

# Admissions Policy



Overley Hall  
School

**Approved by:** Beverley Doran

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### 1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain **how to apply** for a place at the school
- Set out the school's **arrangements for allocating places to the pupils** who apply
- Explain **how to appeal** against a decision not to offer your child a place

### 2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code](#)

The school is required to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

### 3. Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents can apply for state-funded school places at the school's normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

**Looked after children** are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions

**Previously looked after children** are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

#### **4. Availability and offer**

Overley Hall School provides education for up to twenty four children and young people from across many authorities nationwide. Prior to admission, we carefully consider the impact a referred child may have on others due to their vulnerabilities.

Overley Hall School is an independent special school for children aged 8 to 19 many of whom reside onsite, in the Wellingtonia Children's Home, from anything between 39 & 52 weeks of the year. We also offer education-only day placements. We cater for children with complex needs associated with learning difficulties, autism, communication, social conditions and other diagnoses. All of our children can be described as having complex needs having two or more disabling conditions that co-exist such as Autism and ADHD, or severe learning difficulties with mental health.

Many of our pupils have additional needs linked to symptoms of attachment and trauma. Our staff to pupil ratio is high with many of our children having 1:1 staffing. We recognise the vulnerability of all children with or without learning disabilities, however the vulnerability of our pupils is increased due to their cognitive deficits, and social communication and language difficulties. We cater for learners who not only require a differentiated curriculum but who, at times, require further adaptations to our teaching and the environment to enable them to make progress.

Overley Hall School has a 'can do' ethos who places emphasis on maximising individual achievements at whatever level they might be at by adopting our pedagogical skills and approaches. We focus on what our learners *can do* rather than what they can't do. We aim to personalise our curriculum offer to transform life chances.

## 5.0 How to apply

### Initiation

The admissions policy to Overley Hall School is usually initiated by:

- a. The Principal
- b. Heads of School and Care
- c. Clinical Psychologist
- d. Parents
- e. Social workers
- f. Psychiatrist (occasionally)
- g. SEND Department
- h. LA Commissioners

Call the school on Telephone Number: 01952 740262 or Email your enquiry to [info@overleyhall.com](mailto:info@overleyhall.com). A school prospectus will be posted out.

After having an initial discussion to establish that Overley Hall may possibly be an appropriate placement, full notes (referral paper work) including Education Health Care Plans are requested. A meeting at the school is arranged to have further discussions to establish if the school and/or Childrens home feel the holistic needs of the young person can be met. It is also important to us that the parents and authority representatives feel Overley Hall has an ethos, and curriculum that they feel will enable the child an opportunity to thrive. It is also important to ensure the peer group for the child is compatible. Parents are encouraged to work with their local authority to agree that Overley Hall is a suitable setting for their child.

Following these initial discussions, a visit to see the pupil is arranged to enable all the various disciplines to be consulted as to the pupil's specific needs. This usually involves meeting the young person in their current school, at home or in the childcare provision. This helps Overley Hall to collect as much information as possible to ensure the placement will be able to meet the needs of the young person.

After meeting the pupil and all those involved, an in depth discussion is held with Senior Staff at Overley Hall School to discuss their special needs and if the placement would be appropriate, and compatible with the existing school and registered home population. A second assessment visit is organised for senior staff to meet the young person. During this time, all the relevant authorities visit Overley Hall, i.e.

- a. Educational Psychologist
- b. Education Officers
- c. Social Services
- d. Parents and sometimes the prospective resident.

### **Placement**

After a decision has been made about suitability of placement, and everyone is in agreement, including the placing authority, placement is offered. Once a placement is confirmed parents/guardians will be given a Placement Assessment Profile (Referral Form) to complete. This helps us to be more aware of the young person's needs.

It is sometimes necessary for Overley Hall to set specific arrangements and terms, particularly around contact, medication etc. This would be agreed at the Pre –Placement meeting at which representatives from the authorities Social services and where appropriate Education and parents would attend.

