



THE SHRUBBERIES SCHOOL **ADMISSIONS POLICY**



Introduction

The Shrubberies School is an all-age special school catering for pupils with severe, complex and profound learning difficulties. The admission policy has been drawn up in order to ensure that children with these needs are admitted to the school in a systematic and efficient manner.

Principles

The admissions authority for the school is Gloucestershire Local Authority.

The school would expect that all pupils referred to them for admission would have a severe, complex or profound learning difficulty. In addition to this learning difficulty the child may also have other co-existing conditions including:

1. Sensory impairment
2. Physical impairment
3. Social emotional and mental health needs (including behavioural needs)
4. Autism
5. Medical needs
6. Communication needs

Pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) have significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. This has a major impact on their ability to participate in the school curriculum without support. They may also have difficulties with communication and perception and the acquisition of self-help skills. Pupils with SLD will require support in all curriculum areas. They may also require teaching of self-help, independence and social skills. Some pupils may use sign and symbols but most will be able to hold simple conversations. Their attainments may be within the Pre-Key Stage Standards for much of their school careers.

Pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) have complex learning needs. In addition to their SLD, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as sensory impairment, physical disability or a significant medical condition. Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some pupils communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language. Their attainments are likely to remain at the engagement indicators stage throughout their education.

Some pupils attending the Shrubberies School may have a combination of sensory impairment, sensory processing and/or hearing and visual difficulties. These pupils have much greater difficulty in accessing the curriculum and environment than those with a single sensory impairment. They have perceptual and communication difficulties and their acquisition of incidental learning is very limited. This can result in high anxiety and sensory deprivation. They require teaching approaches that make optimum use of their sight and hearing in conjunction with their other senses. They often require alternative means of communication.

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Admissions Authority

The governors of the Shrubberies School recognise the authority of Gloucestershire Local Authority (LA) in all matters concerning pupil admission to the school and adopt the Local Authority policy for admissions. As a Special School, admissions are, therefore, controlled by the Local Authority and places cannot be offered directly by the school.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility, however, to ensure that the Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) needs and outcomes of pupils can be met and that pupil numbers in the school are kept at manageable limits with reference to the agreed place numbers for the school.

The Headteacher will also be mindful of the need to maintain a balance of numbers within and across departments and of class sizes and a balanced range of disabilities in individual classes.

Gloucestershire Local Authority - General Principles

- Gloucestershire Local Authority is the admissions authority for county maintained special schools. Heads have no autonomous powers to admit children but clearly the LA will need to exercise its power in close consultation with Heads and families having regard to the children involved.
- A pupil should only be considered for a place if she/he meets the criteria set out in The Children's and Families Act 2014. Exclusions do not constitute an intervention and therefore excluded pupils do not necessarily have special educational needs.
- A pupil will be considered for a place in this special school on the basis of an assessment (conducted within the last six months) by a Local Authority Educational Psychologist and information will also be sought from his/her current school or EYFS provision to support the proposed placement. The educational psychologist's report should demonstrate how the child's special educational needs meet the criteria set out in The Children's and Families Act 2014.
- A pupil will only be considered for a place in this school if they have an EHCP and it is deemed appropriate by the Local Authority to meet his/her stated special educational needs.
- The proximity of the pupil's home to the school is an important determinant in the offer of a place. The Local Authority should consider the efficient use of resources with particular reference to any additional costs incurred, for example, relating to transport.
- The filling of places needs to equate with the number of places purchased. Either there is a place within the planned place values or, if these are exceeded, the purchase of an extra place(s) has to be agreed by the Local Authority Head of Special Educational Needs, prior to any indication or offer made to parent and child.
- It is not possible to admit children without prior consideration of the financial implications for the Local Authority.
- Where the Local Authority has made name a special school provision on the EHCP it has a legal duty to implement. In most cases the timing of any placement will be discussed/negotiated with the parent. It may be helpful to record that a placement in a special school will be considered when an appropriate vacancy occurs, if the purchase of a place or vacancy cannot be immediately identified.
- The places purchased are **full-time equivalent** thus if children are attending on a part-time basis, the sessional attendance at the school will be added in order to arrive at this equivalent figure. For example, children attending on a 0.2, 0.5 & 0.3 basis equates to a 1 full-time place being purchased. In this case, they are not to be considered as three individual full-time places just because three children are involved.
- Each year, places will be determined by Gloucestershire Local Authority. Each special school is aware of its full-time equivalent quota of places and current number of pupils on roll. The school

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should notify the Local Authority immediately when a vacancy occurs and the Local Authority should maintain a record of pupils registered in each special school.

