



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 2024

Next Review Date: January 2025

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 (EHCP).

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 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 In 2021** KCC initiated 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). This process has yet to be fully implemented. On completion of our application, Learning Opportunities were awarded Lot 2 which represents an opportunity for tenderers to work more closely with The Authority in the strategic planning of placements in a transparent, open manner, including the opportunity for block contracting of placements. Tenderers successful in joining Lot 2 will be consulted on potential placements first. However, having fully considered all aspects of the DPS Learning Opportunities made the decision, that despite our successful tender, we will not be signing the Kent DPS contract at the current time. This decision will be subject to regular review.

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 / 07394 984289

Email Address: simong@learningopps.org or kevind@learningopps.org

Website Address: 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)

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

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

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

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Race equality, cultural diversity & inclusion policy
- GDPR
- SEND policy & Information report

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The function of determining admissions is made jointly between members of the 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 this policy as appropriate

It is the responsibility of the Proprietor to: -

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

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.

Learning Opportunities will carefully consider every referral on an individual basis. In every case, our admissions process evaluates the needs of the individual student and determines whether the school can meet needs and outcomes based upon the information presented in the EHCP, and where appropriate, any supplementary reports and assessments that can accompany a referral.

Learning Opportunities will also consider whether the school may need to provide additional support for a student whose safety or that of others is unusually at risk. The additional support would be determined by assessment with the cost of the placement adjusted accordingly.

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

- the school is fully subscribed
- admission would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person
- where attendance would not be compatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources, or
- where the admission of a student would compromise the Health and Safety of students and/or staff within the school

ADMISSION PROCESS

- The Local Authority sends consultation request and associated documentation to Learning Opportunities requesting a place.
- A member of the leadership team, who may request further information, will undertake initial assessment of the referral information in line with the school's eligibility criteria
- Where it is felt that the school is **unable to meet the needs**, the Local Authority will be informed of the reasons for not being able to meet the needs.
- Where it is felt that the school is **able to meet the needs**, the Local Authority will be informed that the school is able to offer a place.
- The Local Authority will confirm funding and issue an IPA for signature.
- The school will confirm the placement and begin transition arrangements, which may include observation / meeting the potential student in their current provision.
- Parents / carers, social worker if applicable and student, where appropriate, will be invited to visit the school.
- Once the offer of a place has been accepted by the referring agency, Learning Opportunities will arrange a pre-placement planning meeting.
- 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 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.

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.