

Admissions Policy

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Andy Hargreaves
Director of Education

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Introduction

Ridge Hill School operates under First4Children Education which offers education for children and young people.

Services include:

- Day education for young people

We endeavour to ensure all pupils have access to a robust and well-rounded curriculum. This policy outlines the school's procedures for admissions. The process is fair and in-keeping with the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Education Act 1996. The school promises to provide all admitted pupils with a safe environment to learn and develop.

Fees to cover running expenses for pupils are paid by Local Authority (LA) Education and/or Social Services Departments, and in some cases the Health Authority.

Purpose

General values

- To provide an environment in which each child is given opportunities and teaching to develop the pupil's ability to become a happy, participating member of the family, school and community.
- To promote a disciplined, happy and friendly atmosphere whilst simultaneously providing situations which encourage independence and autonomy.
- To encourage pupils as far as possible not only to have a positive self-regard but also to treat others with courtesy, respect and tolerance.
- To develop a clear understanding of right and wrong.
- To compensate for the disadvantage society may place upon children and young people with Autism.
- To develop the self-advocacy skills of the pupils so that society is influenced in the thinking and actions by the individual and not only by others speaking on their behalf.
- To respect pupils' rights and needs as individuals, as pupils, and as members of a wider community with particular reference to

issues of culture, religion, age and gender.

- To provide the highest quality education and care for the pupils in our school.

Aim(s):

To provide an Autism-specific environment that enables young people to become:

- Successful pupils who enjoy learning, make progress from their starting points, and achieve.
- Confident individuals who are able to lead safe, happy and fulfilling lives.
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.
- Independent individuals who are enabled to function to their maximum potential.

With a focus on developing:

- Personal attitudes and attributes, e.g. empowered, adaptable, confident, risk-taking, enterprising.
- Appropriate life skills, e.g. self-help, personal care, and daily living.

Eligibility

- Children and young people with a primary diagnosis of Autism and associated learning difficulties who may also have a co-occurring diagnosis.
- The age range is from 5-11 years.

NB within Autism there is a need to consider the overall presenting profile of a pupil in order to ensure that the most appropriate educational provision is accessed.

An assessment of suitability will need to take account of the following:

- The pervasiveness of the pupil's Autism.
- The developmental profile of the pupil.
- Whether the curriculum of the school will support the pupil in their learning and the next steps of their journey, as reflected in their EHCP (Education Health & Care Plan).
- Whether the building demographic and environment is suitable and has the right equipment to keep the pupil safe
- The way in which the pupil's Autism affects their behaviour.

- The degree of learning difficulty.
- Compatibility with existing profile of the school

If a child/ young person is found to be 'unsuitable' for a placement at Ridge Hill School, any response given to the LA will demonstrate the following:

- The placement would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude of the child.
- The attendance of the child/ young person would be to the detriment of others.
- The attendance of the child/ young person would be an inefficient use of resources.

(Section 33 and 39 Children and Families Act 2014)

As per section 9.80 of the SEN code of practice, the Local Authority must consider the school's views carefully.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Deputy Headteacher and SENDCO will:

- Lead as the first point of contact for prospective placement enquiries and suitability assessment requests
- Receive and acknowledge new referrals from the Local Authority
- Undertake regular updates to the Admissions Tracker
- Lead on producing thorough, timely and effective desktop assessments of suitability, ensuring the appropriate members of the SLT are equipped with the information to implement appropriate decisions for face to face assessments
- Convene and facilitate a Panel Meeting comprising of the Headteacher, SENDCO, and Assistant Headteacher to scrutinise and determine the suitability of the child/ young person for our school.
- Convene and facilitate a half termly Admissions Meeting with key staff to discuss current referrals and anything pertaining to Admissions
- Convene and facilitate a meeting with the class team following a successful referral to deliver information on the new admission as necessary, including next steps and actions
- Ensure that Administrative staff have all the details of the new starter to register and input all data/ documentation received from the LA onto the appropriate computer systems/software.

The Deputy Headteacher will:

- Undertake school visits with prospective families, in accordance with new referrals
- Meet with the Headteacher and provide an update on school visits/prospective families
- Following confirmation of acceptance of placement, liaison to take place with the family of the new admission, distributing necessary admission paperwork and documentation, communicating the start date and organising the transition into school
- Attend panel meetings to discuss prospective pupils
- Attend class meetings for new pupil
- Be a point of contact, advice and support for the family of the new admission when and where necessary
- Work with the family of the new admission to organise Orientation and Transition visits into school
- Organise a 'New Pupil Meeting' with the family of the new admission in conjunction with the school SENCo following the new admissions first half term in school.

The Schools' Business Manager will:

- Liaise with the Deputy Headteacher who will liaise with the Local Authority when an offer of placement is made regarding costings for said placement.
- Organise the exchange of contracts as necessary where a placement has been agreed by the Local Authority.
- Support with costings for provision maps as required

The Assistant Headteacher will:

- Attend Admissions meetings
- Support with Observations/ providing staff
- Support the Face to Face Suitability Assessment with the Headteacher and SENDCO
- Attend panel meetings for prospective pupils
- Attend Tribunal when required in support of possible placement for prospective pupils

The Director of Education will:

- Attend panel meetings for prospective pupils, offering advice and guidance in support of the child/young person's suitability when

deemed as necessary.

Procedure

Admission and Assessment of Suitability

See Appendix 1 - 'Admissions Flowchart' at the end of this policy.

