

Sheiling School Ringwood

Admissions Policy and Procedure

1. Admission to the Sheiling School

Prospective pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and are identified as having moderate, severe or complex learning difficulties may be referred to the School by Local Education Authorities or Social Services Departments, or through tendering consortiums of local authorities. In many cases the children's parents/carers make initial contact.

The stages for admission of pupils to the Sheiling School are usually as follows:

1. For approaches by:
 - a. **Parents/carers:** parents/carers, and if appropriate relevant professionals, will be invited by the School Admissions Coordinator for an informal visit to the School.
 - b. **Funding authorities:** usually the authority will provide the relevant documentation on the child's education history for initial consideration by the school. In the case of tendering consortiums this may have a strict timescale attached and parents may only be invited to consider the school at a later stage of the process.
2. A pupil mentor will be assigned by the school to support the education coordinator in the admission process and to be the primary link between the school and the parents/authorities. Pupil mentors are senior members of staff who will then usually stay attached to the child throughout their time at school. The role includes chairing internal and statutory reviews for the child.
3. The child (and parents) will be invited for a short visit to see how the young person reacts to the school environment.
4. Upon receipt of a completed application and all relevant records a formal interview will be arranged for the child to experience school life – usually visits to class and house - and for the parents/carers and/or relevant professionals to discuss the child's history and any issues related to the prospective placement.
5. Following the interview, the School Admissions Coordinator, in liaison with senior members of staff, will determine if the school can meet the needs of the child concerned. If this is the case, then usually within 10 to 15 school term working days of the interview taking place, the School Admissions Coordinator will either:
 - a. Offer, in writing, a place at the school, stating start date and including these documents:
 - i. Terms of admission
 - ii. Term dates
 - iii. Fee schedule
 - iv. NASS contract to be signed by the funding body
 - b. Advise in writing that there is no current vacancy at the school and offer that the child's name is kept on a waiting list.
 - c. Advise that the school cannot meet the child's needs and therefore will not be offering a place.
6. In the event of a place being offered at the School, parents/carers and authorities will be requested to confirm in writing their acceptance under the Terms and Conditions of Admission at the stated fee level (Assessment Fee).

7. Upon receipt of confirmation, and no later than two weeks prior to the admission start date, the Admissions Coordinator will send the parents/carer an information pack. This will include details of the child's teacher and houseparent as well as a clothing list for residential pupils. At the same time the funding body will be sent two copies of the national NASS contract to be signed, with one copy to be returned to school and the other to be kept by the funding body.

The school will comply with the terms and conditions of the NASS Contract or other specific contracts with the Local Authority once this has been signed by both parties. The school will also comply with the guidelines of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

Every pupil is admitted on the understanding that the first 6 weeks at School is seen as a trial and assessment period. An Assessment Review will then be held at the end of the assessment period. The on-going fee level will be confirmed at the Assessment Review. In exceptional cases it may be necessary to extend the assessment period.

The School reserves the right to postpone or cancel the process of admission of a child if circumstances change, e.g. the child's needs or behaviour change or if there is no longer space and appropriate facility for that particular pupil.

2. Terms of Admission

2.1 Fee Structure

Once a place has been offered and it is accepted by the Authority, an Invoice will be sent out and fees become due within 30 days of receipt. A charge will be made on all overdue accounts in line with the published fee schedule.

Every child is admitted on a term's trial and assessment basis. An assessment fee will be charged for this period.

At the beginning of the following term the fee level will be adjusted accordingly, in agreement with the funding authority, and either a standard or discretionary reduced fee level will be set. Fee levels are reviewed thereafter at each annual review.

Fees, which are exclusive of pocket money, clothing or outward bound activities, are payable termly in advance.

Items which are not covered in the fees are detailed in the school's charging policy in the prospectus.

The schedule of fees will be adjusted yearly to take into account the rate of inflation, or other costs such as changes in regulatory requirements, staffing, etc.

- Accounts will be due on presentation of three termly invoices.
- Fees are based on a 38 week academic year.
- A charge of 5% per month will be made on all overdue accounts.

- Standard and Discretionary fees include all food and lodging appropriate to the attendance type, education and life skills, normal class room support, entertainment, and some off site visits, therapies including speech and language.
- Standard and Discretionary fees exclude personal expenses, pocket money, transport costs other than included off site visits, which will be charged as extra when appropriate. Also excluded are costs for additional staffing, night waking staff and other items where particular difficulties or unusual circumstances have been identified. In such cases additional fees will be applied following negotiation and agreement.
- Fees may be subject to an annual increase in line with inflation. LEA's will be notified of larger than inflation increases well in advance and in line with the NASS or current mutually agreed contract.
- It is the policy of the school to make clear within the minutes of the Assessment/Annual Review that the appropriate fee schedule has been distributed and that all parties are aware of the current fee level. The LEA will also be informed in writing.

2.2 Policy of Review

After initial assessments, Individual Learning Plans are formalised in consultation with teachers and care staff working directly with the pupil, according to the Code of Practice. All pupils have an annual review of their Statement of Special Educational Needs. Parents of privately funded pupils without a Statement are encouraged to follow the same procedure. Summary reports are sent out to all parties two weeks prior to the Annual Review.

Every child admitted to the School is offered a place on the understanding that this will cease in the July after the statutory School leaving age is reached (for Seniors Programme students this will be the July after turning 19).

In line with the Code of Practice, the pupil's Transition Review will take place during the academic year that the child turns 14. The review will consider the suitability of ongoing placement in the Sheiling School's Seniors Programme. Following the review a Transition Plan will be drawn up.

2.3 Exclusion and Withdrawal Policy

Exclusion:

Under normal circumstances the decision as to when a child leaves the School will be mutually agreed upon, through the annual review process, at least one term before the scheduled date of leaving. When a child's situation becomes unmanageable or suddenly breaks down, an Emergency Review will be arranged, in order to determine the best way forward for the child or young person.

In extreme circumstances, it may be necessary to dismiss, or exclude, a child at short notice. The circumstances in which this could happen are when a pupil clearly shows no response to care and control strategies when:

- The pupil is causing harm to itself or others, or...
- When the child is exhibiting unmanageable behaviour.

The school will have two options:

- a. **Exclusion for a fixed period**
- b. **Permanent Exclusion**

Withdrawal:

If a child is withdrawn by parents or authorities a term's notice is required in writing, or a term's fees are expected to be paid. The School reserves the right to charge interest at 5% per month on accounts overdue by more than two months.

In the event of temporary exclusion, it shall remain the absolute responsibility of the placing authority to provide for the needs of the child who is excluded from the School. The Authority is also responsible for expenses as may be incurred.

When an Emergency Review has been called the Authority will be notified and will be expected to send a representative. It may be necessary to make decisions in an urgent Review in the absence of a representative from a placing authority if such a representative cannot attend.

May 2009