The Pre –Placement meeting will discuss and confirm the following:

- a. Proposed start date
- b. Assessment period
- c. Family address and telephone numbers
- d. Transition planning (see below)
- e. Funding/invoice details
- f. Medical info including medication details/ needs /addresses etc.
- g. Family contact arrangements
- h. Special arrangements/considerations

For a **residential placement**, the decision about suitability of placement will be made by the Head of School and the registered manager in consultation with the placing authority. Before making such a decision, a referral form must be completed. In addition, placement impact risk assessments must be undertaken and considered before any agreement to place a young person can be undertaken.

Referrals will be screened in accordance with Overley Halls Equality and Diversity Policy.

Overley is committed to ensuring referrals are adequately scrutinised to protect not only the referral but also young people currently attending school and living in the home, therefore Overley Hall will:

- meet the young person, parent(s) or carers
- Where possible invite the young person and / or parents to visit the school and home
- Provide a copy of the prospectus, virtual tour and statement of purpose to the placing authority, parent(s) or carers
- Provide a copy of Overley Hall School guide and Overley Hall Young Persons Guide.
- Request and scrutinise an update chronology
- Request and scrutinize the care plan
- Request and scrutinize the EHCP
- Request and scrutinize the other relevant information about the young person for example:
  - a) Individual Education
  - b) Transition documents
  - c) Psychology reports
  - d) Speech and Language + Occupational Therapy reports
  - e) Latest Annual Review documentation
  - f) Recent looked after review reports
  - g) Pathway plan
  - h) other relevant plans
  - i) reports from health specialists reports

As part of the referral process Overley Hall will meet the young person in their environment preferably in their current placement and their educational placement.

If appropriate, Overley Hall will ask the parents to visit prior to any decision being made.

Once the decision has been made to accept the placement a transition plan will be put in place around visits for the young person and planning around bedroom such as colour scheme etc. Where possible as many key staff will visit the young person prior to them moving to Overley so that they are more comfortable when they move.

## **5.1 Special Circumstances**

During periods which may affect the admissions procedure, such as the country being in the midst of a pandemic, slight deviations to the admission procedure may be affected. These differences may result in reducing visits/contact during the assessment period and post admission period. Overley Hall will endeavour to ensure all parties (parents, carers, and local authority officers) are provided with sufficient information to be able to make informed decisions. Overley Hall will not accept a young person without meeting the learner and assessing his learning needs prior to

admission.

## **6. Assessment**

All young people admitted to Overley Hall now come on a three month assessment period, where by the contract can be terminated at the end of the three months if we feel we cannot meet the needs of the young person, or the authority and/or parents feel we are not an appropriate placement for the young person after all.

All professionals involved would be kept informed at an early stage of our intentions and further meetings arranged if necessary.

## **7.0 Transition**

We realise that the young people are individuals and their needs are individual, therefore a discussion would take place on how we are going to proceed with the Transition to Overley Hall, and we realise that we have to be flexible in order for this process to work appropriately. If it has been decided after the assessment visits, and subsequent meetings that it would not be an appropriate placement, then all concerned are informed in writing as soon as possible after the decision is made. This would be done at the young person's pace as much as possible and as much time given to the process as was seen necessary for the Transition to work.

There are several examples that we have used in the past that have been quite effective:

- Providing Children's Guide to School and to the children's home
- Using photos of areas of the building, and staff to familiarise the young people with us.
- Short visits by the young person with staff, parents etc. usually involving an activity.
- Unaccompanied short visits.
- Increase above visits to include an overnight stay bringing items with them to keep in their bedroom
- Increasing overnight stays.

We appreciate that this can be a very difficult time for parents and families and therefore try to keep them as involved as possible in this process, we would therefore invite parents to be involved with choosing of the bedroom (availability allowing), the décor of the room, soft furnishings and choosing pictures for the room and having a part in the design of the young person's school curriculum.

