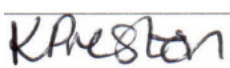


Policy/Procedure Name:	ADMISSIONS POLICY		
Last Update:	August 2024	Next Update Due:	January 2027

Author	Alex Smythe
Signature of Authorised Individual	
Signature of the Director	

CONTENTS

- 1 Philosophy
- 2 Purpose
- 3 Admissions Criteria
- 4 Admissions Criteria – Exceptional Cases
- 5 Admissions Procedures
- 6 Policy Evaluation
- 7 GDPR
- 8 Equality
- 9 Inclusion Statement
- 10 Appeals

1. Philosophy

Willow Park School provides education and care for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders(ASD)and associated learning, communication, sensory and behavioural difficulties.

Willow Park School believes that all children with special educational needs arising from an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Speech, Language and Communication difficulties, whose profile of needs appears consistent with the school's admissions criteria, and whose parents and local authority wish it, have a right to be considered for assessment for admission.

The school prioritises referrals from Local Authorities and then considers parental referrals on a first-come, first-served basis. Willow Park School considers referrals from all cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and does not discriminate on any of these grounds.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the school's assessment for admission process is to determine and clarify the needs of the individual pupil with a view to evaluating whether these can be met by Willow Park School's educational approach and environment.

An assessment for admission considers each prospective pupil's:

- Education and performance levels
 - Speech, Language, Communication and Sensory needs
 - Behavioural and emotional response
 - Self-help and independence skills
 - Emotional wellbeing and mental health needs
 - Adaptability and response to the school's approach, interventions and environments
 - Impact on the existing peer groups
- An assessment for admission also considers:
- The effectiveness of the school's behaviour management strategies and their implementation (therefore, this policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy).
 - An in-situ risk assessment along with a matching exercise to the school's existing peers and staff expertise.
 - A multi-disciplinary judgement on the school's ability to meet all of the pupil's identified needs.

This assessment for admission process involves baseline evaluations against which progress will be measured at regular intervals. The assessment information from these evaluations informs the pupil's initial Individualised Learning Plan which includes a detailed programme designed to enable each individual to work towards specific, purposeful and attainable goals.

To begin the assessment for admission process we will request up-to-date referral papers, including the pupil's or young person's EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan), a history of his or her education and any assessment reports that have been completed to determine individual strengths and needs. This information will be considered with reference to Willow Park School's admissions criteria.

3. Admissions Criteria

The criteria for admission to Willow Park School are based on a combination of factors. These include the individual pupil's or young person's needs, the level of family commitment, the suitability of the school's approach and environment, and

the availability of an appropriate peer group. These criteria are set out below and are subject to regular review.

- Each pupil will have a confirmed diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or evidence of behaviours and responses which are strongly associated with an autism spectrum condition and where a diagnosis is expected but may not yet have been confirmed. This might include a diagnosis of Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) or references to ASD with a demand-avoidant profile.
- Pupils may present with challenging behaviours resulting from their inflexible thinking patterns or from the communication, emotional and social difficulties that arise from the Autism Spectrum Disorder but not from other primary emotional, behavioural or mental disorders.
- Pupils may have a variety of atypical learning styles and difficulties which range in severity.
- Pupils may present with co-morbid medical conditions or factors; or mental health issues but the school reserves the right to decide whether these can be managed effectively and safely within its existing resources.
- Willow Park School values partnerships with families and expects a reasonable level of family commitment to supporting and maintaining its programmes and approach.

4. Exceptional Cases

In exceptional circumstances, consideration for admission may be given to special cases. This may be at the request of professional specialists who are familiar with the work of the school and who are seeking placements for difficult-to-place pupils. Where such specialists consider that Willow Park School may be able to provide the structures, supports, environment and peer group that might meet many of the needs of a particular pupil or young person under their care, then careful consideration for admission may be given by the school, despite the lack of a confirmed ASD diagnosis.

Each case will be judged on its own merits; will require a complete, accurate and up-to-date set of referral reports together with a written recommendation from a specialist who knows the school well; and may necessitate prior approval by Ofsted. It is strongly recommended that alternative placements continue to be sought while the Head teacher and Principal evaluate the feasibility of an admission for these exceptional cases.

The Head teacher reserves the right to discontinue the evaluation process of such cases when it becomes clear that an individual pupil's or young person's needs would be incompatible with those of other pupils already at the school, or those needs are considered to be beyond the scope of staff expertise.

5. Admissions Procedures

Pupils are assessed against the school's admissions criteria in the following staged manner.

Step 1 - Evaluation of the referral information

Determination of whether the pupil's or young person's special educational needs, as described in the referral reports, match the school's admissions criteria:

Step 2 – Meeting the pupil or young person and his or her family

The school's Leadership team will then:

- Arrange to meet the child or young person, parents/carers and in some cases teachers. (This may be at Willow Park School, at the family home or in another setting, as appropriate.)
- Request any additional paperwork and collect further information associated with the pupil's or young person's needs, health (including mental health), education and care; and
- Consider the child's or young person's suitability for placement in the light of this additional information.

