

# Admissions Policy & Procedure

West Heath School



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Copies of this policy are available on the School Website - <http://www.westheathschool.com/policies-and-procedures> or as a hard copy on request from the School Office.

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# 1. Aims & Objectives

This policy outlines the admissions process and gives clear examples of the type of student we are able to educate and support. This policy aims to:

- To provide a clear admissions process for parents/carers and stakeholders.

The objectives of this policy:

- To ensure West Heath School admit students who meet our admission criteria and have every chance of succeeding and progressing.
- To ensure all our students can progress and the mix of students is in keeping with our vibrant and successful learning environment, with all students feeling safe.

# 2. Legislation and Guidance

Independent School Standards 2019

Children and Families Act 2014

Equality Act 2010

Human Rights Act 1998

# 3. Definitions

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASD – Autism Spectrum Disorder

OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

# 4. Introduction

West Heath School seeks to provide education for 10–20-year-old students. We provide a high level of education for Key stage 2, 3, 4 and 5 teaching the National Curriculum, as well as a broad range of GCSE, BTEC, NCFE and A Level subjects.

All the children who come to us will have their own individual challenges; many of them will have been out of school for a considerable period of time. Here at West Heath School, we can provide excellent support in accordance with their individual needs that will enable them to go on to thrive academically.

We specialise in providing for a wide range of Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs presenting attachment difficulties and complex trauma. Some of our children suffer from obsessive disorders, anxiety and depression, others have high functioning ASD and therefore have communication difficulties. Alternatively, some of our children externalise their behaviour and have a diagnosis of ADHD but will respond well to our gentle therapeutic approach. We are a haven for those children who have been severely bullied but accept that the victim can sometimes become the perpetrator, who also needs understanding and management.

# 5. Procedures & Practices

## 5.1 Admissions Criteria

West Heath School is registered with the Department of Education under the designation of Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

We welcome students with an EHCP who exhibit mild to moderate levels of one or more of the following:

- A child suffering from depression and related problems which in the extreme have led to self-harm and possible suicide ideation
- Anxiety based problems including attachment disorder and Tourette's syndrome
- Phobias inhibiting school attendance or "normal" living e.g., OCD
- Refusal to attend school; separation anxiety disorder
- High functioning ASD
- Mental health problems suffered because of complex trauma
- Externalising behaviour difficulties including ADHD
- Relationship problems and lack of social skills
- A child suffering family trauma as a result of events such as accidents, bereavement or abuse
- Social difficulties, possibly as a result of extreme discrimination or bullying
- Specific learning difficulties with resultant behaviour reactions
- Social and communication difficulties
- Diagnoses of ME and post viral syndrome illnesses which have prevented normal school attendance and progress

**We do not normally take students who display the following tendencies, but we can often recommend an appropriate alternative School.**

- A sustained history of violence directed against property, students, or staff
- A history of arson
- A history of bringing firearms, knives or other dangerous items into school
- A child whose behaviour creates unacceptable health & safety risk
- A child who has been known to supply or deal in drugs
- A child who has severe learning difficulties and who is unable to access the broad and balanced curriculum delivered for students of average or above potential
- A child with complex physical needs
- Students with a primary speech and language need
- A child with high levels of mental health difficulties such as Schizophrenia/Psychosis/Severe Personality Disorder
- A child who presents as a significant suicidal risk
- A child whose behaviour is likely to significantly impact negatively on fellow members of our school community, for example, by increasing anxiety in other students
- A child with a history of persistent sexualised behaviour or assault
- A child who would require a high level of staff support, for example, in the ratio of 2:1, to keep themselves and/or others safe or to make progress in their learning

**We do not normally take students with traits of, or a diagnosis of PDA, ODD or Conduct Disorder, however each young person is assessed on a case-by-case basis.**

## **5.2 Admission Procedure:**

1. We welcome informal visits to West Heath School from prospective parents/carers and pupils, once we have received an EHCP and supporting documents this can be arranged by contacting our Admissions Officer.
2. We accept students at any time during the academic year (subject to space). We do not admit pupils into our Year 11 cohort ~~and~~ Primarily, our Sixth Form students are educated offsite by our partner college providers, therefore applications for Sixth Form should be submitted ahead of the Autumn term, for a college placement to be secured We do also

offer an onsite Sixth Form curriculum for suitable students in order to prepare them for a college placement and can admit students onto this course throughout the year.

3. We can only admit students once they have turned 10 years old, however, the Admissions process can begin up to six months prior to their 10<sup>th</sup> birthday.
4. Formal applications are submitted either by parents or via referral from the local authority, which initiates the start of the official consultation process.
5. Our admissions team, which includes a range of professionals depending on the child's need, reviews the paperwork in the context of our admissions procedure.
6. We aim to respond to applications within two weeks, not including school holidays, and successful applicants will be offered taster days and an interview, typically carried out by the Principal and appropriate members of the senior team.
7. During the taster days assessments are carried out by relevant professionals and practitioners, to include a Speech and Language assessment and a meeting with the School's Psychologists.
8. West Heath School will also discuss the student's needs with previous providers and professionals/practitioners involved. Therefore, it may take up to two weeks following an interview and taster days to make a final decision.
9. A letter to the student's parents/carers and local authority is then sent with our formal consultation response, stating whether or not West Heath School can meet the child's needs and offering a placement if appropriate.
10. The decision not to offer a place at West Heath School, at any point of the consultation process, is only ever taken after careful consideration by experienced professionals who feel the provision at West Heath School is not sufficient to adequately meet the child's needs and therefore a place at the school would not be in their best interest.
11. If a placement is offered, the school awaits funding to be agreed before transition arrangements are put in place.
12. The offer of a placement is always dependent upon available spaces generally and in specific year groups/learning environments (HEART for example). It is also dependent upon the capacity of our Induction and transition teams.
13. West Heath School is a listed building with enforced planning restrictions. West Heath School does not own the school site, is accountable to the landlord and accordingly bound by the terms and conditions of the lease. Therefore, the school site cannot be built on or expanded to accommodate any additional students.
14. When we are oversubscribed in a particular year group/ learning environment, we do hold an electronic waiting list. Students are put on the waiting list only at the request of the Local Authority and/or parents and places are given in the order at which funding has been agreed. We hold students on the waiting list for 12 calendar months and will contact them as and when a place becomes available. If a place does not become available during this time, but is still desired, the consultation paperwork must be resubmitted.
15. Once a student has started, a New Student Placement Meeting will typically be held after 12 weeks, to understand how well they are progressing. Note that all student meetings including New Placement, Annual Reviews and Emergency Review meetings are minuted by the school's Review Co-Ordinator or delegated minute taker. Meetings will only be voice

recorded in extenuating circumstances, i.e. where the Review Co-Ordinator or other minute taker is unavailable or if the school have received and agreed a request to make reasonable adjustments. The school does not agree to the sharing of recordings with third parties (including on social media) without written prior consent.

16. On the rare occasion where the student either isn't progressing sufficiently to warrant a continued placement or if the students' needs emerge as outside our admission criteria, an in-year review will be called. This review will focus on how our provision can be adjusted if possible, to meet the student's needs and if this isn't achievable or reasonable, to identify an alternative provision in partnership with the student, parent and Local Authority.

## **6. Persons with particular responsibilities**

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Admissions Panel who are selected from the SMT team.

## **7. Monitoring and Evaluation**

SMT  
Student Services Committee  
Trustees  
Admissions Officer  
SENCO

## **8. Links with other Policies**

- Equality of Opportunity Policy

## **9. Consultees**

The Principal, Senior Management Team, Student Services Committee and the Trustees of the School