

THE LION WORKS SCHOOL POLICY



Admissions policy

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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
- Meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards by making the school's policy on admissions available to parents

2. Legislation and guidance

The school will set out in this admissions policy the process and selection criteria for placement. As an Independent School we are required to have a written policy on admissions. This policy meets that requirement.

This complies with the following legislation:

- [Equality Act 2011](#)
- [Education Act 2010](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#)

3. Definitions

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

This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care due to being adopted.

4. How to apply

Applications for placements usually come via a Local Authority SEND department. It is however possible to apply directly if parents intend to fund a school placement via their own means.

Applications via Local Authority SEND departments:

1. Parents are advised to book a tour of the school. This will be an opportunity to gain an understanding of the provision on offer as well as an opportunity to meet the school Leadership. Parents are advised not to bring the potential new student with them at this stage in order to allow for a candid and direct dialogue.
2. If you feel the school could be an appropriate option for your child/dependent following your first visit then we encourage and support parents to make subsequent visits/tours of the school alongside the potential future student.
3. If you feel our education offer may be appropriate for your child/dependent then you should ask your Local Authority Care Officer (CO) to make a placement consultation with the school. Your CO must consult with the school if you request it.
4. The school admissions administrator will receive and process your child/dependent's EHC plan and associated documents. An initial response will then be provided to your CO indicating whether the school considers it likely that they have the resources and expertise required to support the potential new student. This response will be approved by an Executive Director. This is not usually sent to parents as well but a request can be made for this.
5. If the Initial response indicates that the school may be able to meet the needs of the potential new student then the potential new student will be invited in for 2 half day assessment sessions in school. The assessment process involves one to one sessions with specialist teachers as well as time in class with a potential peer group. Potential future students are accompanied one to one throughout this process. The Headteacher will oversee the remainder of the admissions process and will determine if the school feels able to meet the needs of the potential new student. The assessment day arrangements may be amended at the direction of the Headteacher, if it is deemed that reasonable adjustments are required to support a student to access the assessments.
6. Following the assessment mornings the Headteacher will write a report which will be sent to the parents of the potential new student as well as the Local Authority CO and Brokerage team. This will constitute either an offer of a placement or a determination that the school does not feel able to meet the needs of the potential new student.

Applications directly via a parent of carer:

1. It is possible for parents to make a direct application to the school but it is necessary to consider the financial implications of self-funding a placement. The school is not block funded by a public body and so the resource base required via placement fees reflects the entire cost of delivering a specialist education.

2. If the parent of the potential new student has an EHC Plan this should be sent to the school's admissions team. If the child does not have an EHC Plan the parent/carer should write a cover letter expressing a request for an initial consideration of a placement request.
3. If the parent/carer does not have an EHC plan for the potential new student then a school admissions application form must be completed and returned to the admissions team. This can be requested from the admissions team.
4. The admissions team will prepare an initial response which will be sent directly to the parent/carer of the potential new student. This response will be approved by an Executive Director. This will identify whether the school feels it is probable that it has the resources and expertise required to meet the needs of the potential new student.
5. If the school feels that there is a reasonable expectation that it can meet the needs of a potential new student then the potential new student will be invited to attend two half day assessments. Following these assessments the Headteacher will write a report which will either constitute the offer of placement or a determination that the school is unable to meet the needs of the potential new student.

The school will endeavour at all times to reply to Local Authority placement consultations within 14 days of receipt during term time. The 14 days begin from the receipt of a full application in the school's required format.

The school will endeavour to respond to parent applications within the same time frame.

If a face-to-face assessment is assessed as being reasonably appropriate the school will offer this at the next available opportunity. The school can facilitate one face to face assessment each week during term time.

5. Allocation of places

A) Admission number

The school does not provide a specific number of spaces or allocations per academic year. The school releases spaces according to availability within the school. This availability is not a strict measure of possible spaces within a class but is a subjective measure based on the needs of the cohort and the communication and learning approaches of on-roll students. As such the release of spaces is dependent on the judgement of school leadership as to the capacity of the school to meet the needs of more students with the resourcing the school has and the current allocation of resourcing based on need of the student's on-roll.

