



PATRON  
HM THE QUEEN



# Hassocks

A unique, positive education for  
young people on the autism spectrum

## Admissions Policy & Procedure

Policy Written: 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Policy Agreed by: Governing Body

Policy Review Date: 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## **Introduction:**

LVS Hassocks is an independent special school for young people aged 11-19 with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, usually high functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome.

Many of the young people who are referred to LVS Hassocks have encountered negative school experiences as a result of their diagnosis. These can include:

- Poor attendance, disengagement from learning and social isolation at school which may have included bullying
- School breakdown as a result of their autism spectrum disorder
- Elevated levels of anxiety
- A range of mental health issues such as feelings of low mood and low self-esteem
- Problems with independence skills such as eating, sleeping and personal hygiene

In many cases, over time, these factors combine to reach crisis point and lead to school refusal or multiple school exclusions which result in a poor quality of life for the young person and their family. It is often at this point that referrals are made to LVS Hassocks. For these reasons, the school strongly believes that referrals and admissions to the school should be a partnership building process with parents, the placing authority and the school, designed to ensure that the school can meet the needs of the prospective student.

All applicants are carefully considered to ensure that the school is suitable for the young person's age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs and that the placement is compatible with the provision of efficient education for other students already attending the school.

No applicants will be treated less favourably during the admissions process on the grounds of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The Admissions process appreciates how challenging the transition into a new placement can be for young people and their family. It recognizes that the process needs to be planned sensitively and thoroughly.

The time frame for the admissions process depends on a number of factors including:

- The quantity and nature of the referral information
- The number of young people already waiting for assessment
- The time of year and availability of placements
- Sourcing specialist training to support health needs

All referrals and admissions to the school are coordinated and arranged through the Admissions Panel who include the Director of SEN, the Head of School, the EHCP and Transitions Co-ordinator, the Deputy Head and the Therapy Team including the School Nurse.

## **Admissions Criteria:**

All young people admitted to LVS Hassocks:

- Have a primary diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder – usually high functioning autism or Asperger syndrome.
- May have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- Are aged between 11-19
- May have additional needs associated with other diagnoses such as ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia

Additional information:

- Students will have abilities in the average or above average range but may display atypical learning styles and uneven (spiky) profiles of cognitive strengths and difficulties
- Students may have a range of needs that are directly linked to their autism spectrum condition resulting in inflexible thinking patterns, social communication and interaction difficulties, emotional dysregulation and sensory difficulties.
- Students will have needs and ability profiles that are compatible with an appropriate key stage peer group
- Students may present with additional medical conditions including mental health issues and stereotypical behaviours, but the school reserves the right to decide whether these can reasonably be managed safely and effectively within its existing resources.
- All placements are for 38 weeks
- Students will be limited to approximately 60 minutes journey time each way
- International students will require a guardian resident in the UK
- The site is of an open nature and therefore not suitable for young people who have a known history of absconding or who may attempt to run away
- The schools will accept students that are privately funded by parents, trusts and other funding bodies

## **Referrals:**

Referrals are accepted at any time and new admissions can take place throughout the year.

Most referrals are made by local authorities, but in many cases begin as parental enquiries. We encourage parents to visit the school as part of their search for an appropriate placement for their child. To this end, the school hosts regular Open Days, the dates for which can be found on the school website.

## **Admissions Process:**

*Stage 1 – initial referral either by parent(s)/carer(s), local authority or advocate acting on the parent(s)' behalf*

- We request as much information as possible including educational, medical and any safeguarding reports to assist with the decision on whether to proceed with the referral.
- We work with parents/carers and external agencies to ensure that decisions on whether to offer an assessment visit are based on complete, accurate, reliable and up to date information.
- We may visit the young person in their current placement or at home if they are not currently placed at a school

*Stage 2 – school based assessment visit*

- When a decision has been made that the reports indicate that the young person meets the admission criteria and there are places available in the relevant key stage, an assessment visit to the school will be arranged
- During the visit the young person will experience a range of informal assessments, to ensure the young person's needs can be met
- The school may request additional assessment visits

*Stage 3 – transition into school*

- Following successful assessment visits a placement will be offered
- Any placement offered will be subject to the full cost of the placement unless there has been prior agreement between the placing authority and the school
- Following acceptance of the place and confirmation of funding, a transition plan will be agreed
- Sometimes, a graduated transition with a reduced timetable is required in order to re-engage the young person in learning
- Each young person is supported by relevant staff as determined in the transition plan
- A Post Entry Review is booked which will be within a 6 week time frame

Please note: LVS Hassocks will admit a maximum of 60% of its total student numbers from any one local authority unless there are exceptional circumstances which will be considered on a case by case basis by the relevant Governing Body.

Please see the diagram on the next page which details the Admissions Process

## Admissions Procedure

Referral is logged and recorded. Referrals are processed in order of receipt. Referrals can come from Head Office, local authorities, parents/carers and advocacy groups

All referrals are reviewed by the Admissions Panel which meets weekly during term time. Information may be sought from previous educational establishments and relevant external professionals including medical information.

The Admissions Panel decides on how to proceed as soon as possible. If the decision is to take the referral to the next stage, assessment dates will be mutually agreed with the authority and the family.

A decision on the prospective admission will be made at the next Admissions Panel meeting immediately following the assessment.

An assessment plan, usually one or two days, is agreed with the family and relevant staff.

A summary profile of the young person is compiled and distributed to all staff prior to the school based assessment visit. We request that families contribute to this to ensure that information is up to date.

The assessment may include some time working individually with specialist staff but will mainly involve being in a class or activity based group.

The young person is encouraged to give their views on the school during the visit.

A summary report is compiled containing feedback from staff on the young person's requirements on admission, the young person's views on the school and recommendations for next steps in the admissions process.

The placing authority and other interested parties will be informed of this decision as soon as possible following the Admissions Panel meeting.

An offer letter is sent to the Local Authority or parents/carers to offer a placement with expected date of entry.

On acceptance of placement offer, the family receive the parent handbook.

All new students receive a personalised timetable and induction handbook.

After approximately six weeks, the family and young person are invited to a Post Entry Review meeting to discuss how the transition has worked and the young person's targets are updated.