With this in mind we understand that parents may need initial daily telephone contact to reassure them of their young person's progress and well-being. A specific day and time will then be set up

for Key workers to telephone parents to update progress and keep them informed. The young people will also be encouraged to make contact with parents either over the phone, through email, web cam, sending photos, cards postcards etc., with the Key workers help as often as necessary. Overley Hall staff will endeavour to help with escorting the young people for family visits when appropriate.

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from your local authority.

Please note, pupils already attending our nursery will not transfer automatically into the main school. A separate application must be made for a place in reception.

## **7.1 Within the first week of admission Overley Hall will:**

- Commenced writing the Positive Support Plan
- Set up the admission folder (white files)
- Ensure the young person's social worker has visited.
- Ensure the young person is registered with all health professionals
- Have a date agreed for the first review, post admission, PEP, LAC, CIN
- To ensure the Young person is aware of the fire drill procedure
- To ensure the Young person made aware of the Complaints procedure
- Ensure the young person has been shown the Young Persons Guide to school and care.

## **8.0 Allocation of places**

### **8.1 Admission number**

The school has an agreed admission number of twenty four pupils for entry. Overley Hall is a school and Childrens home registered for children and young people 8 – 19 years of age. The Children's Home has twenty two bedrooms and caters for twenty two children and young people. This enables the school to take two day students only.

The school has six class groups which can vary in size depending on the cohort of young people at that present time, their cognitive abilities and their needs. Our class sizes can vary between one and six pupils. Most classes have three or four young people. We currently have two key stage 5 groups, two key stage 2/3 classes and two key stage 4 classes. It must be noted that this varies and is flexible depending on current cohort of pupils and students.

## **8.2 Selection**

Overley Hall is a school and Childrens home which caters for young people with complex needs, most of whom have autism and 'severe to moderate' learning difficulties. See Appendix A for a list of diagnosis we feel we are suitable to cater for and Appendix B for a list of diagnosis we do not feel we are able to cater for. As we offer a person centred approach we are very adaptable and therefore we may be able to tweak our set up, curriculum and approach to meet the needs of a young person as long as our other pupils and students are not negatively impacted on by doing so. All of our pupils and students have an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP) or are currently being transferred from a Statement of Need to and EHCP.

## **8.3 Oversubscription criteria**

All children whose statement of special educational needs (SEN) or education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place if the preplacement assessment feels Overley Hall can meet need and in a way which does not negatively impact of the pupils and students already in school.

In the event that the school receives more applications than the number of places it has available, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out below, in order until all places are filled.

1. Highest priority will be given to looked after children and all previously looked after children who apply for a place at the school..
2. Priority will next be given to children on the basis of social or medical need such as epilepsy. The school requires as supporting evidence if you are making an application on the basis of social or medical need.

Senior management Meetings will take place to agree the priority order.

## **8.4 Children below registration school age**

Where children below compulsory school age are offered a place at the school, they will be entitled to attend the school full-time as soon as they have had their 8<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Parents & Authorities may defer their child's entry to the school until later in the school year as agreed with the school.

## **9. In-year admissions**

You can apply for a place for your child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose statement of SEN or EHC plan names the school will be admitted if Overley Hall feels they can meet need.

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, your child's name will be added to a waiting list for the relevant class group and family room in the children's home. When a space becomes available it will be filled by one of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6.3 of this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Enquiries for in-year admissions should be sent to the following address:

*Overley Hall School*

*Wellington*

*Telford*

*Shropshire*

*TF6 5HE*

*Telephone: 01952 740262 Ext 0*

*Email: [info@overleyhall.com](mailto:info@overleyhall.com)*

## **10. Appeals**

If your child's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If you wish to appeal, you should speak to your local authority SEND department or Social Services to discuss their thoughts and must set out the grounds for your appeal in writing and send it to the following address:

*Overley Hall School*

*Wellington*

*Telford*

*Shropshire*

*TF6 5HE*

*Telephone: 01952 740262 Ext 0*

Email: [info@overleyhall.com](mailto:info@overleyhall.com)

## **11. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Senior Management Team annually.

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes.

