

Admissions & Integration Policy



Approved by: Governing Body

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1. Aims3

2. Legislation and statutory requirements3

3. Definitions3

4. How to apply3

5. School procedures for admission4

6. Allocation of places5

7. Appeals6

8. Monitoring arrangements6

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
- School Admission Appeals Code

The school is required to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

The normal admissions round for Cornfields School is any period during which parents/Carers or a Social worker as the corporate parent can apply with the Local Authority Special Educational Needs (SEN) Department agreement, for a funded school place at Cornfields School.

Admissions in line with our School registered status are welcomed from pupils who fall in the age category 7 – 16 years.

4. How to apply

Applications are usually made directly to the school Head Teacher, by a Local Authority SEN Department, since all of our pupils are in receipt of funding for Specialist School provision via their Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP).

General applications and enquiries are also welcomed from parents/carers and Social workers, but all consultations must be made via the Local Authority who will be responsible for making a decision regarding any offer of a school place at the school.

5. School procedures for admission

- **General Process**

All referrals to Cornfields School are managed by a School Admissions Panel consisting of the Head Teacher and Operational Managers. Information is shared with all members of the School Leadership Team before pursuing a referral.

Our school is designated to support children whose primary special needs have been identified through Statutory assessment as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) or having speech, language and communication difficulties. However, in view of the complex nature of special educational needs, Cornfields considers any referral on merit.

- **Placement in Cornfields School is subject to the pupil meeting the admissions criteria:**

This requires a minimum level of personal development including a basic level of personal care, the ability to engage and focus alongside their peers without presenting an intolerable risk to others, and to demonstrate a willingness to learn and to be supported to set long term aspirational outcomes.

The decision to offer a place within the school is made solely and exclusively on the basis of the relevant information provided by the home authority and parent or carer at the time of referral and via the Initial Network meeting conducted by personnel from the School Leadership Team.

- **Initial process for referrals**

After the initial referral or request to consult is received from the relevant local authority the child, carers, parents, Social Worker and / or any other professional directly involved may be contacted. The school may arrange a meeting at the child's home, current school setting or at Cornfields. It is not unusual for a number of meetings to take place. Following meetings, the Head Teacher or an Operational Manager will help to determine whether the school provision offered is likely to be suitable for the child's needs.

If all parties agree that the school can provide suitable provision, then the school will outline that they can meet the child's needs and will advise the relevant local authority SEN department. The local authority will review the referral in line with

their own policies and procedures and will decide if a school place at Cornfields is to be offered to the child. The offer of a place made by Cornfields school will be valid for a period of 30 days from this offer being made. After this period the offer will be considered invalid and any further consideration of a placement must be the subject of a further consultation. The reason for this 30-day cut off is to ensure the stability and welfare of the school cohort as a whole and to ensure other consultations can be considered and processed without concerns regarding outstanding offers.

This is then followed by an initial network meeting that further identifies the child's strengths and difficulties with all professionals / stakeholders involved. This is designed to gather essential background information around learning and cognition and pertaining to risk assessment, health, medical, behaviour, social and emotional difficulties etc.

All relevant consent forms are then completed. All this information must be shared before a start date / induction period can be initiated. Any strategies around risk that need to be put in place can be identified and agreed at this stage.

The pupil and parent/ carer will meet with a member of the school leadership team to sign a home-school agreement. Specific routine issues, boundaries and expectations are discussed and agreed as a contract with the pupil at the Home School Agreement meeting.

- **Induction period**

Having considered and agreed to pursue the placement, the school SENCo and class team formulate an induction timetable for a period of time dictated by the child's needs, circumstances etc. This, most often, will be a part-time integration within the pupil's class and will involve staged opportunities as part of an initial assessment. This timetable will build on the child's previous educational experience and also match the prevailing needs of the child.

The length of the induction period will be based around the needs of the pupil. Ordinarily, we would anticipate induction having been completed once a pupil has attended on a full timetable for a 4-week period. Pupils will be full time as soon as practicable but this will take into account any relevant risk assessment at advice of other professionals.

If the induction period has raised concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of the pupil (or those around him/her) then this will be documented and the timetable, implementation and strategies will be revised to include a clear time scale for the future. If concerns remain, then professionals at the review meeting or subsequent network meeting will discuss the feasibility of the placement.

If we determine that we cannot meet need we will communicate this to parents/carers and the local authority. We will provide 28 days' notice of the school placement offer being withdrawn.

6. Allocation of places

6.1 Admission numbers

The school has an agreed admission number of 50 pupils. Children may enter at various points throughout the year and all years are open for entry until the agreed admission number is reached.

6.2 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.

1. Highest priority will be given to looked after children and all previously looked after children, irrespective of their fostering authority or IFA, who apply for a place at the school.
2. Priority will next be given to children on the basis of a social or emotional need, where placement in a small specialist setting is agreed as a primary need on their EHC plan.
3. Priority is next given to pupils who reside in Kent or Medway.

7. Appeals

If your child's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, you can request information about why admission was refused and given information about the process for appeal. If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal in writing and send it to the following email address within 10 days of being notified by the local authority:

info@cornfields.kent.sch.uk

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the governing body annually.