

# ADMISSION POLICY

Rossendale School was established in May 1989 as a school catering for pupils with Autism. Admission to the school is made via a referral from a local Education Authority.

At the time of referral, a copy of the pupil's Education Health and Care Plan, plus the appropriate advice, should be forwarded to the school. If the Plan has not been finalised it would be helpful for the school to know whether any changes are likely to be made to the proposed Plan prior to the projected date of admission.

Having received the case papers from the LEA and a request for admission, the school will liaise directly with the LEA and set a provisional interview date. The school's expectation is that the pupil, and preferably both parents or carers, will attend at the specified date and time, accompanied by a representative of the LEA who has particular knowledge of the case.

The parents or carers will be met by the Headteacher and other senior staff and following a tour of the school will be asked to discuss the needs of the child along with their own expectations. The LEA representative will be expected to fill in any family background and to outline the expectations that the LEA has of the school if placement were to proceed. The young person will also be expected to undertake a short assessment of their educational needs.

Following this interview, senior staff meet and discuss the referral at length to ascertain whether the school could fully meet the needs of the young person. Various criteria are examined before a decision is arrived at.

Namely:

- (i) Is the young person prepared to commit themselves to the placement?
  
- (ii) Are the family/carers committed to the placement?
  
- (iii) Is there sufficient support for the placement from the statutory agencies involved?
  
- (iv) Can school meet the needs of this young person as defined by Review: Admission Policy and their Education, Health & Care Plan?
- (v) How will this referral impinge upon existing pupils already in place?
- (vi) What are the resource implications if this placement is to go ahead?
- (vii) Is the information upon which judgement will be based sufficiently up-to-date and accurate?
- (viii) Is further information required before an informed judgement can be made?

Taking the above points into account, one of three decisions is then arrived at:

- (a) A place is offered, and a provisional date and time set for admission.
- (b) The place is declined, and a letter is sent to the authority outlining the reasons and offering the school's view on an alternative placement.
- (c) School decides that they cannot make a definite offer at this stage and require further information, in which case that information is requested from the LEA and a further date and time set to see the young person again.

School appreciates that this can be quite a lengthy process, and generally when a referral is made to an out of Authority school, LEA's are looking for an immediate response to their enquiry. However, at Rossendale we feel that it is important that sufficient time is taken to ensure that if a placement is offered, the school can fully meet the young person's needs by bringing about change and not simply containment.

Once a place is offered, then school makes a major commitment to that young person and their family to ensure that the educational needs are met.

Following admission to the school, the young person undergoes a short induction period before being fully integrated into his or her class group. After having been in the school for some 10-12 weeks an Initial Planning Meeting is called, which includes a phone call to parents to discuss the child's progress and transition into school.

The youngest age for admission to the school is normally 8 years. Rossendale School offers day places for boys and girls. The school is registered for 104 pupils.

Rossendale School is conscious of the fact that the EHCP process can be a fraught time for pupils, parents and LEAs. In order to help alleviate some of this difficulty, particularly in complex cases or where relationships between LEAs and families have been tense, the school is quite willing to see parents without obligation. This can occur either with or without an LEA representative, but in either case without the child. The visit is totally without prejudice and it should be made clear that no obligation is placed on the parents, LEA or School. It does, however, give parents an opportunity to look at a particular form of provision, which may be able to meet their child's needs. Needless to say, parents and young people will only be seen formally at the request of an LEA.

Pupils referred to the school should have a diagnosis of autism. Staff skills have been targeted and developed to help meet the needs of complex and sensitive young people who have undergone an experience, or variety of experiences, that have had a traumatic effect upon them. The school is NOT resourced to cater for the needs of delinquent and disaffected adolescents, nor do we accept referrals on behalf of young people with established drug abuse problems. The school adheres to the National Curriculum and pupils are entered for a variety of external examinations, appropriate to their needs. It is therefore important that the young people fall within the average intellectual ability range.

The founding principle upon which the school was built is a deep conviction that ALL pupils have an entitlement to a positive education which allows them to experience success. An entitlement which:  
'First enlarges a child's knowledge, experience and imaginative understanding and thus his awareness of moral values and capacity for enjoyment; and secondly, to enable him to enter the world after formal education is over as an active participant in society and a responsible contributor to it; capable of achieving as much independence as possible.' (Warnock).