- A pupil's case for a county maintained special school place may be considered at any stage of the year following the confirmation of the Statutory Assessment or by the Local Authority Head of Special Educational Needs (in exceptional circumstances). Potential candidates for placements can be made as the result of:
 - Annual Review of EHCP
 - Statutory Assessment leading to an EHCP
 - Emergency placement
- Headteachers of Special Schools should refer any request from parents for a place in their school to the Local Authority. Local Authority officers, educational psychologists, personnel of Social Services and local Health Trusts should make their recommendations to the SEN Casework Team so that the procedures, as outlined, can be applied in all cases.
- An exceptional placement may be made immediately with the approval of Local Authority Head of Special Educational Needs where there is thought that the pupil and/or his/her peers are at risk.
- Placements can be made at any time of the school year. In addition, there will be an annual admissions meeting for each area special school during Term 5, in order to identify the majority of pupils to be considered for places in September.

Procedures for the Admission of a Child to a Special School

- A named person will maintain a record of the names of pupils on the role of a special school and a waiting list of children who have been recommended for placement.
- Requests for special school placements will be considered by the SEND Resource Panel. The Educational Psychologist will have discussed the proposal with parents and the child's current school or pre-school provision. Where Statutory Assessment has not been initiated, the school or pre-school centre will be asked to complete a referral form for Statutory Assessment and to send it to the SEND Casework Team. The responsibility for preparing the case for panel will lie with SEND Casework Team.
- If parents indicate at an Annual Review that they wish their child to be considered for a place in a special school, they should indicate this in the parent view section of the EHCP review. If the Educational psychologist is not present at the meeting his or her professional advice will be sought by the casework team on receipt of the completed EHCP review report.
- If approved by the Panel, papers will be sent to the special school(s) to indicate that the child is being considered by the Local Authority for a place. The school should confirm whether or not there is a vacancy or will inform the SEND Casework Team immediately a place becomes available.
- When Statutory Assessment has been completed, the SEND casework team will check as to the availability of places prior to naming a school on the EHCP. If no immediate vacancies are available in special schools, the SEND Casework Team will retain the case and record, for example:
 - Further consideration of the possibility of Gary being admitted to a special school which caters for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties will be given at a time when a place becomes available. The appropriateness of any proposed change of provision will be considered at a 'Review Meeting'.

The EHCP should be written when it is due and the interim provision in a mainstream school should be stated.

- Where the pupil does not gain admission to a special school following the SEND Resource Panel, the casework team will inform the parent and present school / pre-school provision. A review meeting should be called to consider how the pupil's needs can be met within his / her current setting.
- The SEND Casework Team will inform the special school that a place can be offered to a pupil. The casework team will write to the parent and present school / pre-school provision to inform them of the action taken and proposed.
- In the case of a proposed transfer from a county maintained special school to another school a fully completed Annual Review Form signed by the parent and Headteacher of the current school and countersigned by an Educational Psychologist must be sent to the SEND Casework Team.
- The Headteacher of the special school may wish to meet the parents and child prior to an offer formalised by the Local Authority.

Admissions Arrangements at the Shrubberies School

Early Years Foundation Stage (pre-school) pupils

Pre-school children are offered places at The Shrubberies School following a recommendation from the Early Years placement panel to the SEND Casework Team. An EHCP may have been started or be in place but, at this age, it is usual for further assessments to take place in order to determine the child's future educational needs.

