



# Oakswood College

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## Student Transfer

### *Policy and Procedure*

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SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY



GOVERNANCE



QUALITY



COMPLIANCE



EXCELLENCE



# Oakwood College

Empowering Through Education

*(Trading name of Oakwood Group Ltd)*

## Student Transfer Policy & Procedure

*(For Oakwood College Students Only)*

### Document Control & Version History

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Student Transfer Policy &amp; Procedure (For Oakwood College Students Only)</b>
<b>Document Type</b>	Governance Policy and Procedure
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Head of Quality Assurance & Information Systems
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Approved By</b>	Board of Governors
<b>Approval Date</b>	18 March 2026
<b>Effective From</b>	18 March 2026
<b>Review Cycle</b>	Annual
<b>Next Review Date</b>	18 March 2027
<b>Applies To</b>	All registered Oakwood College students, Academic Administration, Student Services, Programme Leaders, Admissions team, and staff involved in student transfer decisions and records
<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Supersedes</b>	New Policy
<b>Related Policies</b>	Admissions Policy; Student Withdrawal Procedure; Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy; Student Records Management Policy; Students Complaints Policy and Procedure; Student Protection Statement, Refund and Compensation Policy; Student Terms and Conditions; Student Fees Policy



<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Student Transfer Policy &amp; Procedure (For Oakwood College Students Only)</b>
<b>Document Location</b>	Oakwood College Policy Repository
<b>Regulatory Reference</b>	Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration; Consumer Rights Act 2015; CMA Guidance for HE Providers; UK Quality Code for Higher Education

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Introduction, Scope and Principles .....	3
2. Fair Treatment and Prohibited Behaviours .....	3
3. Information Provision .....	4
4. Limitations .....	5
5. Transfer Requests and Assessment .....	8
6. Fees, Refunds, and Compensation .....	11
7. Record Keeping and Certification.....	11
8. Appeals and Complaints.....	11
9. Student Protection .....	12
10. Students Transferring from Widening Participation Backgrounds.....	13

**NOTE: This policy does not normally apply to students studying on a Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) programme of higher education delivered by Oakwood College, as the equivalent BNU policy will normally apply. These students are advised to seek guidance from the Head of Academic Affairs or the Head of Quality Assurance & Information Systems for support with exploring, or making, a transfer.**

## **1. Introduction, Scope and Principles**

Oakwood College recognises that there may be times when a student wishes to transfer either into, or out of, Oakwood College onto another higher education course of study, or they may wish to transfer internally to another higher education course delivered by Oakwood College. A student transfer involves changing education providers, courses, or modes of study, with suitable recognition of prior learning and credits wherever possible.

This policy ensures all students are treated fairly when transferring between courses and/or institutions, in line with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and the Office for Students (OfS) regulatory framework.

This Policy is specifically designed to align with the following Office for Students' Conditions of Registration:

- **Condition B1:** Quality, Standards and Enhancement
- **Condition B2:** Resources, Support and Student Engagement
- **Condition B3:** Student Outcomes
- **Condition C2:** Student Complaints (OIA)
- **Condition C4:** Student Protection (Market Exit)
- **Condition C5:** Treating Students Fairly
- **Condition F2:** Student Transfer Arrangements

This Policy is intended to provide clear information, expectations and procedures relating to academic, financial, and support aspects to facilitate the continuation and quality of study.

This Policy applies to:

- Students transferring into Oakwood College from other providers (external transfers)
- Students transferring out of Oakwood College to other providers (external transfers)
- Students transferring between courses or modes of study within Oakwood College (internal transfers)

## **2. Fair Treatment and Prohibited Behaviours**

Oakwood College commits to treating all students fairly throughout the transfer process and associated services (such as pastoral support), consistent with the requirements and expectations of OfS Condition C5 (Treating Students Fairly). Oakwood College will not engage in any unfair penalisation, misleading information, or discriminatory practices in the course of administering any student transfers, whether external or internal.

To facilitate a student transfer, a student may not necessarily need to follow the formal admissions procedures and processes for applying to a course of study with Oakwood College, even where they are a student applying to transfer from another institution. Where feasible and appropriate, a 'fast-track' admissions procedure will be put in place, subject to satisfying respective Awarding Body requirements. Notwithstanding this, Oakwood College's consideration of Student Transfer Requests will be conducted in accordance with the principles of Oakwood College's Admissions Policy and/or the applicable Admissions Policy of any Awarding Body of programmes delivered by Oakwood College. Where both policies may apply, the Admissions Policy of the respective Awarding Body will take precedence.

