



MacIntyre Academies Quest Academy

Admissions Guidance

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Person Responsible: | Principal |
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| Date of staff consultation: | |
| Date adopted by the Trust Board: | |
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Admissions Guidance

Quest Academy is a School for children and young people, aged 9 – 19 years who have social, emotional and mental health needs and/or an autistic spectrum condition. When at full occupancy, the Free School will provide 80 places across all age groups. For a child/young person to be admitted to the school, his/her placement must be agreed by a local authority (LA) and named in the child/young person's education health and care plan ('EHCP') (formerly statement of special educational needs). A child without an EHCP will require an assessment of their needs for an EHCP and the support of the local authority.

The two routes of admission are:

1. A Local Authority names the school in the EHCP and the school must admit (sole registration with MacIntyre)
2. A Local Authority places a child in the school for assessment purposed for up to 20 weeks (dual registered between MacIntyre and child's current school)

This guidance is in place to ensure that all involved in the admission procedure work in partnership, enabling informed decisions, and planning to be in the best interests of the child/young person. The guidance promotes the rights of all students regardless of disability, ethnic background, language, culture, faith or gender

Why Quest Academy is named on an EHCP

The Quest Academy is a Special School and as such does not have admissions criteria, therefore if the school is named on the EHCP then we will accept the referral. We work closely with Local Authorities, primarily Warwickshire in the case of this school, and they will not name Quest Academy unless they feel that we can support the child.

An EHCP will name Quest Academy where the child's Local Authority identifies the school as the most appropriate to meet the needs of the child/young person. Quest Academy is often named in an EHCP if the parents/carers have expressed a preference for special school placement, OR the parent/carers preferred a placement in mainstream school, but evidence shows that no reasonable steps could be taken by the LA or existing school to overcome the 'incompatibility with the efficient education of other pupils'. In most cases, although the child/young person will have been supported through a high level of additional resources within their mainstream placement, all reasonable steps will have been exhausted.

Many of our students will have previously found going to school a challenge and may have had difficulties in coping within a mainstream environment and therefore accessing an appropriate curriculum. The child/young person often has a history of persistent, complex and long-term learning needs and will often be working at a national curriculum level below their chronological age.

At the point of referral, many children/young people have additional, associated and sometimes a complexity of needs which may include:

- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Social and emotional needs;
- ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder);
- ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder);
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD);
- Tourette's syndrome;
- Mental Health Difficulties;
- Speech and Language Difficulties;
- Dyslexia;

Evidence is also likely to exist of:

- Learning difficulties in a range of curriculum areas, with greater difficulty in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, and understanding concepts;
- Inadequate progress despite appropriate and sustained interventions within the child's/young person's existing placement;
- Life-skills well below age-appropriate levels;
- Vulnerability as a result of their diagnosis or learning needs;
- Sensory difficulties;
- Difficulties with social development, communication and interaction;
- Emotional difficulties including anxiety, distress or other factor arising from an inability to cope with social interactions particularly within existing school placement;
- Poor communication & self-advocacy skills.

Other factors that can impact on a child's/young person's ability to succeed in their current placement may include:

- A child in the Looked After system
- Significant input from Health and Social Care
- Significant illness or mental health issues in the family
- A history of bereavement, separation, loss, neglect or abuse
- Family breakdown or poor family support network

Quest Academy aims to support young people to improve their own well-being, focusing on their communication, social, emotional and mental health as central to the delivery of the school curriculum. We include learning to build positive relationships and learning that will help children and young people understand and shape their own emotions. We have a holistic and non-judgemental approach to supporting behaviour that empowers the child or young person to engage in education. We support children and young people to recognise their challenges and barriers to learning and teach them alternative ways of responding to difficult situations. The school aims to support students to become socially responsible, polite and caring young adults, who value the lives of others and the environment in which they live.

Our students benefit from a curriculum that focuses on developing academic potential, social, vocational and life skills and learning that is practical and often outside the classroom.

