

# Sutherland House School

## Admission Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Sutherland House School provides educational opportunities for pupils who have a diagnosis of autism

Pupils are admitted to Sutherland House School through a referral by their Local Authority, **however, parental enquiries and visits to the school are welcome**. The school can be contacted on 01159 609 263, or email our referrals team [schoolreferrals@autismeastmidlands.org.uk](mailto:schoolreferrals@autismeastmidlands.org.uk)

There are no criteria as to intellectual ability or attainment, although the school is less likely to be appropriate for pupils whose social communication difficulties are secondary to profound intellectual disabilities. In practice the school is able to cater for a broad range of abilities including significant learning difficulties as well as for those with age-appropriate attainment.

Responding to admission requests can be complex, given the range of factors that may need to be taken into account, however consideration will be given to pupils regardless of age, gender, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, in a fair and equitable process.

Referrals are often received throughout the year and will be considered as they come in, rather than at set times of the year.

## 2. Procedure

2.1 A pupil can only be formally considered for admission once the Local Authority indicates that they are requesting a place. This normally takes place in writing via email, post or through the referrals portal during or at the end of the process of assessment leading up to the writing of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

2.2 As part of this process the Local Authority may make informal enquiries as to whether the school is able to meet the pupil's needs and/or whether there are places available. This may or may not lead to a formal request for placement.

2.3 All referrals requests or enquiries should be emailed to [schoolreferrals@autismeastmidlands.org.uk](mailto:schoolreferrals@autismeastmidlands.org.uk)

2.4 Our multi-disciplinary referrals panel will give consideration to the paperwork sent by the Local Authority and provide a timely response, usually a deadline is provided, as to whether there is a match between the stated needs of the pupil and the provision offered by the school.

2.5 On some occasions it may be necessary to observe the pupil in order to inform decision making, however this would be agreed in consultation with the Local Authority. This has not been possible during the pandemic. The use of visual meetings with parents, school and pupils are useful.

2.6 Once a formal request for placement has been received, the school will undertake a process of assessment, to determine:

- Whether or not we can meet the pupil's special educational needs,
- Whether a place can be offered,

- The level of support required to meet the pupil's needs (resources and staffing) with regard to the banded fee structure

The process of assessment may involve some or all of the following:

- Information provided by professional reports
- Information provided by parents
- Observations of the pupil, ideally in their existing provision (outside of the pandemic)
- Gathering information from those professionals currently involved with the pupil

### 3. Decision Making

Factors which may influence the decision on whether to offer a place at Sutherland House School may include:

- The number of places and their availability across the whole age range
- The current pupil profile and compatibility with existing pupils
- The complexity of the needs of the pupil and the suitability of any alternative provision that could be considered
- Travel distance. Places would only be offered to pupils within a reasonable daily travelling distance
- The age of the pupil. Priority is given to early admissions

Decisions are made by our multi-disciplinary referrals panel

The school will maintain contact with the Local Authority and with parents throughout the process and will inform them, in writing, immediately following the admissions decision

It is not the school's policy to maintain a waiting list as it has been found not to be in the best interests of the pupil's educational needs to make a commitment if a school place cannot be made within a reasonable time scale.

In certain circumstances there may be disagreement between parents and Local Authorities regarding placement at Sutherland House School. This may result in an appeal through the tribunal process. Where either party wish to name Sutherland House School in the EHCP, the school are required to confirm, in writing, that a place is available prior to the tribunal taking place. In such circumstances decisions will be made in the same way other admissions decisions as described above.

The school recognises the tension between the role of advocating on behalf of parents in the tribunal process and working in partnership with Local Authorities. Therefore, we would always encourage parents to seek mediation during the period leading up to tribunal.

### 4. Extended Assessment

5.1 For particularly complex pupils, the school will offer a period of extended assessment of up to 2 terms. This may include input from the psychology, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy teams as required. There would also be a need for additional staff in class and this would be reflected in our banded fee structure