

Admissions Policy

Admissions

SMS Changing Lives School



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Admissions Policy



Approved by:	Hecabe DuFraisie	Date: August 2024
Last reviewed on:	15 September 2026	
Next review due by:	October 2027	

This policy is disseminated to staff at relevant meetings and through line management and staff appraisal. The policy is referred to regularly in line with SEND training and is listed on the school website.

SMS Changing Lives School is an independent secondary specialist school for young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties.

As an Independent school. SMS has its own admissions criteria that differs from those of state schools and academies.

SMS currently has capacity on the school roll for a maximum of 70 students. SMS welcomes all new young people and their families. They wish to ensure that:

- Parents/carers are happy with the choice of placement and induction process
- The young people's introduction to school is positive
- The school feels confident in its capacity to meet the young person's needs.

Students will be admitted:

a) If they have an Education & Healthcare Plan or in exceptional circumstances a Statutory Assessment is under way and the pupil has been referred to the school by the Local Authority.

b) The school is able to meet the child's needs academically, socially and medically.

c) If the primary need specified in their EHCP comes under the spectrum of Social Emotional and Mental Health.

d) After due consideration of the referral papers by the head teacher, and, where appropriate, SENDCO, teaching staff and proprietor and if there are places available within the agreed place number or physical capacity set by the Local Authority.

The admission process will:

- be clearly outlined to prospective parents / carers which may include making opportunities for parents / carers to visit to help them make an informed decision both informally and formally.
- be handled as sensitively as possible taking into account both the needs of the young person and their family.

- begin to establish the partnership with parents / carers and clarify expectations.

facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between home and school through home visits and/or induction meetings.

- enable parents / carers to become confident partners in their child's education.
- be sensitive to the needs of other students in the class and the resources available.
- Include liaison with the external agencies involved with the young person as appropriate (e.g. SALT, EP, Social Care, YOS) and Outreach where involved.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

Prior to placement being confirmed.

Stage 1:

- Parents / carers are encouraged to make an informal visit to the school. This may often be suggested by the Educational Psychologist, LA or the current school. It is intended to provide the parents/carers with the necessary information required to make an informed choice regarding their child's placement.
- Parents / carers may visit the school without their child at this stage. They may be accompanied by a key professional or a friend.
- Student papers are sent to the education department from the young person's current placement for a decision / view on a referral to SMS.
- After consideration of the papers in consultation with appropriate staff, SMS agree the place is appropriate and confirm place to the Local Authority

Or

Notify pupil services that they feel unable to meet the pupil's needs with clear reasons for this action

Or

Say yes “in principle” but state that a place is currently unavailable at that time.

Following Confirmation of Placement

Stage 2

- Where possible, SMS and the young person’s current school setting will establish a liaison programme. The purpose is to share appropriate information about the young person and work towards a smooth transition. It will be needs led and on an individual basis.
- For new students there will be opportunities to facilitate a visit to the school for the young person if appropriate. This may be with school staff / parents / carer.
- Transport arrangements to be confirmed and applications made to LA by the parent/carers if required.
- Students will generally start school full time from entry although a part time transition timetable may be offered if appropriate.

Once the Child has Started School

Stage 3

- Opportunities for close liaison between home and school will be maintained via the
- The young person’s key worker.
- Liaison between home/school may also be via telephone or by making a time to meet with school staff and parents/carers in school.
- An Annual Review is held within 12 months of the Education & Healthcare Plan being issued and thereafter annually.

Please note, all placements are subject to a 6-week probationary period.