Underpinning the admissions process

1. Quest Academy accepts referrals from Local Authorities (LAs). Whilst we welcome approaches from parents, the school cannot proceed to the admissions stage without a local authority naming the school in a child's Education Health and Care Plan.
2. For children who are undergoing assessment for an EHCP, parents/carers may indicate to the LA that they would like Quest Academy to be named as the school of preference within their child's EHCP. The LA will consider parent/carers' preferences but may not agree to the school of preference. In such circumstances parents have the right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND).
3. Prior to the admissions process and the school being named on an EHCP, parents or carers are encouraged if they wish to make a visit to the school, preferably before the completion of a statutory assessment or Annual Review. The focus of any visit is upon parent/carer viewing the school. The school will not comment on the appropriateness of the provision for the child/young person before the completion of the admissions process.
4. If requested and appropriate, key staff from Quest Academy will attend an Annual Review at the child's/young person's existing school.
5. We will support families whose children are referred to the Free School with access to a Family Footings Advisor. [Family Footings](#) introduces families to the benefits of using person centred thinking tools and other key skills to assist parents when they are interacting with professionals involved in their children's lives. This is especially useful during times of transition to help families to:
 - Feel listened to
 - Be more in control of their lives
 - Work in partnership with services to find the best outcome for their child
 - Feel more connected into their local community
 - Express their aspirations for their life both now and in the future.

Admissions Process

The process of admission to Quest Academy is as follows:

1. The Local Authority will send a copy of the child's/young person's Education, Health or Care Plan, latest annual review and any other relevant paperwork to the school for consideration.
2. All children/young people will be visited in their current school placement and home if possible. This visit forms part of the admissions process but may happen before or after the initial meeting with parents/carers, as follows:
 - The Principal will invite the child and his/her parents/carers in for a pre-placement meeting and tour of the school. The Principal, will then arrange for a designated member of staff to visit and observe the child/young person in their present setting and at home. They may additionally talk to any relevant professionals including an educational psychologist if involved.
 - If it is not clear from the paperwork, that the school can meet the child/young person's needs, the Principal will organise for a designated member of staff to visit and observe the child/young person in their present setting and talk to all relevant professionals including educational psychologists. There may be the need to go back to the LA to negotiate funding for additional support and/or expertise.
3. The Principal will confirm the top-up funding level with the LA, agree a start date and arrange the admission of the student.
4. The LA will arrange transport in accordance with its own Home to School Transport policy.

Pre-placement meeting/visits

The pre-placement meeting and visits to current school/home are designed to gather up to date information from children/young people, their parents/carers and professionals in support of the admissions process (please see appendices 1-4 for template documents used during home/family visits). The information sought will typically include feedback on:

- What motivates the child/young person and an understanding of what support works well;
- Previous school placement(s) and experience(s);
- Academic ability, national curriculum levels and skills that the child/young person has developed;
- Behaviour in different environments and behaviour strategies that have worked well;
- Whether the child is looked after and if so the name of the contact person and key personnel in the placing authority;

- Family organisation and an understanding of significant people in the child/young person's life
The child/young person's and their parent/carers' expectations of what the school can do
The child/young person's and their parent/carers' aspirations for the future;
- An understanding of religious and cultural needs;
- Current EHC planning or previous Statement of Educational Needs;
- Current multi agency involvement, feedback and outcomes of any assessments including a CAF if in place;
- Information regarding any particularly vulnerabilities;
- Information regarding attendance, any fixed term exclusions.

The student will wherever possible take a central role in the pre-placement visit. He/she have the chance to talk about themselves and their experiences. The student will also be invited to join a class or play in the playground, supported by an experienced member of the staff team. If it is not possible for the student to attend (if, for example, it would cause severe anxiety) the student will be observed during the visit to their current setting and at home.

Arrangements made to help the children's/Young people's transition into School

The school will liaise with the parents and carers and/or the current educational setting to see what transition arrangements will best suit the child/young person. Transitions are often difficult for children who have social, emotional and mental health needs or an autistic spectrum condition. An induction programme, appropriate to the individual child/young person, will be drawn up to support transfer to Quest Academy. It is essential to consider mechanisms/strategies that may make the process easier for each child/young person. This may include visits by key staff between schools.