- Application, supported by a specialist, is generally made through the Local Authority. Visits to the school are normally made by parents and professionals prior to an application being submitted. Pre-parental visits are undertaken by the Deputy Headteacher or other nominated individual.
- Following an initial visit, informal assessments will be made by professional staff of the school with the following considerations:
 - If a request for assessment has been received from the LA.
 - If a request for assessment on behalf of the parents has been received from the host LA.
 - If a request for assessment has been received by the parents or on their behalf by the professional involved, where the parents are engaged in SENDIST Tribunal procedures, or similar.
 - If a request for assessment is made by a parent/carer of a pre-school child.
- All relevant information/documentation must be collated and circulated before a decision to assess is confirmed. 'Desktop Assessment of EHC Plan' must be completed alongside the scrutiny of all documentation received by the school.

- A suitability panel (phase 1) meeting will take place consisting of the SLT including SENDCO. Decision made to proceed to formal assessment.
- The 'face to face' assessment will be carried out by the Deputy Headteacher. A report will be completed following the visit being undertaken.
- A panel meeting (phase 2) will convene as soon after the assessment as possible.
- If further information is required, consideration may be given to an 'Extended Assessment' at Ridge Hill School
- All contacts and actions made must be completed and inputted onto the 'Admissions Tracker'.
- Deputy Headteacher to communicate decision from the panel meeting to the Local Authority and copy in SLT.
- The Schools' Business Manager will liaise with the LA regarding costings and the exchange of contracts following the LA's acceptance of offer.
- The Local Authority will communicate their final decision to the Deputy Headteacher and parents with 28 days of the offer being made – no direct confirmation of decision to be communicated to parents by school.
- Following written confirmation being received from the LA with acceptance of placement, transition process to commence and school staff to be informed.
- Deputy Headteacher will make contact with the family to begin the transition process.
- Parents/carers will be asked to complete the appropriate Admission form prior to their child/ young person's attendance at school.
- During the transition process the Deputy Headteacher will be the first point of contact.
- The Deputy Headteacher will work with the family and class team to organise transition visits into school. This will be in the form of;
 - An 'Orientation' visit: This visit is a tour of the school grounds with parent/carer and the pupil. This will include meeting the class team and offering parents/carer a chance to ask questions, order uniform etc.
 - Transition Visit: Can be 1 hour stay in class group

Note: Bespoke Transition plans are put in place for each new pupil as appropriate to their needs.

Review Process

Annual Review

The Annual Review of EHCPs are conducted by the SENDCO in accordance with the requirements set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2014). Pupils' needs, identified outcomes and provision are reviewed and evaluated as part of this process. Ridge Hill endeavors to work in partnership with pupils, parents and all agencies (LA Education, Social Care, Health, other) to ensure that pupils' needs are accurately identified and appropriately met.

Transition Review

Pupils who attend Ridge Hill School will undergo a number of transitions during their school career. Pupils with Autism, who find change particularly difficult, are especially vulnerable at these times. Ridge Hill transition planning is pupil-centred and needs focused, with both pupil and parents/carers identifying their aspirations and goals for the future.

We encourage pupil involvement in decision making about their future (as advocated in the SEND Code of Practice). Each pupil will participate in the 'Preparation for Next Steps' process through curriculum based activities and when preparing their personal contributions to their annual review. We recognise the importance of a coherent, planned Transition Process and welcome the opportunity to involve all parties in a collaborative and proactive way. The Transition Plan will be developed during the Transition Meeting with parents/carers, social worker and any other professional e.g. Speech and Language Therapist or other medical professional. Transitions within Ridge Hill e.g. between classes/departments is individually planned and may involve visits to the new class, personalised transition books with photos and occasionally familiar staff moving class with the pupil.

Discharge

- One term's (12 weeks) fees in lieu of notice is required should it be decided that Ridge Hill no longer meets the child's needs.
- The pupils EHCP will be reviewed annually through each academic year and at each key point of transition.
- A 'Placement Review' to consider the appropriateness of a pupil's placement can be convened at any time between annual reviews
- In the SEND code of practice January 2015, it states that all Children/ young people's EHC plans should be "*used to actively monitor progress towards their outcomes and longer term aspirations. They must be reviewed by the local authority as a minimum every 12 months. Reviews must focus on the child or young person's progress towards achieving the outcomes specified in the EHC plan. The review must also consider whether these outcomes and supporting targets remain appropriate*". This process will enable us to determine whether the placement continues to be effective.
- Should any pupil become a danger to other pupils, they will be considered for exclusion only if all positive intervention programmes have not been successful. Similarly should the sustainability of educational progress and the presence of any pupil be considered detrimental to the education of other pupils or impair the efficiency of the school the appropriate LA will be asked to withdraw the pupil.
- If all positive intervention measures have not been successful, consideration will be made as to the sustainability of the pupil's educational progress at Ridge Hill School. This will be done in conjunction with the team around the pupil including parent/ carer and the Local Authority to ensure the best outcome is sought for the pupil.

Tribunal and Appeal process

At Ridge Hill School, we aim to support families through the process of SEND Tribunals. For more information on the SEND Tribunal process and how we can offer support, please refer to the SENDCO.

In the event that you disagree with the decision made at panel regarding your child/ young person's placement at Ridge Hill School, you can appeal this decision, should you wish to do so. For more information on this process, refer to our complaints policy.

Conclusion

It is important that all procedures for admission and discharge for each young person are followed in accordance with above policy. In this way young people with autism will access the most appropriate educational provision according to individual need.

Legal context

This policy was written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- (i) Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, January 2015
- (ii) DFE School Attendance, Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, August 2020
- (iii) Education Act 1996

Policy Impact

We have a rolling program for reviewing our policies. We regularly review the impact of our policies on the needs, entitlements and outcomes for pupils, service users, staff and parents.

Appendix 1 – Admissions Flowchart

