



"Building Curious, Confident, Courageous, Communicators and life-long learners"

The Shires School Oakham and Stretton

Education: Admissions Policy

Policy Review Process	
Created by	Jamie Hill – Head of Education
Date of implementation	September 2020
Most recent policy review	September 2021
Next policy review	September 2022

Whole School Mission Statement

At The Shires we are committed to enhancing the lives of all our young people so they can all become **Curious, Confident, Courageous, Communicators** and life-long learners, in our community this is known as "the Four C's".

Everything we do as a school is underpinned by the following fundamental values that combine to support all pupils to become **Curious, Confident, Courageous, Communicators** and life-long learners.

We support our children to be:

Safe – be safe, feel safe, and understand risk

Understanding – be effective and successful communicators

Kind – be kind to all around them, to understand and respect the needs of others

Happy – be healthy and happy individuals who enjoy coming to school

Ambitious – have goals and dreams for their futures and be supported to achieve them

Successful – find regular achievement and celebrate this as part of a community

Residential and Day Placements

The Shires are two Independent Special Schools (Residential and Day) for up to 30 pupils aged 11 to 19, who have a primary diagnosis of Autism alongside severe, moderate or mild learning difficulties and possibly other additional needs. Residential placements available are 52-weeks and 38-weeks per calendar year.

- The published admission number (PAN) for Stretton School for **2021-22 is 20 (14 Residential, 6 Day Placements).**
- The published admission number (PAN) for Oakham School for **2021-22 is 8 (7 Residential, 1 Day Placement).**

Admissions Criteria

The Shires accepts referrals from parents/carers, Local Authorities and their partners for prospective pupils who would benefit from specialist education and care designed for those with a primary diagnosis of Autism. Referrals may come directly to The Shires or via our central admissions team (James Taylor-Lawrence – Admissions Manager – 07866 549513 – james.taylor-lawrence@ofgl.uk).

- The Shires caters for pupils with severe, moderate and mild learning difficulties in addition to their primary diagnosis of autism.
- The Shires would not expect to provide for pupils with average or above average ability whose overall progress across the curriculum is in line with their ability.
- We would expect any prospective pupil to be able to be educated alongside other pupils within small groups, therefore the school would not expect to cater for pupils whose levels of behaviours that challenge are likely to put at risk the well-being of other pupils. However, it is recognised that pupils are likely to exhibit behaviours that may challenge resulting from their Autism and Learning Difficulties.

Referrals

Responding to Referrals

1. When a referring agency or agencies approaches The Shires they will be dealt with promptly, courteously, and effectively.

2. The Shires will seek to establish the status of the enquiry, distinguishing between:

- requests for information about referrals, fees and the availability of places
- a request to ascertain in principle if the school would be able to consider a referral regarding a specific pupil
- formal referral for a place
- a request from a Special Education Needs Tribunal to establish if the school (and care home for residential placements) could provide a place that would meet a young person's needs

3. Where the enquiry is for information or to whether in principle The Shires could consider a referral, The Shires will respond in writing with the required information.

4. Where a formal referral is being made, The Shires will commence to gather the initial information. This will include ensuring that the referring agency or agencies has up-to-date information about The Shires, its fees, and the availability of places, that they are aware of the referral process and the provision currently being made for the prospective pupil.

a. Once all the required information has been provided, The Shires' admission panel will consider the referral and all supporting documentation. This will be done within 10 working days of the information being provided to The Shires. The admission panel can decide that: i. the school cannot meet this young person's needs ii. more information is required before a decision can be made iii. that it appears that The Shires can meet this person's needs.

b. The Shires will then complete its referral process by arranging for school (and care staff for residential placements) to carry out a preadmission assessment of the young person; this will be at The Shires' expense.

c. The Shires' pre-admission assessment will include meetings with the pupil, their parents or guardians and the service currently or most recently supporting the pupil. The assessment will build on the referral information and will cover the following areas:

- The young person's primary need is for a service catering for pupils with Autism alongside severe, moderate or mild learning difficulties and possibly other additional needs
- Consider issues around significant risk and dangerous behaviour, in particular any history of arson, sexualised assault, self-harm and physical attacks on others.
- Particularly for young people who are aged 15 or more, evidence that previous placements have failed to meet the young person's needs and whether The Shires would have the time necessary to provide the stability and continuity required to meet their needs.
- Whether conflicts between the young person's family and providers have undermined previous placements, if so what arrangements have been made to resolve the underlying roots of the conflicts.

d. The report of this assessment will then be considered by the admissions panel who will decide whether or not to make a definite offer of a placement to the referring agencies. The Shires aims to complete its assessment and to decide on a definite placement offer within 10 working days of starting the process.

Supporting the admissions process

1. Once the placement of a child/young person at The Shires has been agreed, then the admission process begins. This is a flexible process that is designed to support four outcomes:

- firstly, led by the needs and wishes of the young person, enabling them to have the familiarity they require about the school (and care home for residential pupils) to reduce any anxiety and to help them understand where they will be moving to live
- secondly, to support school and care staff to make the necessary arrangements to promote the child/young person's successful placement at school and home

- thirdly, to support the family or guardians to develop the trust and confidence required for them to support and promote the placement
- Lastly, to ensure that all administrative details of the placement have been agreed and that contracts have been agreed between the school, care home and the funding agencies.

2. The timing of each admission will be individually tailored to the needs for the young person but the school will actively work to promote timely placements and will seek to ensure that the admissions process is not unduly extended.

3. The admissions process will always require staff to visit the child/young person where they are currently living; it will normally also involve the young person visiting school unless it is agreed that this would not be in the best interests of the prospective pupil.

For any placement enquires please contact any of the following;

James Taylor-Lawrence – Admissions Manager
07866 549513 – james.taylor-lawrence@ofgl.uk

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