Oakwood College is committed to the principles of the OIA's Good Practice Framework and applies a 'no detriment' approach to complaints and appeals arising from, or leading to, student transfer processes. Further to this:

- Students enrolled with Oakwood College on Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) programmes who wish to escalate a complaint beyond Oakwood College's internal Student Complaint Procedures may do so through BNU under Stage 3 of the College's Student Complaints Procedure. BNU holds Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) membership as the awarding body for those programmes and will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter (CoP Letter) once the complaints procedure has been exhausted. The CoP letter allows students to escalate their complaint to the OIA.
- Students on ATHE-regulated programmes should follow the Oakwood College Student Complaints Procedure to raise a complaint. For non-academic complaints, all three stages of the Oakwood College Complaints Procedure are available.
- For academic complaints or appeals relating to ATHE-regulated provision, students may escalate under Stage 3 in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure and Academic Appeals Procedure, where applicable.

Oakwood College operates a 'no detriment' approach to appeals and complaints. Therefore, a student will never be denied a transfer onto a college course or a different mode of study as a result of having raised an academic appeal or any complaint with Oakwood College about any matter in the past, regardless of whether that complaint or appeal was upheld.

Similarly, no student will be treated less favourably as a result of making, or having made, a request to transfer either within or out of Oakwood College, where that student either changes their mind about the transfer or the request is denied by Oakwood College.

### **3. Information Provision**

#### ***Information Regarding Transfers Into, or Within, Oakwood College***

For transfers into or within Oakwood College, Oakwood College ensures that clear, accessible, and regularly updated information is provided about:

- Transfer procedures (which are set out in Section 5 of this Policy)
- Academic and regulatory requirements relevant to a student transferring into, or within, Oakwood College, and published Course Summary Information
- Financial implications, including fees, refunds, and loans
- Applicable complaints and appeals processes

In facilitating student transfers into or within Oakwood College, Oakwood College will:

- Undertake an initial review of a transfer request, normally within 7 calendar days of receipt of the request being made in writing
- Provide another institution with appropriate requisite information (such as transcripts, confirmation of attendance and engagement, and support needs information where the student consents) promptly, either directly to the institution or to the student, as requested

#### ***Supported Informed Decision-Making***

One of the ways in which Oakwood College will facilitate student transfers is by supporting students to make informed decisions about whether and how to make a transfer request.

Students (whether already enrolled at Oakwood College or at another institution) who are considering transferring are encouraged to speak in the first instance with their Programme Lead or with the Head of Academic Affairs to discuss their options and explore whether a transfer is in their best interests. Students may also request an informal conversation with college staff about a course before deciding whether to submit a formal transfer request.

Where a student is already enrolled with Oakwood College, the Programme Lead or Head of Academic Affairs may link the student with other relevant staff and services across Oakwood College to explore options and support informed decision-making about student transfers, whether a potential transfer may be internal or to another institution. Where appropriate, students will also be signposted to any available independent sources of support and advice to assist them in making an informed decision.

Where a college student wishes to make a student transfer request either internally or to another institution, they will be assigned a named member of staff to support them throughout the process.

A student may apply to transfer to more than one course in making a transfer request if they are unsure which course they wish to transfer into. College staff will explore the request with the student to help them make an informed decision. Oakwood College may make an offer of a place on more than one course to a student who has made a transfer request.

#### **4. Limitations**

Whilst Oakwood College will do everything in its power to make a potential transfer as smooth as possible for a student (regardless of whether transferring into, out of, or within Oakwood College), this in no way guarantees that an application for transfer into or within Oakwood College will ultimately be accepted. Transfer decisions, whilst facilitated under this Policy, remain admissions decisions.

The decision as to whether a student can be admitted transferring onto a course with Oakwood College, whether from another institution or internally, is a holistic decision about the student's suitability for admission, based on a number of factors, including:

- Academic admissions requirements
- A student's prior academic attainment
- English Language requirements (where applicable)
- The level of study for which the transfer request is being made
- Any key personal information about the student which may have a bearing on their ability and/or potential to succeed in the applicable course

To ensure holistic consideration of a student transfer request, the student may be asked to attend a Transfer Consideration Meeting with academic, admissions and/or student support staff, to facilitate Oakwood College's assessment of the student's needs, circumstances and any other factors that may have a bearing on their potential to succeed in the transfer course. Transfer Consideration Meetings will not necessarily be offered in every case, including where the student is applying for an internal transfer.

