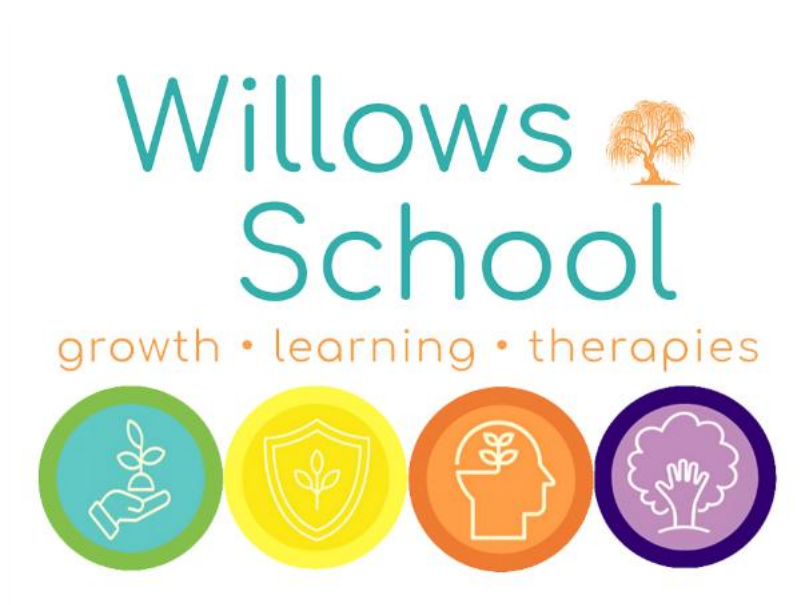




Admissions Policy

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1. Introduction

The Willows School can educate boys and girls from the ages of 5 to 15, with a maximum of 90 pupils at any one time.

Children may enter at various points throughout the year, and all years are open for entry until the agreed admission number is reached, parents/carers or a social worker as the corporate parent can apply with their Local Authority Special Educational Needs (SEN) Department, for a funded school place at The Willows School.

2. Aims

This policy aims to provide guidance for parents, carers and prospective students on the admissions and referrals process at The Willows School.

The school is an Independent Specialist School for young people aged 5 to 15 with social, emotional and mental health needs and social and communication difficulties, associated with Autism Spectrum Conditions or similar diagnosis.

The Willows School offers specialist education in a calm, nurturing and therapeutic environment following a Thrive Approach. A broad and bespoke academic and personal development curriculum including Entry Levels, Functional Skills and GCSE qualifications in class sizes of 6-8 students with a SEN Classroom Teacher and Learning Support Assistant in each class.

The school will offer up to 90 placements across primary and secondary.

3. Legislation and Statutory Requirements

The Willows School offers a clear and supportive process for young people, parents and carers including access to relevant school policies and paperwork via the school website to ensure a successful admission into the school and provide support where there are requests for additional information.

4. Scope

This policy aims to provide guidance on The Willows School admission process for parents, carers and prospective pupils.

This policy is also used in reference to support consultations via the local authorities who wish to consider placement at the school.

The policy will also be used as a reference guide for all staff involved in the admissions process.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Headteacher and the SLT Team manage referrals and visits to the school, holding regular open events and assessment consultations with children, parents and families.

6. Admissions Process

6.1 General Process

All referrals to The Willows School are managed by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.

Our school is designated to support children whose primary special needs have been identified through Statutory assessment as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who may have associated Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). However, in view of the complex nature of many special educational needs, the school will consider any referral on merit.

We welcome visits to the school through our regular open events where we will be available to discuss our offer and vision for The Willows School. We would encourage any prospective parents/carers to attend our open events in the first instance. If a referral via your Local Authority is impending, please contact the school directly and we will arrange a visit to the school.

6.2 Initial Process for Referrals and Assessment

We will ask you to consult through your Local Authority if you feel that The Willows School is suitable for your child or young person. We will always consult with the Local Authority.

We require up to date information, including relevant documents such as the most recent EHCP, previous school reports, medical information including any risk assessments, clinical observations to help assist with our initial assessment.

On receipt of the documentation, the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will review the paperwork and the EHCP to see if we feel we can meet the requirements of the EHCP. We consider at this point the needs, presentations, behaviours and environmental impact, therapeutic needs, alongside the requirements of section F and if we feel our school can support the young person through it's core offer, or a period of intervention combined with the core offer, this would mean that the school is suitable for the child's needs.

The school will then arrange for the parents/carers to visit The Willows School with your child or young person. We will conduct a walk and talk assessment, getting to know the child/young person and gaining an understanding of their needs through a child-centred approach and discussions with the family. Specific routine issues, boundaries and expectations will also be discussed and agreed. All relevant consent and admission forms will also be completed with parents/carers during this visit.

Following this, the SENDCo or Pastoral Manager, will conduct a visit to the previous or current school to gain insight into the environment and working at levels. They will meet with

the school's SENCo and/or Headteacher to discuss the young person, strategies to support and to gain an understanding of the young person's needs in more detail. Observations of the child will include information gathering about educational interests, skills and challenges. Any strategies around risk that need to be put in place can be identified and agreed at this stage.

All this information must be shared and finalised before a formal offer and start date/induction period can be agreed.

6.3 Following the Assessment

The Willows School Senior Leadership Team will discuss the young person following completion on the initial assessment and referral. If the school feels that it can meet needs, the Headteacher will return the consultation to the relevant Local Authority, outlining the offer and associated fees.

In order for us to offer a place, there will need to be a formal application and written agreement of funding from the funding authorities. Once received we will then send a formal offer letter to the funding authority and a copy to parents/carers.

Contracts issued between The Willows School and relevant Local Authority must be signed and returned to the Headteacher before the placement can start. Following agreement of the placement with the Local Authority Placement Commissioners, a start date for transition will be agreed.

Parents/carers and the young person will receive communication from The Willows School outlining the next steps and a date for a final consultation meeting to agree a start date, transition plans, personalised learning plans and positive behaviour support plans with the Pastoral Manager.

6.4 Induction Period and Transition

All transitions are carefully planned with the parents/carers, and child or young person's voice included in all plans. Each transition period is personalised with the pupils' needs and wishes taken into consideration whilst also considering the needs of the pupils currently in the class the young person or child may be joining.

Transition may include a phased entry over a period of time to enable each child to acclimatise to a new setting and staff and for existing pupils to be prepared for the change in the group.

During the first three months of the placement the pupils' abilities and needs will be fully observed and programs of learning amended where necessary. Personalised learning plans, and positive behaviour support plans will be adapted to become more reflective as the child or young person settles into life at The Willows School.

Ordinarily, we would anticipate induction having been completed once a child has attended on a full timetable for a 4-week period. Pupils will be full time as soon as practicable, but this will consider 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 then provide 28 days' notice of the school placement offer being withdrawn.

7. Allocation of Places

7.1 Admissions Numbers

The school has an agreed, on roll number of 90 pupils. Children may enter at various points throughout the year, and all years are open for entry until the agreed admission number is reached.

7.2 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 Lincolnshire LA.

8. 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:
thewillows@rests-sen.uk

9. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher and School Business Manager and ratified by the Executive Board.