Plan
- Without a school place
- No current access to full time provision
- Placement due to Fair Access Protocols²
- In receipt of an Education Health Care Plan
- Currently being assessed/due to be assessed for an Education, Health and Care Plan
- At risk of permanent exclusion
- In custody/due for release/subject to a Court Order
- Currently in receipt of support after adoption by social care
- Health Related Learner

2.6 Referral timescales

Decisions regarding the offer of provision are taken by R.E.A.L. senior managers from across the organisation at a weekly referral panel. The Head of Referrals and Commissioning chairs the meeting. The panel meets every Monday morning (during term time) and all new learners are discussed. The panel takes into consideration the individual needs of each learner, where they live, the nature of the provision to be commissioned and allocate resources accordingly. All decisions made at the panel meeting are communicated to the relevant commissioner within 48 hours of the meeting being held.

Section 3: The Assessment Service

3.1 The core offer

The Referrals and Interventions Team also provides an assessment service for commissioners and the R.E.A.L. Independent Schools. The assessment package provides commissioners with a service for young people where their academic levels and interests

¹ Priorities do vary across the different areas of service (see diagram 1). For example admissions into the independent schools are subject to separate policies and criteria (see section 5). The referral priorities referred to here are predominantly related to provision within personalised programmes.

² The majority of applications for school places will be dealt with through normal admission procedures. However some children in vulnerable groups may find it difficult to secure a school place. The School Admissions Code 2012 (3.15) states that a fair access protocol, as a minimum, must include: • children from the criminal justice system or pupil referral units who need to be reintegrated into mainstream school • children who have been out of education for two months or more • children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers • children who are homeless • children with unsupportive family backgrounds for whom a place has not been sought • children who are carers • children with special educational needs, disabilities, medical conditions (without a statement). In addition, Nottinghamshire's fair access protocol also supports: • children with exceptional social, emotional or behavioural needs, particularly those who pose a significant safeguarding risk (without a statement) • children who have been without a school place for more than 20 school days • children who are subject to a child protection plan or categorised as children in need • children who are fleeing domestic violence.

are unknown. For example where a young person is new to the area, or may be returning to education from elective home education, or have been a persistent non-attender for a long period of time.

There are two levels of the core assessment offer:

1. The Assessment Service
2. The assessment of new or existing learners for the R.E.A.L. Independent Schools (on roll learners)

3.11 The Assessment Service

This package provides an assessment of a learner's individual needs and makes recommendations for future provision. This service is time limited, gives baseline academic levels, an assessment of the young person's interests and hopes for the future, and integrates other available assessment information (such as core assessments from Social Care, youth justice assessment Asset, AIMS assessment regarding risk and other related reports). The package includes all aspects of case management such as: coordination of assessment based sessions, liaison with the family and other key lead professionals, attendance at key meetings, analysis of other information and a report including baseline academic levels to inform recommendations for future provision. This service is particularly useful for Looked After Children where key educational information is missing, and/or where an assessment for an Education, Health and Care plan has been requested but little information is available or missing.

3.12 Assessment service for on roll learners

This package is also time limited³ and includes the smooth transition for all new learners joining the Independent Schools. This service can include liaison with the commissioner regarding specific service level agreements and the agreed menu of individualised provision.

Existing on roll learners may also be referred back for assessment at any time should the need arise.

Both packages provide a single point of contact for all referrals, ensuring equity and equality of access to provision and a clear admission into both schools.

3.2 Baseline Assessments

R.E.A.L. Education uses a range of tools and applications to assess the baseline academic levels of a young person. As a rule we try not to use paper based resources, preferring activity based assessments, to encourage young people to engage.

In line with the changes to the National Curriculum, R.E.A.L. Education uses a staged approach for young people in Key Stages 2 and 3 and assess using key performance indicators to evidence emerging, or securing knowledge.

³ The assessment period is not for a fixed amount of time. Some young people can be transitioned into the identified provision within a day, some may require a longer period of assessment (can be up to 6 weeks) depending on the needs of the child. Assessment information may be gathered by other identified Learning Managers and not necessarily always by the Referrals and Interventions Team

At Key Stage 4 and 5, we assess GCSE Curriculum levels, as well as Functional Skills levels.

3.3 Clarification and agreement of commissioned work

Commissioned packages within R.E.A.L. Education will always require a service level agreement (SLA). A SLA includes:

- Expectations, terms and conditions of commissioned services
- Monitoring, quality and review of commissioned services
- The general cost of the commissioned provision⁴
- Confirmation of the start date of the agreement and the termination processes

Further, and finer details of an individual package including full cost breakdown at the start of a programme will be confirmed in writing (usually via official email correspondence).

3.4 Service Level Agreements

The flexibility of programmes which are individualised means that often changes are made (in agreement with the young person, parents/carers and the commissioner) where relevant and required to maintain the good engagement of a learner, or to increase/decrease sessions according to need. This degree of flexibility does mean that we will require an agreement in writing from commissioners for audit purposes (in the body of an email for example). Verbal agreements are not acceptable to make changes to a programme of education.

