

Oaklands School



Admissions Policy

Approved by:	Julie Smith	Date: October 2024
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1.0 Rationale

Oaklands School is a co-educational special school for up to 60 pupils in the age range 5-16 years with severe and complex learning difficulties, including pupils with a medical diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), or those who may have previously been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. All pupils have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). Prior to the naming of the school in the EHCP, the Local Authority (LA) will have consulted fully with the school, in line with its statutory obligations.

The decision arises from a comprehensive process that identifies the school as an appropriate choice, ensuring it best meets the needs of the pupil. The school recognises the importance of safeguarding both existing pupils and prospective admissions, particularly regarding behavioural and emotional needs. We receive referrals from the LA once they have identified the school as a suitable setting for the pupil.

2.0 Purpose

To ensure that all involved in the Admission Procedure work in partnership, enabling informed decisions in the best interests of the pupil, while safeguarding the wellbeing of all students, staff, and stakeholders at Oaklands School.

3.0 Range of Provision

The school admits children and young people with ASC, Asperger's Syndrome. Social, emotional, and mental health needs may compound difficulties in some instances but will not be the primary area of need. Typically, pupils will have a rate of acquisition and/or degree of retention of knowledge and educational skills across all National Curriculum Core Subjects significantly below age related expectations (ARE). The majority of pupils might have been out of education for periods of time and/or experienced trauma in their lives. Pupils may have communication difficulties that limit access to the curriculum in a mainstream environment. Children with sensory impairment, physical disability, or emotional and behavioural difficulties as their primary need will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Each admission request is reviewed carefully to ensure that the school can meet the pupil's individual needs.

4.0 Procedure

- **Parent/Carer - Initiated Pathway:**

- When parents/carers get in touch with Oaklands School to express interest in placing their child, they are encouraged to complete an initial Pupil Information Form prior to scheduling a visit or on the day of the visit. This form allows parents/carers to share insights about their child's needs and will be valuable in assessing how well the school can meet those needs.
- Parents/carers are invited to schedule a visit to the school at their earliest convenience, preferably before the completion of the statutory EHCP assessment, or Annual Review meeting. During this visit, if parents/carers believe that the school is the right fit for their child, they will be invited to bring their child for a 20 to 30-minute taster session with a suitable class.
- The visit also provides parents/carers the opportunity to observe the school facilities and meet with the SENCo and other relevant professionals. Please note that our staff will not comment on the suitability of the provision for the child during the visit.
- If parents/carers are unable to bring their child for the taster session, or if it is deemed necessary to assess whether the school can meet the child's needs, an assessment visit will be arranged. This visit may take place either at the school or in the child's current setting (e.g., home or current school).

- **Local Authority-Initiated Pathway:**

- The LA may send children's paperwork directly to Oaklands School for consideration. This may occur either as a result of parent/carers preference or to assess availability for placement.
- The school will review the documentation to determine if we can meet the pupil's needs. If further clarification is needed, school staff may visit the child's home or current school to observe the child in their environment and liaise with staff who have knowledge of the child.
- If a place is available and all parties agree on the suitability of the referral, Oaklands School will offer a placement.

- Upon agreement from the LA to fund the placement, key staff from Oaklands School will attend an Annual Review at the young person's existing school if requested.

- **Decision Communication:** If the Oaklands School Board, in partnership with the Executive Headteacher, decides that the school cannot meet the pupil's needs, the LA will be advised of the reasons for this decision, and this will be shared with parents/carers.

- **Transport Arrangements:** The LA arranges transport in accordance with its own policy, and parents/carers must apply for this service.

- **Start Date and Next Steps:** A start date will be agreed upon with the LA, after which the Headteacher will contact the family to arrange the next steps.

- **Induction Programme:** An induction programme tailored to the individual child will be developed to support their transition to Oaklands School. This may include:
 - Visits by key staff between schools
 - Additional visits/part-time placement to support the move to Oaklands School
 - Visits to coincide with the mainstream secondary induction programme for Year 6