



## ADMISSIONS POLICY

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## 1.0 Introduction

This policy complies with the statutory requirements and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- Equality Act 2010: advice for school DfE Feb 2013
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Schools Admissions Code Dec 2014
- Issues of suitability and/or compatibility.

*An admission must not discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil (Equality Act 2010).*

Springwell Special School has 106 places and accepts new admissions from children who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which identifies social, emotional and mental health difficulties as their primary need. Prior to naming the school on a child's EHCP, the LA must consult with the school over the admission of the individual child and carefully consider the school's response, parental views and whether the school is suitable for the child given their age, ability, aptitude and SEND and whether the admission would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education at the school or the efficient use of resources.

The school currently operate across three sites. Along with our main site provision at Carlton we have two specialist satellites. The Key Stage 2 provision is based at Forest Academy, known as Springwell @ Forest which caters for young people with SEMH and our Highfields Specialist Provision at Kirk Balk Academy caters for young people with Speech, Language and Communication difficulties. Once the school is named in an EHCP, the school will start its enrolment process in line with its legal duty, subject to any formal complaint that may be lodged with the Secretary of State for Education.

The aim of this policy is to provide further information about the position of the school on issues of suitability and/or incompatibility.

## 2.0 Admissions Criteria

All children admitted to Springwell have undergone a statutory assessment and have an EHCP that identifies social, emotional and mental health difficulties that are significantly impacting on their ability to maintain emotional well-being in all aspects of their life. Their complex needs will have been identified as requiring specialist, long term support in relation to:

- Achieving emotional wellbeing
- Working towards independent self-regulation
- Building relationships with significant adults in order to address attachment needs
- Developing positive social interaction
- Acquiring the skills that will lead to independent living and positive engagement in the community

## 3.0 Assessment Places

From time-to-time, the school may offer assessment places under the framework established by the Children & Families Act 2014. These will generally be offered where it is deemed to be in the child's best interests for a time limited placement at the school and where parents, the LA and school are agreed on the terms relating to the placement. The child will not be formally admitted to the school during an assessment placement but will be subject to the formal admission procedures detailed in this policy if the assessment place leads to a permanent placement. Assessment places will only be offered subject to space available and in liaison with the commissioning authority's Special Educational Needs Department. Places will be offered for a period of no more than twelve weeks and by the end of the placement a detailed support plan will be agreed by parents, the LA and the school.

#### 4.0 Organisation

The school operates an education delivery model based on national curriculum year groups. Due to the staffing structure and design of the building, classes are based in three distinct areas with two, off-site, satellite provisions. Class sizes are between 5 and 10 pupils.

Planned places in the school are as follows:

Combined Years 1 & 2: 4 pupils

Key stage 2 SEMH: 38 pupils

Key stage 3 SEMH: 30 pupils

Key stage 4 SEMH: 20 pupils

Specialist Highfields (Kirk Balk) 14 Pupils

The optimum class size within each year group is 8 - 10. The staff to pupil ratio at this level provides the school with the basis on which the best educational and other outcomes for pupils can be achieved and, furthermore, allows the school to effectively promote and safeguard the welfare of all children, which given the individual needs of the pupils, is an important consideration. The health and safety of pupils and staff may be seriously compromised if these recommended numbers are exceeded.

#### 4.0 Funding

The school receives funding from three sources:

- The Education & Skills Funding Agency provides funding for each stated place at the school up to the capacity of 106 planned places. The funding is used by the school to support the educational provision for all children on the school roll.
- The local authority provide 'top-up' funding, which should reflect the cost of making provision for that child's individual needs in excess of the place funding. This 'top-up' funding is agreed between the provider and the commissioner and reviewed annually.
- The school may also receive additional 'grant' funding from other sources such as Pupil Premium

Additional funding may be requested to meet the specific needs of those pupils requiring 'exceptional' support who do not profile within the normal SEMH criteria for the school. Any requests of this nature reflect the cost of making adequate provision for that child's individual needs. This funding will be negotiated with the LA via the statutory review process and allocated on a needs basis.

Where a LA wants to commission further places and the school can facilitate these without compromising the safe and efficient education of others, top-up funding is agreed on a place by place basis. Due to the needs of our pupils and the individualised support they are offered, LAs are also charged an extra place value per head.

#### 5.0 Consultation Process

When the school is consulted over a proposed placement, it will generally take the following approach:

- The school's SENCO will review the child's EHCP and the information listed in Section K to assess whether the school can meet their needs and what impact the admission will have on existing pupils
- The SENCO and Head of School will review the proposed funding to assess whether the level of funding is appropriate given the needs of the child and the cost of provision required
- Where practicably possible, the SENCO or Pastoral Manager will observe the child in their current setting and the family home to assess the reliability of the evidence presented by the LA and make recommendations as to the child's suitability or incompatibility
- The Pastoral Manager will speak to professionals from other agencies including Health and Social Care and make recommendations as to the child's suitability or incompatibility

- Once a decision has been reached a report and letter advising of the outcome will be sent to the LA.

Springwell Special Academy will only consider consultations for the admission of young people in KS4 in exception circumstances, for example in the case of a child looked after by the LA.

Please note that reasons for incompatibility are not limited to educational issues. In considering the school's position prior to responding to the local authority, the school will take account of the planned class size, year group numbers and learning area into which the child would be placed. The school's position is that the maximum class size and year group size is set out in this policy and numbers in excess of that maximum should be grounds for incompatibility within the provision of efficient education as it would run contrary to the model of educational provision which works effectively within the school. While the EHCP names Springwell Special School, the school will determine the specific site at which children are placed. The school's decision in regards to this matter is final.

Consultation documentation that is incomplete or does not include information from all professionals engaged with a child and/or their family will not be considered and will be returned to the LA. Likewise, consultation documents will be returned if the school cannot facilitate meetings and observations to assess the child's suitability or incompatibility. Please note that the 15 day consultation period cannot start until all relevant information has been received. The school reserves its right to reconsider their position in relation to a child's suitability or incompatibility if new information emerges during or post consultation prior to their transition into the school. The consultation process applies to all pupils, including those moving into Barnsley from another LA; those who move from another LA and already attend specialist provision; and Looked After Children. Springwell does not consider any school to offer 'like for like' provision. Some children may require additional assessment to ensure Springwell is best placed to meet all areas of need. Only in exceptional circumstances will we consider a consult for a Year 11 student, this is to limit the disruption to both their exams and transition to post 16. The only exception we would consider is a Looked After Child who has moved into area and needs an urgent educational placement.

## **6.0 Visits**

Prospective parents and professionals who would like to find out more about the school are welcome to attend an open evening. Dates and times for these events are listed on the school website. Parents for whom the consultation process has already commenced will be invited to visit at the end of the school day. Please note that all school visits take place after the children have gone home.

## **7.0 Admissions**

Once Springwell is named on a child's EHCP, the Pastoral Manager will meet with relevant parties to agree a personalised transition process for each child. Arrangements for home-to-school transport are the responsibility of the LA and not the school. Parents and carers are encouraged to actively engage with School Transport as failure to complete the required paperwork can delay the transition process. Once the transition process has concluded and transport is in place, pupils will be admitted to the school and transfer onto the school's roll at the start of the next term.

## **8.0 Appeals**

Parents can request a placement at any school and make representation for an independent school. The LA must consider this request and apply to the school on the parent's behalf. If the LA names a different school or educational provision, parents can appeal to the independent Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal service run by Her Majesties' Courts and Tribunal Service.