



## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### ADMISSIONS POLICY

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The Admissions Policy has been written and approved by a team with a range of experience.

Date Created: January 1994

Previous Review Date: January 2022

Next Review Date: January 2024

## INTRODUCTION

Learning Opportunities is an independent special school approved by the Secretary of State to admit students who are in receipt of an Education Health Care Plan.

The current approval for the school is for 36 students with SEMH, ASD and Moderate Learning Difficulties aged 10 - 19 years.

In developing Learning Opportunities admission policy, the Senior Leadership Team have taken account of the need to provide helpful information to parents / carers and referring agencies, based on clear and objective admission criteria. We are committed to working in close collaboration with other agencies to ensure the provision of the most effective service, which is in the best interests of the student.

The school provides a safe, encouraging and friendly atmosphere that fosters a culture that is positive, collaborative and which values and respects equally every member of the school community. We provide opportunities to develop student's independence and prepare them to participate fully in society, thus enhancing their life chances.

In considering admission, Learning Opportunities comply with the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#) (the ISSRs), the non-statutory guidance, and will have regard for the revised Regulations contained within the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, which came into force in January 2015.

Learning Opportunities currently receive referrals from the Local Education Authority (Kent), although will consider requests from other agencies. **Note** KCC are in the process of implementing a Hybrid Dynamic Purchasing System to enable a more co-ordinated approach to securing placements for children and young people (CYP) in Non-Maintained and Independent Special Schools (NMISS). It is Learning Opportunities intention to apply to join the DPS, which will be delivered from 1 September 2022.

Students are primarily referred because the severity and diversity of their needs is such that they cannot be met effectively in mainstream schools or have not been met in similar establishments. In aspiring to meet such needs, we believe that it is essential that a systematic approach to admission be adopted, planning therefore commences at the time of referral.

All students admitted to Learning Opportunities have Education Health Care plans. The school offers small groupings with supportive and committed staff, experienced in providing a clearly structured education. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum in line with statutory requirements, personalised learning programmes, a range of one-to-one and small group interventions, including Literacy and Numeracy, and support to improve behaviour and ability to cope with wider social interactions.

Learning Opportunities is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Admissions Policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010) and takes account of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). We welcome students irrespective of their gender, race, religion, ethnic or national origins, disability or special educational needs, provided that there are good prospects of meeting their needs without unduly prejudicing the education and the welfare of other students.

We recognise that factors governing student admissions are complex and vary from case to case. These factors might include:

- Nature of the student's needs and previous educational experiences
- Recommendations / expectations of the referring body

- Wishes of the parent / carer and student

## **PURPOSE**

Learning Opportunities have formulated this policy to:

- ensure that the school admits those students whose needs, as identified in their EHC plan, can be met effectively and in doing so maximises the potential to make progress in all aspects of their development.
- set out the framework within which decisions are made about admissions to the school
- set out the criteria that will be applied where referrals exceed the number of places available
- meet registration requirements as an Independent Special School, including the Independent School Standards.

Through this policy we aim to ensure that all parties:

- have a clear understanding of the criteria used in assessing the appropriateness of admission
- have a clear understanding of the opportunities and support available within the school
- are prepared to play their part in ensuring, as far as is possible, the success of any placement.

## **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

**Name:** Learning Opportunities

**Address:** Ringwould Road  
Ringwould  
Deal  
Kent CT14 8DW

**Telephone Number:** 01304 381906

**Email Address:** [simong@learningopps.org](mailto:simong@learningopps.org) or [kevind@learningopps.org](mailto:kevind@learningopps.org)

**Website Address:** [www.learningopps.org](http://www.learningopps.org)

**School Classification:** Independent Special School (Secondary)

**Ages:** 10 – 19 yrs. **Year Groups:** 6 -13

**Primary Needs:** SEMH, ASD, Moderate Learning

**Numbers:** 36 Co-educational

**Contact Details:** Simon Graydon (Head Teacher)  
Kevin Dunk (Deputy Head)  
Lesley Buss (Proprietor)

## **PROFILE OF A STUDENT LIKELY TO BE SUITABLY PLACED**

Those students likely to be suitably placed may have a diagnosis of SEMH / ASD / MLD, which may be compounded by medical conditions including ADHD, Dyslexia / Dysgraphia, ODD and OCD. These can manifest themselves in a combination of difficulties including:

- moderate / generalised learning difficulties
- significantly delayed speech language and communication skills
- social communication difficulties
- significant difficulties in attention and impulsivity
- emotional disorders, for example phobias, anxiety states and depression;
- conduct disorders
- attachment disorders
- emotional based school avoidance (EBSA)
- trauma disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, as a result of traumatic experiences or persistent periods of abuse and neglect;

Students are likely to experience a combination of low self-esteem, together with a significant degree of emotional vulnerability. As a result, they may exhibit:

- Unpredictable and intense patterns of behaviours, which significantly disrupt the learning of themselves and their peers.
- Distractibility that inhibits their progress even with significant adult support and increasingly individualised personalised learning programme.
- Behaviour, which is unusual and/or self-injurious and/or endangers others and leads to a significant level of rejection by peers increasing their social isolation.
- Significant anxiety / unhappiness, stress and/or disaffection over a sustained period often accompanied by prolonged periods of absence, leading to a negative attitude towards education.