Outstanding invoice payments are subject to specific company escalation processes.

Section 4: Transition to Personalised Programmes

Transition between programmes can be very difficult, particularly for some young people. To help to minimise anxiety, transitions should be handled with sensitivity between professionals. Wherever possible, a person centred approach will be used.

4.1 Transition Arrangements

No transition should occur without the written agreement of the commissioner, particularly where there is an implication of additional resources or increased cost to the commissioner.

R.E.A.L. Education has a policy which covers the practice of internal and external transitions and contributes to the on going progression of learners. Transition is viewed as:

- A process, not an event. It is a continuous process which is assisted by agreed clear decisions at significant points, with actions that are followed up.

⁴ Costs can vary over a period of time. A timetable is flexible and is allocated dependent on the needs of the individual at any particular time. R.E.A.L. only invoice for the provision utilised and is paid in arrears, and dependent on the timetable of the learner during the invoiced month.

- Transition planning and provision is personalised and based upon accurate and up to date information about the student’s progress
- Assessment is holistic and addresses the emotional health and wellbeing needs and the care needs of students, as well as their educational needs
- We endeavour to start the transition process for a student in good time to allow all necessary information to be gathered and procedures to be followed, specific to the particular point of transition.
- Transition planning meetings (wherever possible) are person centred to ensure that students and their parents/carers are at the centre of the process and are supported to be fully involved
- All relevant agencies will be invited to contribute to the transition planning process and to attend planning meetings where appropriate
- Transition arrangements are reviewed in a variety of ways to ensure the learner is on track, for example through end of term reports, curriculum planning meetings and education, health and care plan reviews.
- Transition issues are recognised as a key strategic priority within R.E.A.L. Education, and R.E.A.L. Independent Schools.

4.2 Support for families, parents and carers

R.E.A.L. Education recognises that changes to educational provision can affect the whole family and not just the young person involved. Many parents and carers come to R.E.A.L. Education following a long and painful journey. Arriving at R.E.A.L. Education can be perceived as a last resort for their child, or it can be a relief. Either way, parents and carers have a large role to play in the success of the education programmes offered to our young people.

Parents and carers will be invited to participate in our parents’ support network, supported through the use of social media and a parenting coordinator. Parents are supported to meet and discuss their concerns and have the opportunity to request guest speakers to come and advise or give further information about the education system. This could be a careers guidance professional with expertise about local labour market information, advisers on education, health and care plans or a substance misuse counsellor.

Section 5: Transition to R.E.A.L. Independent Schools

5.1 Admission Procedures

Introduction

All of our schools focus on students with significant and complex additional needs who may be “lost to learning”, at significant risk of exclusion or out of school with a placement difficult to establish. This may include, but is not limited to, young people who have an Education Health Care (EHC) Plan and young people who do not have an EHC Plan but are undergoing an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment. Typically they will be young people who have been isolated in their learning journey through a number of factors that have made them particularly difficult to place within County/City Councils and for whom existing arrangements within “Education Otherwise Than at Schools” (EOTAS) do not provide a firm base of a school

attachment at a time of significant uncertainty within a family and young person's educational journey. They are those who are at risk of becoming long term "Not in Education, Employment or Training" (NEET). In addition, they may have a range of associated difficulties such as:

- Specific Learning Difficulties such as Dyslexia
- Autism Spectrum Condition or Asperger Syndrome
- Moderate Learning Difficulties

R.E.A.L. Independent Schools aim to maintain learning within a young person's community, whilst engaging partner services, in order to enable an holistic approach to meeting their additional needs within their locality. The focus if appropriate, is towards reintegration into an appropriate mainstream provision linked to both age and ability that will enable young people to lead useful and enjoyable lives within their community. Our Schools are a creative development of strategically placed Learning Hubs with linked, small community venues. These provide opportunities for supporting a dynamic approach to re-engagement through a curriculum model that is geared to re-establishing social opportunity for young people and their families/carers. (See Curriculum Policies). We recognise our duty to embrace diversity and to work to overcome prejudice and we do not discriminate on grounds of ability, gender, ethnicity, race or religion. Admission is reliant on adherence to the school's admissions procedures as set out below.

Referrals

R.E.A.L. Independent Schools provide for boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 19 years. Young people are referred to our schools via their home County/City Council, although referrals will be considered from other County/City Councils and external agencies subject to funding being met directly from the referrer/commissioner. Placements are full time on a day provision basis, though part time and dual placements will be considered on an individual basis if felt to be appropriate. Admissions to the school can be made at any point in the academic year but referrals for young people in year 11 need to be made during the autumn term.

Admission Procedures

Referral papers are usually completed with an 'in principle' decision. Additional information may be gathered and meetings may take place with parents/carers and relevant professionals involved with the child and family. The Referral panel, comprising senior managers, considers all available information alongside the school's admissions criteria and replies to the referrer/commissioner with the decision regarding admission. If the decision is not to admit the pupil, we will discuss with the referrer/commissioner other possible appropriate provision that could be made. If the decision is to admit a pupil, confirmation is sent to the referrer commissioner together with the costs for their approval. Once the referrer/commissioner has accepted the placement and the fund holder has been confirmed, the pupil induction process begins.