Student transfers may also be considered under the College's Support Through Studies Policy and its procedures, under both informal or formal procedures of that Policy as relevant and appropriate the circumstances of the student.

#### ***Requests to Transfer Mode of Study***

Where a student wishes to transfer internally within Oakwood College to a different mode of study on the same or a different College course (e.g. from full-time to part-time and vice versa), the student will be made aware of any financial and other implications of doing so before any such request can be granted.

Oakwood College may refuse such a request if it is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that granting the request:

- would more likely than not have an adverse impact on the student for one or more discernible reasons, and/or
- would place the student at a reasonable risk of failing to succeed in the course



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Where it is deemed appropriate, Oakwood College may grant a request to transfer to a different mode of study but impose specific conditions and/or requirements that the student must fulfil either before commencing the new mode of study, or within a reasonable set timeframe on commencement of the new mode.

Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate student requests to transfer mode of study, Oakwood College will refuse such a request where it is not permissible within the academic regulations governing that course.

### ***Staff Testimonials as Part of a Student Transfer Request***

Oakwood College understands that there may be occasions when a member of staff wishes to support a Student Transfer Request by submitting a testimonial or advocating for the student. However, Oakwood College also recognises that there may be occasions when staff do not feel comfortable or equipped to do so. Whilst College staff may submit testimonials and are welcome to advocate in support of an internal or external student transfer, the following principles apply:

- The provision of a testimonial is entirely at the discretion of the member of staff, and they are in no way obliged to provide one, even where it has been requested
- Staff should not provide a testimonial if they feel in any way uncomfortable or compromised in doing so, and/or if it would constitute a conflict of interest
- Oakwood College may limit the content of any testimonial to a factual record regarding attendance, engagement, and academic attainment. Details of any support needs, conditions, or required reasonable adjustments may only be disclosed to another institution with the express written consent of the student.

### ***Transfer Decisions by Other Institutions***

Requests by students to transfer from Oakwood College to another institution are also admissions decisions of that other institution. Oakwood College has no control over the admissions procedures and requirements of any other institution, including those governing student transfer requests. All student transfer requests are at the discretion of the institution delivering the course to which the student wishes to transfer.

Whilst Oakwood College will do everything in its power to facilitate a student transfer request out of Oakwood College, including responding to requests for information from the transfer institution in a timely manner and supplying requested information wherever feasible and appropriate. Oakwood College cannot predict, enforce or require another institution to admit a student wishing to transfer. Please see Section 8 (Appeals and Complaints) of this Policy for information about complaints or appeals about another institution's decision not to accept a student transfer request.

### ***Timing of Transfer Requests***

Where a transfer request to transfer into Oakwood College or to transfer courses internally is received by Oakwood College, the timing of the request will be taken into account in the decision of whether and when the transfer request can be granted.

### ***Late Transfers***

To ensure that students transferring course (whether internally or from another institution) have the greatest potential to succeed, transfer requests received more than 4 weeks after a course has commenced will normally be considered for admission to the next available intake of the course.

An exception to this is where, in the view of the Programme Lead, reasonable measures and/or adjustments can be put in place that will foreseeably allow the student to join the course late and catch up on missed content. However, where the Programme Lead believes this is feasible in principle but they and the Head of Operations agree, after reviewing all relevant information regarding the Student Transfer Request, that this would not be in the student's best interest, the student will normally be offered a deferred place on the course, subject to meeting all necessary admissions requirements. Alternatively, the student may be offered a place at an earlier stage or level on the course than that which they applied to transfer into.

Students who are already enrolled at Oakwood College and wishing to transfer internally to another college course will nonetheless be subject to the 4-week timescale set out above. However, the following factors of their prior studentship with Oakwood College will be taken into account when determining the feasibility of a student joining the transfer course late:

- Whether the student previously successfully completed their induction
- The student's prior attendance and engagement record
- Any compelling personal circumstances
- Any testimonials from college staff in support of the transfer
- Any academic and/or pastoral support already in place

### ***Incomplete Transfer Requests***

Where Oakwood College has sought specific information and/or documentation either from the student or from another institution in order to make a student transfer decision, and such information is not received within a reasonable timescale, Oakwood College may not be able to confirm that a student transfer request can be granted. This may result in:

- The withdrawal of a place provisionally held or offered in principle to the student, or
- A deferred offer of a place, subject to any conditions set by Oakwood College

## **5. Transfer Requests and Assessment**

Oakwood College will review all transfer requests in accordance with the following principles:

- Each transfer request will be reviewed against the published entry requirements for the course about which the transfer request is being made



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- Oakwood College will review all documentation received in support of the request, including information submitted both by the student/applicant and by any institution from which they wish to transfer
- Oakwood College will liaise as appropriate with any Awarding Body applicable to the programme of study that the transfer request pertains to.
- Where a student wishes to transfer to another institution, Oakwood College will support individual students with their transfer request by liaising with relevant bodies (e.g. other institutions, the Student Loans Company) on their behalf to ensure students are appropriately informed of their options, and to facilitate the transfer as far as possible.