The school is keen to work closely with families to ensure that the whole family's needs are taken into consideration when looking at suitable placements and transition arrangements (please see appendices 1-4 for template documents used during home/family visits). Social stories and photographs of the school and staff will be offered to the children/young people as well as visits/part-time placements to the school so that the child/young person and their family feel fully prepared for the move to Quest Academy. Any visits will be planned with parents/carers and will be bespoke to individual needs.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: First home visit template

Appendix 2: Second home visit template

Appendix 3: Family information template

Appendix 4: Transition to school file contents



Appendix 1 Information from Initial Family Visit

| | |
|---|---|
| Child's name: | |
| Parents' name(s): | |
| Siblings' name(s)/age(s): | |
| Contact number(s): | |
| Email address: | |
| Home address: | |
| Best way to reach you : | <p>Home Mobile Email Post</p> <p>Any times good/bad:</p> |
| Child's current school: | |
| <p>Professionals who know your child well:</p> <p>(Names and roles, if known)</p> | <p>Name _____</p> <p>Role _____</p> <p>Can we contact? _____</p> |



| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| | _____ |
| | Name _____ |
| | Role _____ |
| | Can we contact? _____ |
| | _____ |
| | Name _____ |
| | Role _____ |
| | Can we contact? _____ |
| Discussed confidentiality? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |

A good day for....

Imagine a brilliant day from your child's perspective. How would it start? What would he/she do, where would he/she go? Who would be there? (Think about foods, routines, activities, places, people, dreams [e.g. loves trains, but never been on one]).



How would we know that this was a good day? What would your child be saying/doing/showing us?



A bad day for....

Now imagine _____'s worst possible day! How would it start? Where would he/she have to go and what would he/she be expected to do? What would be forgotten or not done? Who would be there?



[Large empty rectangular box for drawing or writing]

How would we know that this was a bad day? What would your child be saying/doing/showing us?

[Large empty rectangular box for drawing or writing]



Thinking about school...

What has worked well in the past **for your child**? (Favourite subjects or activities, ways to learn [e.g. visual, tactile etc.], environmental factors, group size, training or experience staff had, relationships with different adults/peers, transport, after-school activities, lunch/playtime, routines, therapy)



What hasn't worked in the past **for your child?** (Prompt with same headings as above)



Thinking about school...

What has worked well in the past **for your family**? (Day to day communication with school, chance to be involved in school life, input into strategic stuff (recruitment, school improvement planning), reviews, support school has given you, transport, siblings issues/support, adult learning)

What hasn't worked in the past **for your family**? (Prompt with same headings as above)



Anything else you want to tell us?



Anything else you want Sarah to find out?

Anyone else you want us to talk to? (Add names to first page).



Is it ok to share a copy of this document with Brenda and the selection board for the Academy?

(if not, which bits need to be omitted?)

What Happens Next?

Your MacIntyre Facilitator will go away and type up what you've told him or her and will either post or email you a copy, depending on what you've said you would prefer. Your facilitator will also send a copy on to Brenda Mullen, CEO of MacIntyre Academies, who you may already have spoken to on the phone. If Brenda feels like more information is still needed, your MacIntyre Facilitator will get in touch with your child's current/previous school. (Your facilitator will always try to start with the professionals you've said know your child well).

We will get in touch to let you know what the next steps are soon. In the meantime, if you have any questions or anything you remember that you want to add to what you've already shared, please contact Sarah Geddes (Family Footings Education Lead) on 01788593112 or at sarah.geddes@macintyreacademies.org

Kind Regards,

Sarah Geddes



Appendix 2: Person Centred Planning with Families (second home visit)

Things people love about (child):

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

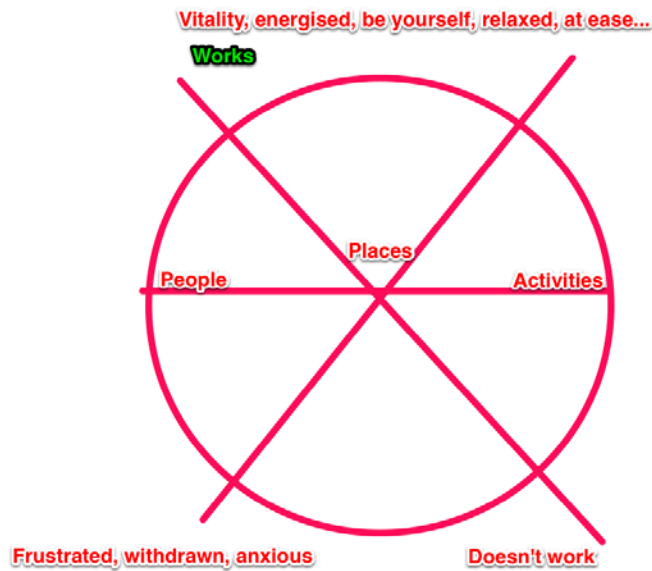
Good things about our family: *(compliments other people have given us, strengths we have, good things about how we treat each other, things we've really got sorted, things we're proud of, what we're like at our best!)*

| |
|--|
| |
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People/Places/Activities for Getting the Best Out of (child)

Facilitator to bring partially pre-populated copy of tool along on A3 to start conversation.