B) Selection and banding

The school offers a formal curriculum as well as a resource intensive curriculum, this can be offered according to availability and is a heavily adapted approach. Students will be offered a placement within one of these bandings following assessment. Although final determination of banding will not be made until after a face to face assessment report has been written, it is possible that at the initial 'EHC plan review stage' of the admissions process that a parent or consulting body may be advised

that there are no spaces available in the banding deemed most likely to be required to meet the needs of the potential new student.

C) Oversubscription criteria

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.

Highest priority will be given to looked after children and all previously looked after children who apply for a place at the school. The following criteria will then be applied:

1. Students who currently attend a school or service operated by the parent group or the school has a formal resource sharing agreement with. This can colloquially be referred to as a 'feeder school or service'.
2. All offers are subject to a 3-week guaranteed period following offer. Beyond that the admissions team will liaise with Case Officers to keep them advised of availability on an ongoing basis. It is not possible to 'hold open' a space beyond this as this could potentially frustrate another student's access to education if the school were to do so. The admissions team will communicate routinely and proactively to avoid disappointment for admissions requests. After the 3-week period has elapsed, admissions offers will be confirmed based on the earliest formal acceptance of an offer from a case officer.
3. Priority will be given to children with siblings at the school. Siblings include step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address. Priority will not be given to children with siblings who are former pupils of the school.

D) Tie Break

In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, the school will use random allocation as a tie breaker to confirm which placement can be agreed. This process will be independently verified. This could happen in the event that one space remained and two case officers provided written confirmation they would like to accept an offer at exactly the same time.

E) Children below compulsory school age

Where children below the school's entry age are offered a place at the school, they will be entitled to attend the school full-time in the September that they would enter year 7 according to their age. Applications are welcome from the first day of the Autumn term of the preceding year.

6. In-year admissions

Parents can apply for a place for their child at any time.

Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group and curriculum class that is assessed as being appropriate, your child will be offered a place.

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 year group. We will not normally conduct assessments unless there is a space that has been assessed as, with reasonable belief, would be appropriate for the potential new

student. This arrangement may be waived by the Headteacher in consultation with the potential new student's parents or carers.

7. Admissions Criteria

The school admissions process is a two-stage process with oversight from the organization's Executive Directors as well as the school's Headteacher. The process is supported by an admissions administrator.

The school has the expertise and resources to meet the following needs (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Presentation of ASC need, including; delayed receptive and expressive processing, sensory processing needs, restricted and/or repetitive patterns of behaviour, limited social imagination and inflexibility of thought
- Social, emotional and mental health needs, which present as sensory withdrawal or communication shutdown relating to being overwhelmed by communication or sensory or social inputs

The school does not have the resources and facilities to be able to meet the following presentations of need (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Physical expressions of need targeting peers or adults
- Emotional deregulation presenting as targeted negative communication towards peers
- Deregulation leading to destruction of property or self-harming and/or self-endangering acts or actions
- Cognitive processing and attainment below the school's specified benchmarks to be able to access the curriculum available in each year group and curriculum area. The year 7 entry minimum level of attainment to be able to access the semi-formal curriculum is level 2 according to the National Curriculum level descriptors in English and Maths. This increases incrementally year on year. We are able to accept students significantly below Age Related Expectation in terms of academic attainment, but our curriculum may not be appropriate or accessible with attainment below the specified level.

The school considers any presentation of need that has not been identified from more than 3 years prior to application as being historic. This need will inform the school's overall picture of need, but it will not be used directly in the consideration of the school's ability to meet the needs of the potential new student.

8. Appeals procedure

If your child's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was unsuccessful and be given information about the process for hearing appeals. If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal in writing and send it to the following address:

For paper format appeals:

Admissions Appeals

The Lion Works School

543 Wallisdown road

Poole

BH12 5AD

Or send electronically to governance@thelionworksschool.org marked as **Confidential – admissions appeal**

9. Complaints

The school has a published complaints process. The admissions process is not subject to the conditions and processes within the complaints process. The school complaints process complies with the Independent School standards with the complaints process available for parents and carers of pupils, as defined by the Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Education Act 1996.

The school always welcomes all feedback on the performance of our committed staff team. Feedback about staff performance relating to admissions can be provided through the admissions appeals process.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Directors annually in consultation with the school board.