## **ADMISSION CRITERIA**

Students can be admitted at any time of year.

All admissions take account of the need to provide education appropriate to age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

All referrals are considered against the following levels of criterion:

- The student falls within the terms of the current approval for the school and presents with the aforementioned profile.
- The young person's educational, health and care needs, and the school's suitability to meet these
- The school's current capacity and whether the attendance of the young person would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the young people with whom he/she would be educated
- If the attendance of the young person would be compatible with the efficient use of resources
- There is evidence from professionals that the student will benefit from access to a highly personalised programme within a special school.
- Student, parent / carer and where appropriate social worker express commitment to the placement.

## **Refusal of Admission**

The Senior Leadership Team reserves the right to refuse admission in the following cases:

- the school is fully subscribed
- where the admission of a student would compromise the Health and Safety of students and/or staff within the school
- where admission would not be compatible with the efficient and effective education of others

## **LEGISLATION**

In formulating our Admissions Policy, we have taken into account the following legislation:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014
- Equality Act (2010)
- Education Act 2011

## **ACCESS TO ADMISSION INFORMATION**

A copy of Learning Opportunities admission policy is located in the main office and is published on the school website [www.learningopps.org](http://www.learningopps.org)

Additional information can be obtained through direct contact with Simon Graydon (Head Teacher) or Kevin Dunk (Deputy Head).

## **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The function of determining admissions is made jointly between members of the Senior Leadership Team.

### ***It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to: -***

- Formulate student profiles and make these available to all staff
- Ensure education / behaviour management plans / risk assessments, which identify effective strategies, are in place and regularly monitored and reviewed
- Ensure appropriate resources are available to meet needs as identified with EHCPs
- Respond to any changes in legal requirements and to propose amendments to the policy as appropriate

### ***It is the responsibility of the Proprietor to: -***

- Monitor the work of the school through the review of the admissions policy.

## **ADMISSION PROCESS**

Once a referral has been received the following steps will be taken:

- A member of the senior leadership team, who may request further information, will undertake initial assessment of the referral information, this may include observation / meeting the potential student in their current provision.
- The school's decision will be communicated to the local authority. Where a referral is received through the DPS system, an expression of interest will be submitted.
- Parents / carers, social worker if applicable and student, where appropriate, will be invited to visit the school.
- Referring agency informed of decision
- Confirmation of funding including any additional resources and transport will be sought from the LEA.
- Once the offer of a place has been accepted by the referring agency, Learning Opportunities will arrange a pre-placement planning meeting.
- IPA will be signed.
- School records including any safeguarding information will be obtained from previous establishment.
- The students name will be entered in the Admissions Register on the agreed admission date.

Learning Opportunities acknowledge that the admission of a student can be challenging and difficult for the parents/carers as well as the student. The school's services are flexible and needs led and, therefore, we offer support via telephone communication, email, home visits (where appropriate) and appointments that are sensitive to the requests and circumstances of parents/carers. Wherever possible, we aim from the outset to move at the pace of the student.

We acknowledge that for some students their placement at Learning Opportunities may require additional resources, over and above the norm. Where this is identified, the local authority will be made aware at the point of expression of interest and in advance of the offer of a place.

As part of the admission process parents / carers and the student will be encouraged to visit the school. This initial visit provides the school with a valuable insight into the needs of the student. In addition, it assists with the provision of a transition plan to enable a successful move into our school. It also ensures that parents / carer are fully informed about the school and what it has to offer their child.

If following the introductory visit, all concerned agree that the student's needs can be met, a mutually convenient date will be arranged for the student to spend a session in the school.

In circumstances where the class / school has reached full capacity, the option for the student to be placed on the Learning Opportunities waiting list will be confirmed in writing.

### **Where a place is not offered**

#### **Letter of confirmation to referring agency outlining reasons**

In situations where it is agreed that the needs of the student cannot be met within Learning Opportunities, a letter outlining reasons will be forwarded to the referring agency.

## **MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW**

The effectiveness of Learning Opportunities implementation of the Admission Policy will be monitored and reviewed by:

- The Head Teacher, who holds responsibility for responding to any changes in legal requirements, and proposing amendments to the policy as appropriate
- The Proprietor as part of their challenge of the Head Teacher.