Things that are important to (child) [Use tool above and Good Day info from visit one to complete]:





[Large empty rectangular box for writing]

Things that are important to (child) continued:

[Large empty rectangular box for writing]



[Empty rectangular box for writing]

What's important to your family? (Relationships with each other/extended family/friends, beliefs and values, things you do together, things that you need to do for yourselves, hopes for the future)

[Empty rectangular box for writing]



Who do I want to support me?

What are the positive qualities in people who already support me well? (refer to 'People' in circle diagram, also anything relevant from Good Day/Bad Day, also trusted professionals mentioned on visit 1).



| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Support that is needed | Skills the person needs to have |
| | |
| Personality characteristics | Shared common interests |
| | |

**Does family have an interest in being involved in staff recruitment? (See last section).*

Good ways to help (child) when things aren't going well: (refer to Bad Day and how we know it's a bad day. What is the best way to respond when these things happen? Also cross-reference with Reputations).





Understanding how (child) communicates:

| In this environment situation... | When (child) does this... |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | |
| We think it means... | And you should... |
| | |



| | |
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| | |
|--|--|

Other important things to know so you can support (child) well:

Health/medication:

Food:

Social skills/interacting with others:

Mobility:

Staying safe inside:

Staying safe outside:

Other:



Other important things to know so you can support our family well: (How to keep us informed, how to involve us in broader decision-making at school, how to tell us there has been a problem, information we still need, extra things we want to be involved in [*e.g. siblings groups, parent support network, parent council, recruitment, Working Together for Change, mentoring other parents, receiving mentoring support from other parents, social opportunities for whole families etc.*], best times/methods for reaching us.

(Reference past W/NW to pre-populate with starting points).



| |
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What are your hopes and dreams for (child) in the future?

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Independence | |
| Community participation | |
| Employment | |

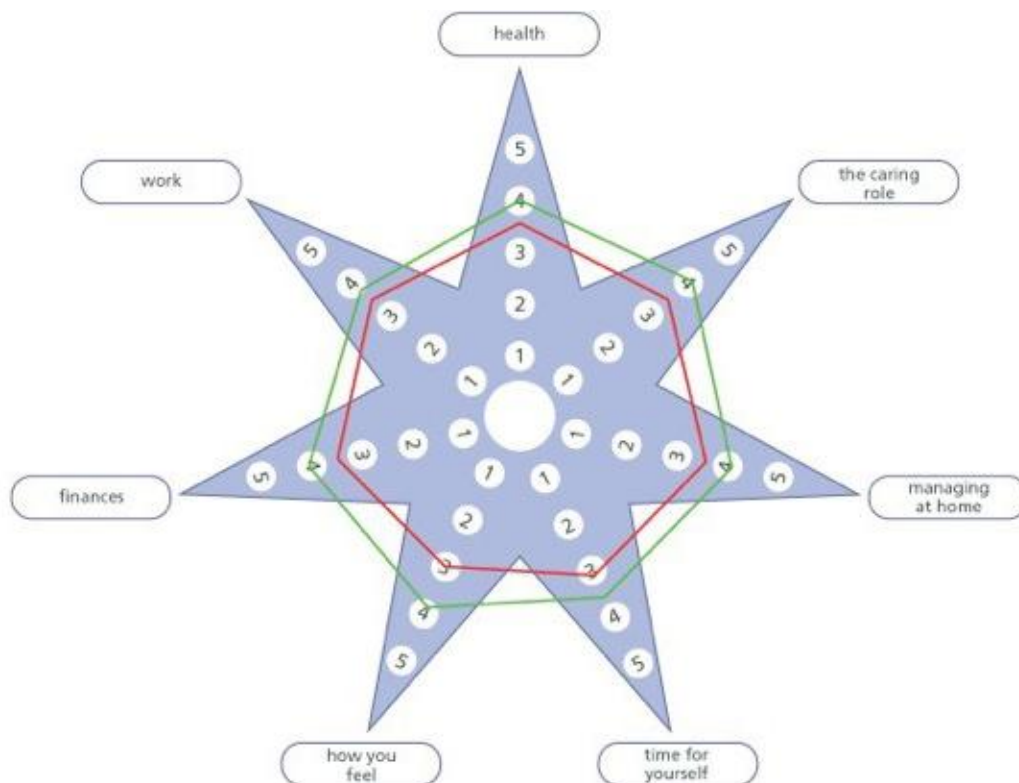


| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| | |
| Education | |
| Other aspirations | |



| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

Outcomes Star for Carers



Facilitators to bring copies of the tool and script to for baseline assessment.

We're using a tool called Outcome Star to help parents take stock of how they feel they're balancing their caring role with the rest of their lives. This can help them to identify things they might want support with and to recognise the things that they're already doing well.

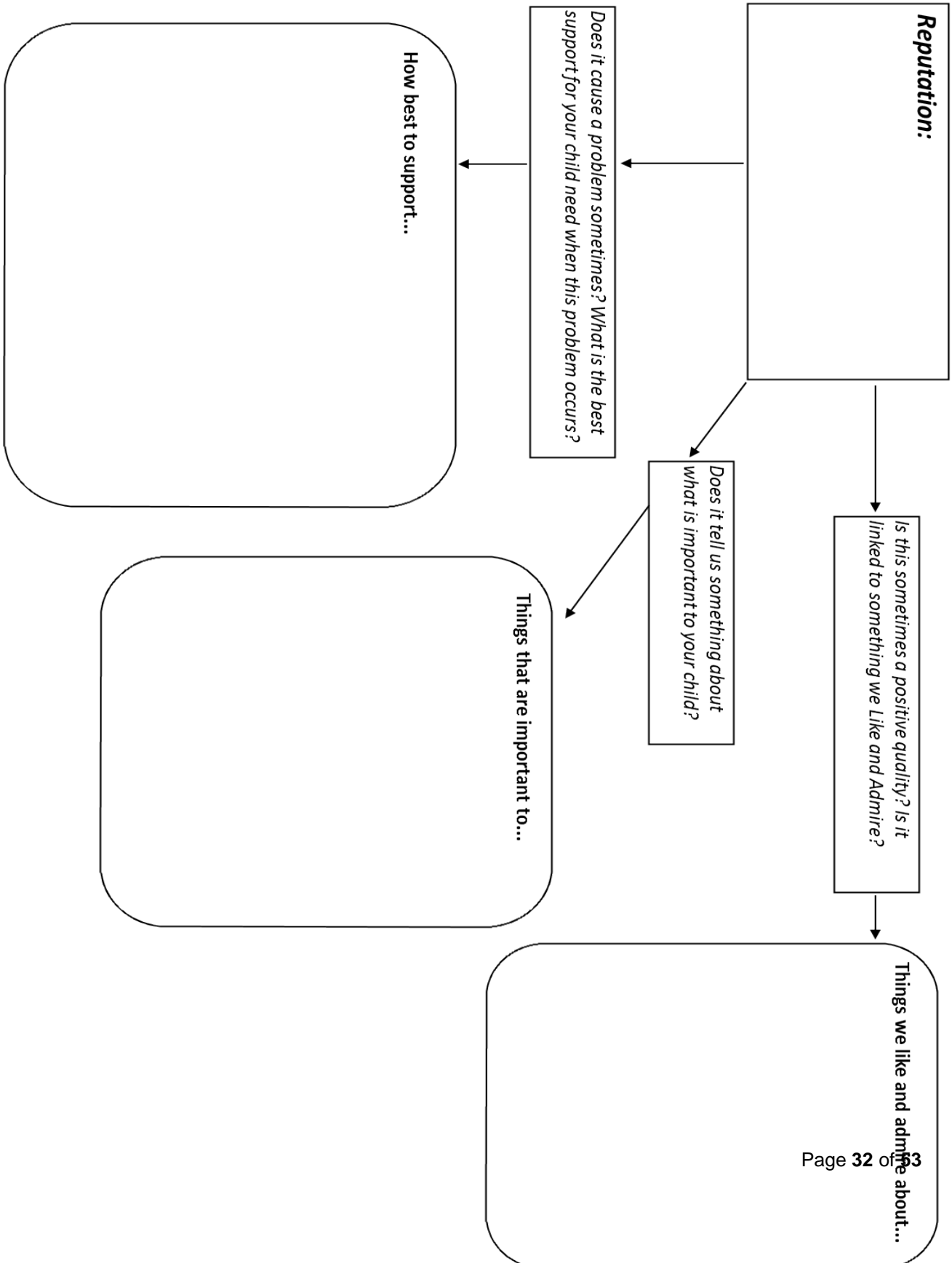
We hope parents will find that their stress levels, their resilience and their general outlook on their families' lives are improving as their children progress through MacIntyre Academy. We will revisit these questions