It is recognised that all staff involved in the education and assessment of the pupils at this stage will need to have access to the available information and to meet with the child and their parents in order that the subsequent work can be approached in a spirit of partnership. It is expected that an interdisciplinary team approach will be integral to the work of the school during the EYFS stage. Every effort will be made to provide an integrated service to the children and their families while acknowledging the different professional protocols that are in place.

Stage 1 – Information Visit

Any parent who makes contact with the school is invited to visit. This visit is arranged and managed by the Headteacher in discussion with the EYFS Head of Department, who is responsible for maintaining a record of any such contact with families.

If a request is received from the LA to place a child who has not yet visited the school then this visit will be offered as soon as possible. Parents may or may not wish to bring their child with them to this meeting. They are given basic information about the work of the school and in particular the EYFS Department. They are taken to the EYFS Department and to see the school's specialist facilities. A school prospectus and leaflet are provided for the parents to take away.

Stage 2 – Placement Request

When a placement request is received from the LA, an individual file is established with all available information about the child. This is then circulated to relevant EYFS staff and interdisciplinary team members such as the school nurse and Speech and Language therapists. Parents are contacted to

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arrange either an information visit or an admission visit as appropriate. The request form is returned to the LA.

Stage 3 – First Attendance

There is an expectation that a parent or carer will attend for the first few sessions with the child to enable a smooth transition into the EYFS Department. The length of time for this to continue is likely to be different for each family and should be led by the parents' wishes in consultation with the class teacher.

School Aged Pupils

Pupils of school age are placed at The Shrubberies School through an EHCP. In order to capitalise on the professional expertise of the whole interdisciplinary team their involvement is seen as integral to the work of the school from the earliest stages. Every effort is made to provide an integrated service to the children and their families while acknowledging the different professional protocols in place.

The following procedure is intended to provide guidance for normal practice. It may be necessary to deviate from this in order to accommodate the needs of an individual family. This is most likely if a pupil is transferring from another placement and needs to be placed quickly.

Stage 1 – Information Visit

Any parent who makes contact with the school is invited to visit. This visit is arranged and managed by the Headteacher in discussion with the relevant Head of Department, who is responsible for maintaining a record of any such contact with families. If a request is received from the LA to place a child who has not yet visited the school then this visit will be offered as soon as possible. Parents may or may not wish to bring their child with them to this meeting. They are given basic information about the work of the school and the curriculum offered. They are also taken to visit classes in the appropriate age range and the school's specialist facilities. A school prospectus is provided for the parents to take away. The Shrubberies School staff are always happy to attend Annual Review meetings of pupils who may be referred to the school.

Stage 2 – Placement Request

When a placement request is received from the LA an individual file is established with all available information about the child. This is then circulated to all appropriate staff and any relevant interdisciplinary team members. Parents are contacted to arrange either an information visit or to discuss an admission date as appropriate. The request form is returned to the LA. As much information as possible, is collected through contact with the current placement or other professionals who know the child.

Stage 3 – Transition Visits

Where possible a series of transition visits are arranged for the child to familiarise them with the school and staff. Staff from previous settings are encouraged to attend with the child in order to support the child and transfer information. Photographs of key people and activities may be taken to go home with the child so that they can be further prepared for any change. Where children move into the area and need to start school quickly it may not be possible to arrange transition visits.

Stage 4 – First Attendance

All staff are made aware that a new pupil is starting at the school and class staff take responsibility for settling the child into school routines in an appropriate way. Class staff will collect evidence of performance and discuss the needs of the pupil at the earliest possible class meeting and. The teacher will liaise with appropriate interdisciplinary staff to ensure that an all-round picture of the child's needs can be established as quickly as possible. Where necessary, the school nurse and therapy staff will arrange to see the pupil and parents at the earliest opportunity. Teaching staff are

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responsible for ensuring close liaison with parents is maintained over this period and any issued addressed as soon as possible.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually and significant amendments will result from whole school discussion. The policy will then be presented to the governing body for approval. This policy was reviewed and updated in January 2021

For further help and guidance relating to the EHCP process please contact Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS):

<https://sendiassglos.org.uk/>