



Admissions Arrangements

Date of last review:	2023	Review period:	2 Years
Date of next review:	2025	Written by:	Carla Mole
Type of policy:	Statutory with LA	Committee:	Residential Board
Signature:			

Introduction

The Local Authority is the admissions authority for county maintained special schools. The LA states that it will exercise these powers in close consultation with Heads, Governing Bodies, families and the children involved.

Pupils are admitted to the school in line with the Authority's policy. In addition, residential pupils are admitted in line with the "Authorities Admissions Criteria". There are numerous considerations for the school when referrals to the residential provision are made and these are outlined in the Authorities' "Admission Criteria" (see section 1 of this document). Pupils can be referred to the residential provision via two pathways (see section 2 of this document).

All pupils admitted to this school must have an Educational Health Care Plan. Pupils may be admitted throughout the year although it is preferred that pupils join the school from the start of the academic year. Referrals made to the residential facility can be made at any point within the school year dependent on the circumstances leading to the referral.

Pupils at the Wyre Forest School are placed here because their needs are more severe and complex than children educated in the mainstream setting. Wyre Forest School caters for children whose major needs are concerned with their moderate, severe and complex learning difficulties which may or may not be associated with autistic spectrum disorders. In addition, pupils may have difficulties associated with behaviour, some emotional disturbance, communication problems, medical and physical conditions and sensory impairment. The school provides specialist support for children who are on the autistic continuum.

Wyre Forest School provides a learning environment that is challenging and supportive, within which it can provide a wide range of appropriate activities and experiences reinforced by individual educational planning.

The school has well established links within the community, including links with; the local colleges, local schools and leisure facilities.

Specialist teaching approaches are used with many pupils, supported by special aids, equipment and technology.

The school provides up to 14 weekly boarding places, within Russell House, for pupils who attend the school. Priorities for the placement of the pupils in this provision are established after consultation with families, pupils, social care colleagues and the local authority.

1. Admission Criteria – Considerations

Prior to deciding the appropriate Pathway and at the point of referral of an individual for a residential placement within Wyre Forest School, consideration should be given to the following areas:

- i. **School Placement:** Only pupils who have an identified secure placement within the school will be considered for the residential provision. Referrals for pupils who need residential support but who will attend different schools will not be considered unless there is already an agreed transition period and start date for the school. The need for a residential placement will be identified with the EHCP (Education Health Care Plan) or agreed as part of a review.
- ii. **Age:** In order that the provision operates effectively and that the emotional welfare of all the residents is considered. The minimum age for admission should be children within academic year 4 and pupils leave at the end of the academic year 13. It is expected that the provision will take in children of a younger age in order that the waking day curriculum will help to maximise educational opportunities and outcomes.
- iii. **Prior Intervention:** Consideration should be taken into what evidenced previous intervention and/or support has been given to families and/or the pupils who are being referred to the residential provision. This may include; any respite that the pupil has received within care provisions, any usage of direct payments in relation to the pupil having care outside of the family home. Consideration should be made as to how an individual may respond to a new four-night residential provision if they have not previously had any form of residential provision elsewhere.
- iv. **Number of Boarding Nights:** Transitions into the residential provision could include a gradual build-up of the number of nights in residence. For example; a pupil may reside for one or more nights a week raising to four nights a week over a given time. Pupils will only generally be considered for residential boarding whereby a four-night week is the ultimate agreed outcome. Bedrooms are to be used for one pupil only and personalised as such (as stated in the NMS) therefore, for example; two pupils sharing one bedroom on a two-night placement each, should not be considered.
- v. **Impact on Current Residents:** At the point of referral, consultation and the involvement of, the Head of Care, Headteacher, relevant school staff, safeguarding team and care staff is imperative to ensure that the needs and welfare of the current pupils are considered prior to new pupils being admitted. This may include taking on a high number of pupils on tiers 3 and 4 who require a high level of staffing which does not fall within budget and/or pupils who may struggle to group live with current group of pupils and/or pupils whose behaviour may have an evidenced or likely negative effect on

current pupils in residence. The Head of Care will gather all information and produce an impact Risk Assessment to ensure safety of all pupils who reside at Russell House.

- vi. **Waking Day Curriculum:** It should be identified that the pupil will benefit from a waking day curriculum across the school and care environment where a consistent approach is required in order to maximise educational outcomes and independent living skills. In addition, it may be identified that the pupil requires support with independent living skills and/or learning life skills using consistent educational approaches.

2. Admissions Criteria – Pathways for Residential Provision

A. Supporting the Achievement of Educational Outcomes: As identified within Annual Reviews, there may be some reasons for considering a residential provision to support the achievements of educational outcomes through a waking day curriculum. Areas for concern would be raised either by the school, parent/carer or social worker (or a combination of these) and discussed within the Annual Review Process or Early Help Assessment. Where a residential provision is likely to be discussed within the Annual Review, the Head of Care should attend the meeting. Triggers for using this pathway may include;

- The current care environment does not support learning and may trigger inappropriate behaviours which are then brought into the school environment.
- The pupil requires educational input in the area of life-skills and independence. This may be pertinent to a pupil nearing the end of their schooling and who requires additional support in order for their development into adulthood.

THE SEND MANAGER AT THE LOCAL AUTHORITY IS CONSULTED AND ADMISSION GRANTED WHEN APPROVED.