If the outcome of the process at this stage strongly suggests that Willow Park School is a suitable placement, then admission will be conditional based on the following:

- Positive consultation with SENA and the family of the pupil.
- Agreement that the school can successfully meet the needs of pupils as defined by their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- A satisfactory home or school visit(s) with the prospective pupil and family. Where both parties are confident that the needs of the child can be met.
- An agreement between the school and SENA on the pricing of the student which identifies the level of need required to achieve the best support. The school aims to review placement progress and costing with a view to reduce the price and save public money.
- A dual signed and agreed Individual Placement Agreement (IPA) between the school and the relevant local authority.
- The completion of a signed parent handbook by parents/carers which informs the school of all known special educational needs and medical

needs and all relevant information of the prospective pupil required by the school in support of the efficient education of their child.

Step 3 – The transition and assessment process

If an offer of a placement is made, the school's leaders will design a programme of Induction for the pupil. Please see the school's Induction Policy for details.

It must be noted that, In most cases, pupils who are referred for placement consideration at Willow Park School have experienced major difficulties in other schools and facilities. Many have spent long periods of time out of school either through exclusion, refusing to attend or because they have been admitted to specialist CAMHS centres. This means that personalised and sensitively planned transition arrangements and individual supports have to be put in place to enable each new starter to successfully join the school.

Transition planning for new starters typically involves two distinct patterns. There are pupils who are judged to be capable of managing an immediate but individually supported admission into the school; and those who require a longer, gradual transition period which has to be phased in over time, again with individual support – please refer to the Induction Policy

6. Policy Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy can be evaluated through a number of quantifiable factors together with sampling parental, local authority and pupil or young person satisfaction with the Willow Park School Assessment, Transition and Admission process.

Potential quantifiable elements may include:

- The ratio of places offered to assessments conducted.
- The number of places accepted.
- The number of places sustained.
- Pupil or young person satisfaction measures.
- Parental views.
- Local authority surveys.
- Staff critical evaluation and reflection on the assessment process.
- The number of successful transitions to adult placements.

The regular, systematic collection and evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data on the effectiveness of its assessment, transition and admissions process forms part of the school's strategy for self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

7. GDPR

Willow Park School is committed to ensuring that all personal data obtained and stored by the school is in compliance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. This also includes accurate maintenance of the Admissions Register in accordance with Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. From the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed or been informed that the pupil will attend the school, an entry will be made in the school's Admissions Register in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Parents/carers or adult with a vested interest in the process will be informed verbally of the need for us to store this information for the purpose of completing the process, regardless of the entry outcome.

- On taking up a place at the school an entry is made in the Admissions Register.
- The Admissions Register is held on electronic format on a secure Management System.
- This is stored on a 'cloud' based server is regularly backed up to ensure records are not lost or destroyed for any reason.
- The persons responsible for the administration of the Admissions Register are the Head teacher and Principal.

The Following Items are Recorded in the Admission Register:

- Full Name
- Gender
- Name and address of all parents/guardians and/or carer with an indication of the parent/guardian and/or carer with whom the pupil normally resides
- At least one telephone number at which the parent/guardian can be contacted in an emergency
- An email address for an emergency contact where provided
- Date of Birth
- Date of Admission / Re-admission
- Name and address of previous school
- Unique Pupil Number (UPN) (where provided by the student's previous placement)
- Student transport details where applicable.

Copies of the Admissions Register are held at the school for a minimum of 3 years. The Admissions Register allows for the inclusion / deletion from the register and is done in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Parents can find the school's Privacy Policy on the school website.

8. Equality Statement

At Willow Park School, we actively seek to encourage equity and equality through our teaching and our employment practices. As such, we seek to advance the equality of opportunity between people who share any of the following characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The use of stereotypes under any of the above headings will always be challenged.

9. Inclusion

Our school is an inclusive school. We aim to make all pupils feel included in all our activities. We try to make all our teaching fully inclusive. We recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a balanced, broadly-based curriculum. We have systems in place for early identification of barriers to their learning and participation so that they can engage in school activities with all other pupils. We acknowledge the need for high expectations for and of all children.

10. Appeals

Willow Park School reserves the right to refuse entry and progress into any year if school's structure does not meet the educational, pastoral, and social needs of the pupil concerned. This decision will be made by the school's management team and reviewed by the Directors and Principal in line with this policy.

Parents have the right to appeal against an unsuccessful application using the school's Complaints Procedure or via the local authority during the consultation process. The way in which Willow Park School deals with pupil exclusion and removal is set out in the Behaviour Policy and Exclusions Policy.