### ***Assessment Criteria***

Oakwood College will undertake holistic consideration of all transfer requests and will seek to understand the student's individual circumstances so that any reasonable adjustments can be made and any relevant factors taken into account, to allow the student the best chance of succeeding. The following criteria will be taken into account when assessing a transfer request:

- Academic suitability for the course
- Recognition of prior learning and/or experience, according to published course information and admissions criteria
- The level of study for which the transfer request is being made
- Specific individual circumstances of the student, including:
  - Prior record of attendance and engagement, and any mitigating or explanatory factors relevant to this
  - Financial circumstances, and funding capacity and eligibility
  - Any disclosed conditions, support needs, and reasonable adjustments required
  - Whether the student falls within the scope of Oakwood College's widening participation commitments (see Section 10 of this Policy)
  - Any other barriers to entering or succeeding in higher education
  - The student's disciplinary record with Oakwood College, including engagement with any academic and/or non-academic misconduct procedures
  - The timing of receipt of the request
  - Whether any academic results are pending (transfer decisions will normally be deferred where pending results would have a bearing on the level or course the student may transfer into)

### ***Consideration of Personal Circumstances, Disabilities, Conditions and Support Needs***

It is a fundamental principle of Oakwood College's approach to student transfers that it must be in the interests of the student to permit a transfer onto a college course of study.



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As part of ensuring a proactive and responsible approach to student transfers, Oakwood College will request information from students making a transfer request about any reasonable adjustments required, support needs, and other personal circumstances relevant to the student's context that will help Oakwood College ensure students are set up to succeed from the outset. Such information will not be used to decline a transfer request in and of itself, but will form part of the holistic assessment of whether the requested transfer is suitable for the student and/or to identify any relevant conditions or necessary support, in accordance with Oakwood College's statutory duty of care under the Equality Act 2010.

### ***Oakwood College Student Transfer Request Procedure***

The procedure below applies to both internal and external transfer requests. Students should follow the appropriate route depending on whether they are currently enrolled at Oakwood College or are transferring from another institution.

#### ***Initial enquiry (all students):***

- Where a student feels they may wish to transfer course or mode of study within Oakwood College, or to transfer out of Oakwood College to another institution, they are encouraged to speak with their Programme Lead or the Head of Academic Affairs in the first instance to discuss their options and support them to make an informed decision about their studies.

#### ***Formal transfer request (all students):***

- To formally request a transfer, students must submit a written request using their college email address to: Head of Academic Affairs at [academicsupport@oakwoodgroup.co.uk](mailto:academicsupport@oakwoodgroup.co.uk)
- As a reasonable adjustment, a member of college staff may make such an initial written request on behalf of the student, copying the student in.

#### ***Students wishing to transfer out of Oakwood College:***

- On receipt of the written request, the Head of Academic Affairs will furnish the student with the relevant transfer information from the institution to which they wish to transfer.
- As a reasonable adjustment and in the interests of facilitating a potential transfer, the Head of Academic Affairs may, with either the express written consent of the student (or their verbal consent confirmed in writing by a member of staff), contact the relevant other institution on the student's behalf to ascertain any information necessary for the holistic consideration of the transfer request.

#### ***Internal Transfer Requests- Existing Oakwood College Students***



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- **Internal transfer requests** to transfer to another college course and/or different mode of study will be proactively facilitated by Oakwood College. Where further information is required, the student will be notified promptly and given a reasonable timeframe in which to provide it.
- Internal transfer requests will be considered by the student's current Programme Lead together with the Head of Operations, who will determine what information is required to complete the holistic assessment in accordance with the criteria set out above in this section. They may seek relevant information from the student's current programme team to inform their consideration of the request.

