Overley Hall School

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Admissions Policy

Policy Owner: Head Teacher
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Approved By: School Support and Scrutiny Team

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how learners may be referred to Overley Hall School.
- Set out the arrangements for considering referrals and admissions.
- Ensure admission decisions are fair, transparent and consistent.
- Explain how placement decisions are made.
- Describe transition arrangements for new learners.
- Provide information regarding concerns, complaints and appeals.

2. Legal Framework

Overley Hall School is an independent special school. The school provides specialist education for children and young people aged 8 to 19 years with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

As an independent special school, Overley Hall School is not subject to the School Admissions Code 2021. However, the school is committed to operating admissions arrangements that are fair, transparent, objective and non-discriminatory.

This policy is informed by:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

3. Admissions Principles

Overley Hall School will:

- Consider each referral individually.
- Work collaboratively with learners, parents/carers, local authorities and professionals.
- Assess whether the school can meet identified educational, social, emotional, behavioural, communication, health and safeguarding needs.
- Consider the welfare, safety and education of all learners.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Make reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

- Ensure decisions are evidence based.
- Provide clear reasons where a placement cannot be offered.

Admission decisions will never be based solely on a learner's diagnosis. Referrals are assessed according to individual needs and the school's ability to provide appropriate provision safely and effectively.

4. Our Provision

Overley Hall School provides specialist education for up to 24 learners aged 8 to 19 years.

The school supports learners with complex needs which may include:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Learning disabilities
- Communication and interaction needs
- ADHD
- Anxiety disorders
- Social, emotional and mental health needs
- Developmental trauma and attachment-related difficulties
- Additional associated conditions

Many learners require highly personalised programmes of support and, in some cases, individual staffing arrangements.

The school offers:

- Educational placements for learners who may reside in Wellingtonia Childrens Home or other offsite residential placements
- Day-only placements
- Integrated therapeutic approaches
- Individualised educational programmes

Prior to admission, the school carefully considers whether it can safely and effectively meet a learner's needs whilst maintaining the welfare, safety and education of existing learners.

5. Referrals and Applications

Referrals are typically received from:

- Local Authorities

- SEND Case Officers
- Commissioners
- Social Workers
- Educational Psychologists
- Schools and Colleges
- Parents and Carers
- Other professionals involved in supporting the learner

Initial enquiries may be made by telephone, email or through the school website.

Following an initial discussion, relevant documentation will normally be requested.

This may include:

- Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Educational Psychology reports
- Therapy reports
- Annual Review documents
- Risk assessments
- Care plans
- Health information
- School reports
- Safeguarding information
- Other relevant professional reports

6. Assessment Process

The admissions process is designed to establish whether Overley Hall School can meet the learner's needs appropriately and safely.

The assessment process may include:

Stage 1: Review of Documentation

Senior leaders will consider all available information regarding:

- Educational needs
- Communication needs
- Behavioural presentation
- Health needs
- Safeguarding considerations
- Therapeutic requirements
- Compatibility with existing learner groups

Stage 2: Initial Consultation

A discussion may take place with:

- Parents and carers
- The young person (where appropriate)
- Local Authority representatives
- Current educational providers
- Other professionals

Stage 3: Assessment Visit

Members of the senior team will visit the learner within their current setting to gain a fuller understanding of needs and support requirements.

Stage 4: Visit to Overley Hall School

Where appropriate, learners, families and professionals will be invited to visit the school.

Stage 5: Placement Decision

Following consultation and assessment, senior leaders will determine whether:

- The learner's needs can be met;
- Appropriate staffing and resources are available;
- The placement is compatible with existing learners;
- Admission can be safely supported.

The outcome will normally be communicated as soon as reasonably practicable following completion of the assessment process.

7. Admission Decisions

Admissions decisions are based upon:

- The learner's identified needs.
- Information available through professional reports.
- Assessment activities.
- Safeguarding considerations.
- Availability of appropriate educational provision.
- Compatibility with existing learners.
- Available staffing and resources.
- Residential availability where applicable.

The school will provide clear reasons where a placement cannot be offered.

8. EHCP Consultations

Where a Local Authority consults Overley Hall School regarding a learner's EHCP, the school will consider whether it can meet need safely and effectively.

The school will provide a response to the consulting authority based on:

- Age
- Ability
- Aptitude
- Special educational needs
- Available provision
- Capacity within the school

Where Overley Hall School is named in a final EHCP following the statutory consultation process, admission arrangements will be implemented in accordance with statutory requirements.

9. Capacity and Availability

The school is registered for up to 24 learners aged 8 to 19 years.

Class sizes vary according to:

- Cohort needs
- Group compatibility
- Risk considerations
- Curriculum requirements

Where the school has reached capacity, referrals may be held under review and reconsidered should availability arise.

The existence of a referral under review does not guarantee that a placement will become available.

10. Transition Arrangements

Once a placement has been agreed, an individual transition plan will be developed.

Transition arrangements may include:

- Photographs and videos of the school
- Meetings with key staff
- Short visits
- Supported activities
- Gradual introduction to the school environment
- Family involvement throughout the process

Transition arrangements will be tailored to individual need.

11. Initial Assessment Period

All learners participate in a **12-week post-admission assessment period** following admission.

This period enables staff to:

- Assess strengths and needs.
- Confirm educational approaches.
- Develop support plans.
- Establish communication systems.
- Review therapeutic requirements.
- Agree learning priorities.

The assessment period forms part of the learner's placement and is intended to ensure that the educational, therapeutic and pastoral provision is appropriately matched to the learner's needs.

Throughout the 12-week period, Overley Hall School will work closely with:

- Parents and carers;
- The placing Local Authority;
- Relevant professionals;
- Residential providers (where applicable).

Regular reviews will take place to monitor progress, evaluate the effectiveness of support strategies and consider whether reasonable adjustments have been implemented appropriately.

At the conclusion of the 12-week assessment period, a formal review will be held. If, following assessment and implementation of reasonable adjustments, it is agreed by the school, placing Local Authority, parents/carers and other relevant professionals that Overley Hall School is unable to meet the learner's needs safely and effectively, alternative arrangements may be considered through the appropriate review and placement planning processes.

Where significant concerns arise prior to the end of the assessment period, the school will work collaboratively with all parties to review support arrangements and identify appropriate next steps at the earliest opportunity.

12. Equality and Reasonable Adjustments

Overley Hall School is committed to equality of opportunity.

The school does not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of:

- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

Reasonable adjustments will be considered throughout the admission process in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

13. In-Year Admissions

Referrals may be received throughout the academic year.

Applications received outside the usual admission cycle will follow the same assessment and consultation process described within this policy.

14. Concerns, Complaints and Appeals

Where a Local Authority is responsible for determining educational placement through an EHCP, disagreements regarding placement decisions should normally be raised with the relevant Local Authority.

Parents and carers may have rights of appeal through the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) where disputes relate to EHCP placement decisions.

Parents and carers may also seek independent advice through their local SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).

Any concerns regarding the school's admissions procedures may be raised through the school's Complaints Policy.

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and the School Support and Scrutiny Team.

The policy may be reviewed sooner in response to:

- Legislative changes
- Regulatory guidance
- Feedback from stakeholders
- Operational changes within the school

The latest version of this policy will be published on the school website.

Related Policies

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Behaviour and Positive Support Policy
- SEND Policy
- Statement of Purpose (Residential Provision)