B. Home circumstances are difficult as evidenced through social care interventions: As identified through previous interventions, the home/care environment is not satisfactory and the child's needs cannot be met in the community. The pupil may already be identified as a CIN or has received early help. Areas for concern would be raised by the parent and/or the social worker and discussed within the Annual Review Process or Early Help Assessment. Where a residential provision is likely to be discussed within the Annual Review or Early Help Assessment the Head of Care or nominated Deputy should attend the meeting. Triggers for using this pathway may include:

- Challenging behaviour within the home is at a point that the welfare of the pupil and/or their parents/legal guardians and/or their siblings and/or wider family is at a critical level and it is recognised that the situation would be considerably improved should the pupil have a residential provision whilst at school.
- The health needs of the pupil and/or their carers and/or their siblings require additional support and it is deemed beneficial for the pupil to have a residential provision to support this.
- Where the child has received considerable respite and home support but the home circumstances have not improved or where a 52-week residential package has already been suggested and/or discussed but deemed too considerable given family holidays and weekends at home.
- Where there has been a recent significant change in the home circumstances which has had a direct impact on the stability within the home/care environment.

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3. Out of County Referrals

Out of county pupils may be admitted with the agreement of the SEND Service Manager depending on the availability and suitability of places. The pupils' own authority is responsible for all funding to the school and residential facility.

The authorities' admissions criteria and considerations listed in sections 1 and 2 apply to both in county and out of county pupils. In addition, consideration will be given to the distance in which transitional arrangements can be made and the cost of any transportation to and from the school. Further consideration will be made toward any possible effect on a pupil moving any considerable distance from their family home or care environment.

4. Referrals and Admissions Process for Boarding Pupils

Referrals and admissions to the Residential Provision can occur throughout the academic year although it is preferred that pupils will be admitted at the start of a full term or ideally the academic year. Vulnerable pupils identified within the school's Early Help Offer will undertake an initial assessment meeting to ascertain the rationale for an offer of a place at Russell House. This will involve the head of Russell House, Assistant Headteacher, Class teacher, the pupil's parents/carers and any

professionals already linked to the pupil. Referrals will come directly from the local authority and in some instances, parents/guardians/professionals may approach the school to arrange an initial individual visit. Where possible, individual visits would include; a chance for parents, families, professionals alike to meet a variety of professionals within the school and have a tour of the residential facility and school. Pupils referred to Russell House will receive an Early Help Offer Assessment if appropriate.

Admission to the Residential Facility at the Wyre Forest School is based upon the school being able to meet the needs contained within the child or young persons' EHCP (Education Health Care Plan) and there being an appropriate vacancy within both the care and school settings. Residential places are reserved for pupils within the school only, therefore a pupil must have a secure placement within the school before being admitted to the residential facility. Wyre Forest School does not provide short-break/respite as a routine package within its residential facility. Funding and support from the local authority must be arranged, agreed and in place prior to full assessments being completed and admission, however, initial assessments would be completed by the School and Boarding staff to determine the suitability of the child/young person for the provision.

Initial Assessments take in to consideration a wide range of reports and existing assessments including:

- Core Assessment documentation from Social Services.
- Annual Reports from current and/or previous schools and respite services.
- Medical Records: Health Plans, Care Plans.
- Risk Assessments, Behaviour Development Plans, etc.
- Therapeutic Assessments/Reports: SaLT, OT, etc.
- Education Health Care Plan

All children and young people will be assessed where possible through visits to: their current school, home/care setting, respite/short breaks facility (if applicable). These visits would be carried out by senior managers and care staff from Wyre Forest School. In addition, where appropriate, the child/young person would come to the Wyre Forest School for a visit and see the residential provision. Where possible, a more in-depth full assessment can then be carried out during this visit involving a range of staff from the school, including; Head of Care, Head/Deputy Head Teacher, proposed Class Teacher, Therapeutic Staff (SaLT, Psychology, etc.), care staff key-workers, etc.

It is vital to ensure that prior to admission, the needs of the child/young person, as identified during the assessment, are within the Local Authority Admission remit of the school and can be met. Likewise, any effects that the child/young person may have on the existing group of children/young people in both the class and the boarding facility are fully considered. In light of this, Wyre Forest School will not routinely take

unplanned or emergency placements but may be able to offer swift, well-planned admissions.

Based on the outcomes of the initial assessment and provisional risk assessment, the Senior Leadership Team will make the final decision on any offers of a residential placement. The pattern of individual admissions and transitions may vary, based on the needs of the individual child or young person.

Placement Plans, Care Plans and admission documentation must be agreed prior to admission in all cases, in order that all staff are prepared and can meet the needs of the individual.

Bespoke transition plans can be agreed at the point of admission, for example: it is encouraged that a child to come for a few visits to the boarding facility and increase to a few over-night stays before settling in as a full-time boarding pupil. This can be planned, if necessary, over a period of weeks and may help alleviate some of the anxieties that children and young people often experience when staying away from home for the first time.

Initial Three Month and Review Cycle

During the first half term of a pupil being admitted to the boarding facility, an initial review will take place as a follow up from Early Help Offer Assessment to assess whether the provision is meeting the needs of the individual. If it is agreed that the provision is meeting the needs of the individual, the placement is confirmed.

Review meetings will then continue following the cycle of Annual EHCP reviews. At each of these meetings, any amendments to the Placement Plan documents are discussed and agreed following a review of care, education and therapeutic progress.