### ***Student Transfer Request Procedure- External Students Transferring into Oakwood College***

- **External transfer requests** should be submitted to the Head of Admissions and Registry via email: [admissions@oakwoodgroup.co.uk](mailto:admissions@oakwoodgroup.co.uk), accompanied by the following documentation:
  - Confirmation of Oakwood College course or courses the student is interested in transferring to
  - References, academic or otherwise
  - A Personal Statement that explains why the student wishes to take the course(s) they are requesting to transfer to, and includes details of any personal circumstances, condition, disability, required reasonable adjustments and/or support needs
  - Evidence of relevant professional qualifications, where applicable
  - Evidence of relevant work experience, where applicable
- Where an external transfer request is made or facilitated by another institution on behalf of one of their students, the student should be copied into all correspondence, and it should be confirmed from the outset that the student has granted their express written permission for that institution to liaise with Oakwood College on their behalf.
- External transfer requests will be considered in accordance with the relevant processes and published criteria set out in Oakwood College's Admissions Policy.
- Final approval of transfer decisions rests with the designated academic and registry authority in accordance with Oakwood College's Admissions and Academic Governance arrangements.

## **6. Fees, Refunds, and Compensation**

As part of supporting students to make informed decisions about whether to transfer, Oakwood College will explain clearly any implications for tuition fees, Student Loans Company funding, maintenance support eligibility, sponsor arrangements, refunds, or

compensation before a transfer is confirmed. Any fee or other refund owed to the student as a result of a transfer will be processed in accordance with Oakwood College's Refund and Compensation Policy.

## **7. Record Keeping and Certification**

All transfers, including transfers out of Oakwood College and requests to transfer onto a college course and/or different mode of study that are not authorised by Oakwood College, are documented in Oakwood College's student record system.

To support and facilitate student transfers:

- Oakwood College will produce transcripts or evidence of completed credit to support onward progression, normally within **10 working days** of confirmation of withdrawal or transfer, unless dependent on awarding body confirmation.
- Oakwood College may, where appropriate, send such documentation directly to another institution, notifying the student accordingly.

## **8. Appeals and Complaints**

Oakwood College students can appeal against a decision by Oakwood College not to permit a transfer to another college course and/or different study mode by making a complaint under Oakwood College's Student Complaints Procedure.

Oakwood College students who wish to complain about any aspect of the Student Transfer Process, including the process itself, may do so under Oakwood College's Student Complaints Procedure.

External students who have had a student transfer request declined by Oakwood College may appeal or complain about that decision, and/or may raise a complaint about Oakwood College's student transfer process, under Oakwood College's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure.

### ***Complaints and Appeals about Another Institution's Decision regarding a Student Transfer Request***

Complaints or appeals about another institution's decision not to accept a student transfer request fall outside the jurisdiction of Oakwood College and must be made to that institution under its own procedures. An exception to this is where the student believes that action or inaction on the part of Oakwood College has led to an adverse decision by the other institution, in which case they may make a complaint under Oakwood College's Student Complaints Procedure.



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For students at Oakwood College on BNU programmes, where a complaint cannot be resolved through Oakwood College's internal procedures, students may escalate through BNU's complaints process and, ultimately, to the OIA via BNU's membership.

For students at Oakwood College on ATHE-regulated programmes, the relevant escalation routes are set out in the Oakwood College Student Complaints Procedure and the Academic Appeals Procedure, as applicable.

## **9. Student Protection**

Oakwood College is committed to fulfilling its student protection obligations in line with **OfS Condition C4**, to protect students in situations that may threaten their continuation of study. This may include necessitated transfers of study to other College courses or to courses at other institutions.

To fulfil these obligations, Oakwood College:

- Has assessed and published clear measures for mitigating risks to student continuation and study quality
- Will take all reasonable steps to implement protective measures should risks materialise, such as course or campus closure, teaching disruption, or withdrawal of a mode of study
- Will provide students with timely information, advice, and support to help them make informed decisions if risks materialise
- Maintains refund and compensation arrangements to protect students financially where continuation becomes impossible; any refunds and compensation will be administered in accordance with Oakwood College's Refund and Compensation Policy
- Reviews and updates its student protection arrangements regularly, involving students to ensure fairness and continued relevance

## **10. Students Transferring from Widening Participation Backgrounds**

Some students belong to groups identified within Oakwood College's widening participation and equality of access commitments, which aim to improve access and success for those facing additional barriers in higher education. Examples include students from low-income backgrounds, students with a disability, care leavers, and those who are the first in their family to attend higher education.

Where a student from a widening participation background is transferring into Oakwood College:

- Oakwood College will provide additional support tailored to the student's individual needs



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- The student's progress and well-being will be carefully monitored to help them succeed
- Those students will be treated fairly and given tailored opportunities and support throughout their studies and transfer process

For more information or support relating to or during the transfer process, students should contact their Programme Lead or the Head of Academic Affairs in the first instance.