Timelines

- Usually, the referrer/commissioner stipulates the timelines for a response and these are adhered to. This timeline can range from 2 to 15 days. We will always provide a response and will be submitted ahead of the final deadline wherever possible but will always be within the stipulated time frame.
- Once our response has been submitted, we then await the commissioner's decision. This can take up to 3-4 weeks.
- When the commissioner accepts our offer, contact details for the family are obtained and we get in touch with them no later than 3 working days of the decision.
- A convenient home visit/meeting is arranged with the family to take place as soon as possible but no later than 10 working days of receiving the decision.
- After the meeting, a confirmed decision is given to the commissioner and an on roll date agreed.

Inability to offer a placement

Decisions around admission to the schools will be made following consultation with parents, the referrer/commissioner and other relevant agencies. R.E.A.L. Independent Schools retain the right to decline the admission of a pupil on the following grounds:

- The school feels that the learner's needs, as identified in their Education Health Care Plan and / or referral information, would not be met.
- The school feels that the pupil's needs could be met by other LA services such as mainstream schooling or alternative provision and that a placement at R.E.A.L. Independent Schools would be inappropriate given the needs of the young person.
- The school has reached its capacity in terms of the number of placements.
- The attendance of the young person would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources or the efficient education of others.
- The referral is made from a County/City Council which is not the young person's home County/City Council unless funding had been agreed and was in place accordingly.
- Any competition for placements would see a 'Looked After Child' take precedence over other non 'Looked After' Children.

Section 6: Transition to other educational settings

6.1 Transition Packages

R.E.A.L. Independent Schools through an assessment service package, may on occasion identify another education setting as being the most appropriate and suitable for a young person. Should R.E.A.L. Education feel unable to meet the needs of an individual learner, we will aim to recommend another provider or setting who can. This is because we are committed to ensuring the needs of the learner are met, the learner comes first.

Where other provision has been identified, R.E.A.L. can provide transition support into the new setting, for example, where a young person is to be re-integrated back into a mainstream school or into specialised residential provision, and regular support staff can make the move more comfortable.

Transition packages can also include commissioned services for teaching assistant support in a school for a term to reduce the risk of permanent exclusion. It is due to the flexibility of our packages that we are able to offer a completely bespoke service.

A Quick Read Version of R.E.A.L. Referrals and Intervention Team Policies and Practices

A Quick Read Version of R.E.A.L. Referrals and Admissions Policy and Practices

Purpose

The purpose of our policy is to provide commissioners with clear information about our services, costs, processes and procedures so they are able to make an informed decision, dependent on the individual needs, regarding the educational provision on behalf of the young people and their families.

Services

R.E.A.L. Education can provide a range of provision options, and a mix and match approach can be taken to build a bespoke package for a young person. The range of education services available include:

- half day or full day sessions across part of a week, or full time
- 1:1 provision with a Teaching Assistant - usually as part of entry level courses such as functional skills, AIMS awards
- 1:1 provision with a Specialist Teaching Assistant - usually as part of additional value subjects such as Personal & Social Development (PSD), well-being, and counselling
- 1:1 provision with a Teacher - usually as part of a GCSE pathway such as English, maths, ICT, or science
- 2:1 provision where a risk assessment identifies a requirement
- participation in small curriculum groups - usually as part of GCSE subject classes such as English or maths
- participation in vocational group work pathways such as mechanics, construction, sports and public services, land based studies, creative digital, catering and music
- assessment based sessions
- case management coordination including curriculum timetable planning, management of teaching staff, safeguarding, family liaison, transport coordination, attainment and progression tracking, attendance at meetings and end of term reports
- transport to and from sessions
- other specialist interventions including 1:1 dyslexia intervention teaching (including assistive technologies), career guidance interviews and counselling.
- exam hosting facilities, or short term intensive sessions leading directly to functional skills assessments and tests

Costs

The cost of any provision is an integral part of the commissioning process. At R.E.A.L. Education there isn't a one size fits all approach to our work and our timetables are flexible to accommodate a bespoke curriculum for each individual young person. This means that costs can vary, depending on the menu of options chosen, and the range of staff utilised across the young person's timetable.

Assessment Packages

Sometimes young people require an alternative package but the commissioner may not have access to up to date information about an individual due to their specific circumstances, for example, a Child in Care, or a young person returning to education following a period of non-attendance or elective home education. The core offer an assessment package is time limited and provides baseline academic levels and recommendations for future provision and/or curriculum and predicted grades.

Processes & Procedures

To refer young people to education services at R.E.A.L. commissioners can submit referral information to referrals@real-education.org. Allocating resources relating to new cases are made by a panel of senior managers every Monday (during term time). We aim to communicate decisions to commissioners within 48 hours of the panel meeting.

All commissioned services are confirmed through a Service Level Agreement, and we invoice for services on a monthly basis.

Admissions to the R.E.A.L. Independent Schools are also discussed at the allocation meeting but are subject to separate guidance which can be found on the school websites, or in the full Referrals and Admissions Policy document.