with them on a regular basis so we can see if this is happening and talk about anything we can change in order to help.



Appendix 2i: Reputations (to inform Like & Admire, Important To, Good Support)
(Facilitator to bring multiple copies pre-populated with info from Visit 1, if applicable).





Appendix 2ii: Good Day/Bad Day from visit 1 (to inform Important To, Good Support).

A good day for (child):

| |
|--|
| |
|--|



How would we know that this was a good day? What would your child be saying/doing/showing us?

A bad day for (child):



[Large empty rectangular box for drawing or writing]

How would we know that this was a bad day? What would your child be saying/doing/showing us?

[Empty rectangular box for writing]



| |
|--|
| |
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Appendix 2iii: Understanding how (child) communicates (*alternative*)

| |
|-----------------------------|
| How do we know whenis |
| Happy |
| Sad |
| Angry |



| |
|--------|
| |
| Poorly |
| Tired |
| Bored |
| Other |

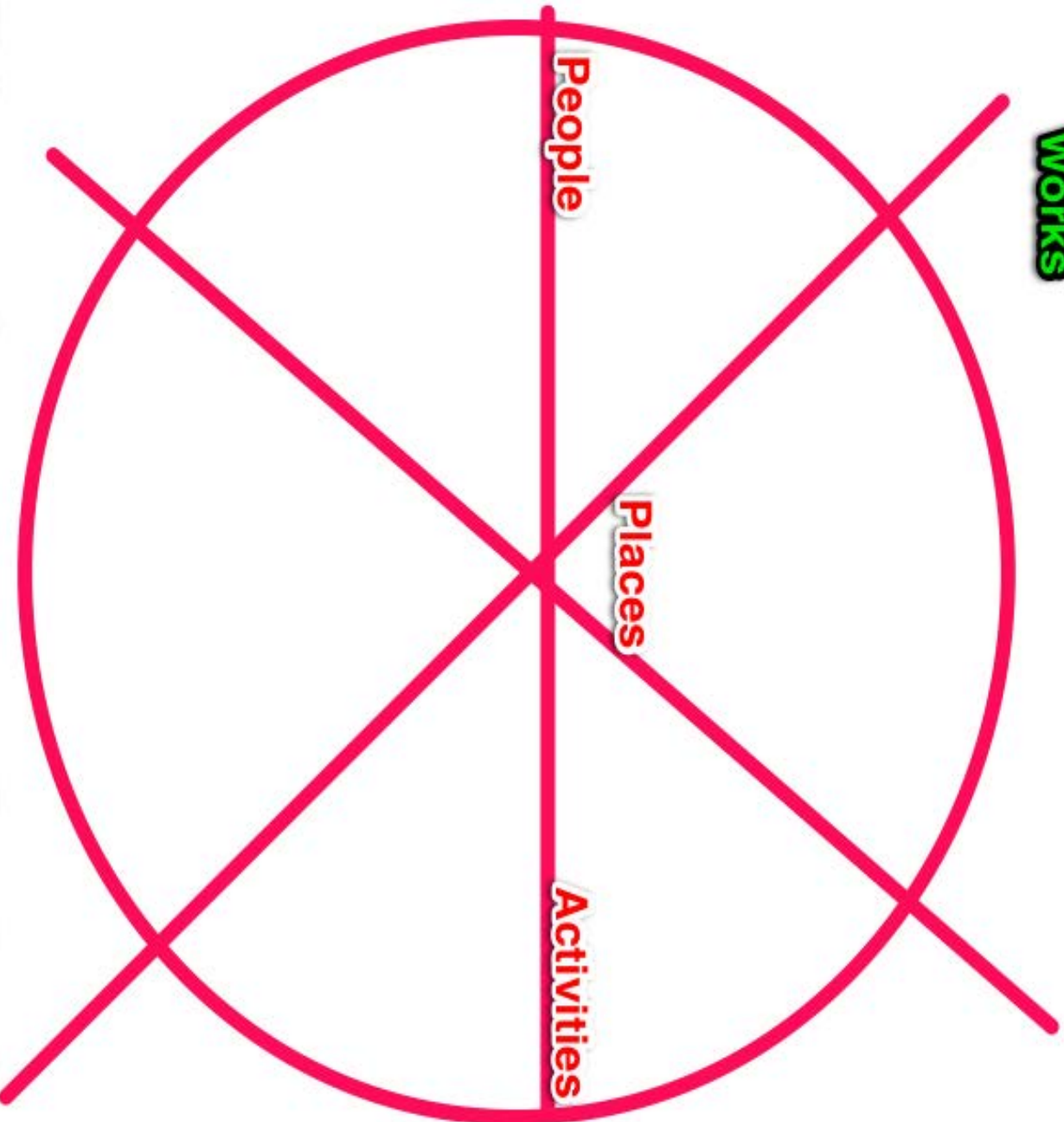


Appendix 2iv: People/Places/Activities to Get the Best Out Of Me

Facilitator to bring A3 copy of this, pre-populated with info from Visit 1.

Frustrated, withdrawn, anxious

Doesn't work



Works
Vitality, energised, be yourself, relaxed, at ease...



Appendix 3 Section 1: Contact preferences

| | |
|---|---|
| Child's name: | |
| Parents' name(s): | |
| Siblings' name(s)/age(s): | |
| Contact number(s): | |
| Email address: | |
| Home address: | |
| Best way to reach you : | <p>Home Mobile Email Post</p> <p>Any times good/bad:</p> |
| Child's current school: | |
| <p>Professionals who know your child well:</p> <p>(Names and roles, if known)</p> | <p>Name _____</p> <p>Role _____</p> <p>Can we contact? _____</p> |



| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| | _____ |
| | Name _____ Role _____ Can we contact? _____ _____ |
| | Name _____ Role _____ Can we contact? _____ _____ |
| Discussed confidentiality? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |

Section 2: About (child)

Things we Like and Admire about (child)



Things that are Important To (child):



How Best to Support (child)

Health/medication:

Food:

Social skills/interacting with others:

Mobility:

Staying safe inside:

Staying safe outside:

When I'm upset or angry:



Other:

Matching Support for (child)

What are the positive qualities in people who already support (child) well?



| |
|--|
| |
|--|

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Support that is needed | Skills the person needs to have |
| | |
| Personality characteristics | Shared common interests |
| | |

Understanding how (child) communicates:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| In this environment situation... | When (child) does this... |
| | |



| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| | |
| We think it means... | And you should... |
| | |

Our hopes and dreams for (child) in the future

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Independence | |
|---------------------|--|



| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| | |
| Community participation | |
| Employment | |
| Education | |
| Other aspirations | |



| | |
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Section 3: About (child's) Family

Things people Like and Admire about our family

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| |
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Things that are Important To our family:

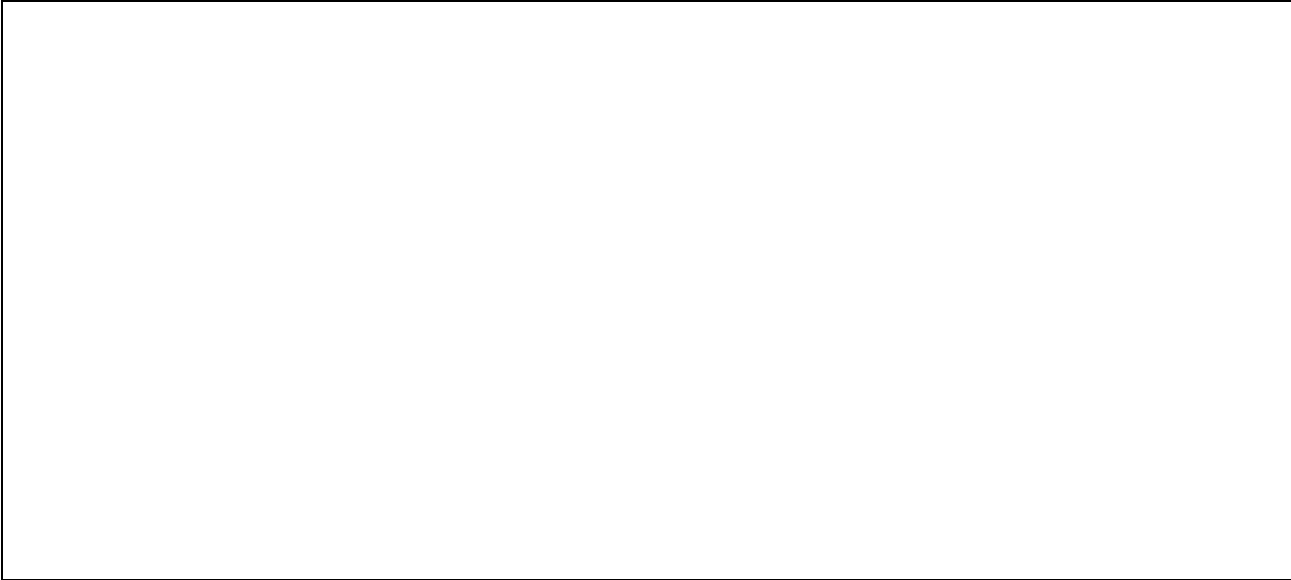
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How Best to Support our family

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Appendix 4 Family Information for Transition into School: Contents List

(Information compiled from 2 facilitated home visits to family)

Section 1 – Cover Sheet:

- **Cover Sheet with names, contact info, best method/time to contact, names/roles of other professionals parents trust.** (First page of Part A document)

Section 2 – About Child:

- **Things we Like and Admire about Child**
- **Photo**
- **Important To Child**
- **Good Support for Child:**
 - On a “bad day” / good day
 - Health/medication
 - Food
 - Social skills/interacting with others
 - Mobility
 - Staying safe inside / outside
 - Other
- **Matching Support tool for child** (Who Do I Want to Support Me?)
- **How child communicates** (one of 2 possible Communication Chart formats)
- **Parents’ aspirations for child around:**
 - Health
 - Independent Living
 - Employment
 - Community involvement

Section 3 – About Family:

- **Things people Like and Admire about our family**
- **Important To Family**
- **Good support for our Family**
 - Starting with what has worked well/not worked previously
 - Day to day communication
 - How to involve us in decision-making (both strategic and for our child)
 - How to talk to us when there is a problem
 - Other things we would like to be involved in (parents/siblings groups etc.)

Section 4 – Appendices:

Copies of the information gathered using the individual PC tools (info is already incorporated above)

Section 5 – Parent Resilience:

(not included in final document. Stored remotely via Outcomes Star)

Baseline assessment using Outcomes Star 'Carers Star'
Parents’ reflection on how well things are going with:



- Caring Role
- Managing at Home
- Health
- Time for Yourself
- How you Feel
- Finances
- Work

Documentation to support facilitated home visits and its uses:

The documents below will be completed by the facilitator and copies will be retained. Family Information for Transition into School document will continue to be of use once placement at the Academy commences.

MacIntyre Academies First Visit to Family form

Purpose of document:

1. To submit to the Selection Panel
2. Copy to parents
3. Final page of document is for the family's reference, so they understand the next steps in the process.
4. Facilitator will feed this information into preparation for more detailed discussions in the second visit (pre populating person centred thinking tools to take to the second visit). Ultimately the content from this form will be transferred into the Final form and not a permanent record for file.

MacIntyre Academies Second Visit to Family form (NB this meeting occurs when place has been taken up by families/ confirmed by LA)

Purpose of document:

1. For facilitator's use: includes templates for person centred thinking tools and facilitator prompts

Family Information for Transition into School - Final Form (described on p.1)

Purpose of document:

1. Final comprehensive document using all of the information gathered from the two visits (supersedes the previous 2 templates) . It contains the necessary information to complete:
 - a. One Page Profile for the child
 - b. Family One Page Profile
 - c. Matching Staff tool
 - d. Communication chart for the child



- e. Aspirations/desired outcomes that could feed into an EHC plan.

This information can also form starting point for parent contributions to child's Person Centred Review.

NB This document does not include the information gathered from the Carers Star, as this would be stored remotely via Outcomes Star.