## Appendix A

**Overley Hall School is a specialist school which caters for complex children who often have co-morbid profiles and fall into the following categories.**



1. Social	2. Diagnosis	3. Other	4. Diagnosis and Provision
<p>We can educate and support pupils with varying levels of complex needs, ranging from mild to severe and will usually include a number of the following:-</p>			
<p>a) Pupils with communication and language needs, who may present with any of the following: Difficulties in communication with peers, leading to social isolation and apparent behaviour difficulties</p> <p>Elevated levels of frustration or anxiety caused by the inability to participate in learning and/or social contexts</p> <p>Communication difficulties that impact on: -classroom -participation and -interactions with peers</p> <p>Language disorders/Speech Disorders and difficulties with listening skills</p> <p>b) Students with Autistic Spectrum Conditions and associated conditions such as: ADHD and PDD</p>	<p>a) Pupils with mild to moderate levels of the following: Anxiety-based problems including Attachment Disorder, Separation Anxiety, Generalised Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Panic Disorder, Tourette's Syndrome</p> <p>b) Depressive Disorder's including depression and self-harm</p> <p>c) Disruptive Behaviour Problems including ADD/ADHD, Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Pathological Demand Avoidance</p> <p>d) Foetal Alcohol Syndrome</p>	<p>a) Pupils requiring input to develop the following: Sensory motor skills  Communication  Challenging behaviour  Varying range of cognitive functioning ranging from severe to high functioning  Abuse and neglect  Functional skills  Anxiety  Sensory modulation  Motor skills  Sensory skills  Perceptual skills</p>	<p>Pupils with moderate to severe levels of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autism</li> <li>• Angelman Syndrome</li> <li>• Fragile X</li> <li>• Down Syndrome</li> <li>• Smith McGinnis</li> <li>• Dyspraxia</li> </ul> <p>Other conditions where pupils would benefit from an eclectic mix from the following list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person Centred Approach</li> <li>• Individual tailored educational/therapeutic programmes of study</li> <li>• Therapeutic approach to complex co-morbidity</li> <li>• Intensive Interaction</li> <li>• Sensory Integration</li> <li>• Attention Autism</li> <li>• SCERTS</li> <li>• Speech and Language Therapy</li> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• Occupational Therapy</li> <li>• Clinical Psychology</li> <li>• TEACCH</li> <li>• Theraplay</li> <li>• Makaton</li> <li>• Forest School</li> <li>• Highly Structure Approach</li> <li>• A 24 hour/Continuous Curriculum/Waking day Curriculum</li> <li>• Engagement pedagogy</li> </ul>

**Overley Hall School recognises that it is not a school which generally caters  
for the following**

<b>1. Social</b>	<b>2. Diagnosis</b>	<b>3. Other</b>
<b>We are unable to educate and support pupils with the following needs:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Pupils with a primary speech and language need without a co-morbidity</li> <li>c) Students with a primary need of Pathological Demand Avoidance diagnosis</li> <li>d) Pupils with a primary diagnosis of ADHD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Severe levels of any of the disorders/needs as stated in the Diagnosis column 2 – Page 1</li> <li>c) Children with no co-morbidities</li> <li>d) Schizophrenia</li> <li>e) Psychosis/Psychotic episodes</li> <li>f) Severe Personality Disorder</li> <li>g) Significant suicidal risk</li> <li>h) Complex physical needs</li> <li>i) Primary need diagnosing is EBD</li> <li>j) Primary need stems from sexual abuse</li> <li>k) Where a diagnosis of mental health is their primary diagnosis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Pupils with significant criminal involvement</li> <li>b) Pupils with significant levels of substance misuse</li> <li>c) Pupils with significant and planned/calculated or persistent levels of aggression</li> <li>d) Students with a history of arson</li> <li>e) Pupils whose behaviour is likely to significantly impact negatively on other young people at Overley Hall School, for example by increasing anxiety in other pupils or that puts them at risk</li> </ul>