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# Admissions Policy

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October 2020

**Responsibility:** Head of Centre

**Reviewed:** October 2020

**Reviewed by:** Deputy Head

**Next Review due:** September 2021

**File location:**

This policy can be found:

- On our website - <https://www.lvs-oxford.org.uk/about-us/key-information/policies/>
- By emailing - [enquiries@lvs-oxford.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lvs-oxford.org.uk)

## **Purpose of policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity for the Admissions process to LVS Oxford and ensure it is fair and consistent. It is written with reference to the SEND Code of Practice (DfE-00205-2013, January 2015), approved by governors and reviewed annually.

## **Introduction**

LVS Oxford is an independent special school for young people aged 11-19 with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, usually high functioning Autism or Asperger's syndrome. We offer day placements over 38 weeks in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Sixth Form day placement includes work experience and a college link.

Many of the young people who are referred to LVS Oxford have encountered negative school experiences as a result of their diagnosis. These can include:

- Poor attendance, disengagement from learning and social isolation at school, which may have included bullying
- School breakdown as a result of their autism spectrum disorder
- Elevated levels of anxiety
- A range of mental health issues such as feelings of low mood and low self-esteem

In many cases, over time, these factors combine to reach crisis point and lead to school refusal or multiple school exclusions resulting in a poor quality of life for the young person and their family. It is often at this point that referrals are made to LVS Oxford. For these reasons, the school strongly believes that referrals and admissions to the school should be a partnership-building process with parents, the placing authority and the school, designed to ensure that the school can meet the needs of the prospective learner.

The Admissions process appreciates how challenging the transition into a new placement can be for young people and their family. It recognises that the process needs to be planned sensitively and thoroughly, and it is for this reason that LVS Oxford does not believe it is in the best interest of a potential student to be assessed whilst an inpatient of mental health services.

The time frame for the admissions process depends on a number of factors including:

- The quantity and nature of the referral information
- The number of young people already waiting for assessment
- The time of year and availability of placements
- Sourcing specialist training to support health needs

All referrals and admissions to the school are coordinated and arranged through the Admissions Team. The Admissions team includes the Head of School, Deputy Heads, the School Nurse and a Speech and Language Therapist.

## **Admissions Criteria**

In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, all applicants are carefully considered to ensure that:

- the school is suitable for the young person's age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs
- the placement is compatible with the provision of efficient education for other learners already attending the school, and the efficient use of resources.
- No applicants will be treated less favourably during the admissions process on the grounds of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

All young people admitted to LVS Oxford:

- Have a primary diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder – usually high functioning autism or Asperger syndrome.
- May have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- Are aged between 11-19
- May have additional needs associated with ASD

## Additional information

- Learners will have abilities in the average or above average range but may display atypical learning styles and uneven (spiky) profiles of cognitive strengths and difficulties
- Learners may have a range of needs that are directly linked to their autism spectrum condition resulting in inflexible thinking patterns, social communication and interaction difficulties, emotional dysregulations and sensory difficulties.
- Learners will have needs and ability profiles that are compatible with an appropriate key stage peer group
- Learners may present with additional medical conditions including mental health issues and stereotypical behaviour. However, the school reserves the right to decide whether these can reasonably be managed safely and effectively within its existing resources.
- All placements are for 38 weeks
- Students will be limited to approximately a 60 minutes journey time each way
- International learners will require a guardian resident in the UK
- LVS Oxford has an open gated site and is not suitable for young people who have a known history of absconding or who may attempt to run away
- The schools will accept learners that are privately funded by parents, trusts and other funding bodies
- Admission will not be detrimental to the needs of the other learners – no pupil should compromise the opportunities of others within the school.
- The school must be satisfied that the parents/carers are supportive of the placement
- LVS Oxford will admit a maximum of 60% of its total learner numbers from any one local authority unless there are exceptional circumstances which will be considered on a case by case basis by the relevant Governing Body

## **Referrals**

Most referrals are made by local authorities, but in some cases begin as parental enquiries. We encourage parents to visit the school as part of their search for an appropriate placement for their child. To this end, the school hosts regular Open Days, the dates for which can be found on the school website.

## **The Admissions Process**

**Stage 1 – Initial referral** either by parent(s)/carer(s), local authority or advocate acting on the parent(s)' behalf

- Referrals are accepted at any time and new admissions can take place throughout the year.
- Referrals are processed in order of receipt.
- All referrals are reviewed by the Admissions Team which meets weekly during term time.
- We request as much information as possible including educational, medical and any safeguarding reports to assist with the decision on whether to proceed with the referral.
- We work with parents/carers and external agencies to ensure that decisions on whether to proceed through the admissions process are based on complete, accurate, reliable and up to date information.
- We may visit the young person in their current placement or at home if they are not currently placed at a school

## **Stage 2 - Interviews**

When the reports indicate that the young person meets the admission criteria and there are places available in the relevant key stage, two online interviews take place between the young person, their parent(s) and members of the Admissions Team.

## **Stage 3 – School-based assessment visit**

- If, after the interviews, parents would like to progress the application **and** the Admissions Team consider it appropriate, an assessment visit to the school will be arranged
- A summary profile of the young person is compiled and distributed to all staff prior to the school-based assessment visit. We request that families contribute to this to ensure that information is up to date.
- Medical and dietary information is also requested.
- An assessment plan, minimum one morning and two full days, is agreed with the family and relevant staff.
- The visit may include some time working individually with specialist staff but will mainly involve being in a class or activity-based group.

- The young person is encouraged to give their views on the school during the visit.
- The school may request an additional assessment visit if this is considered necessary to make an informed decision on the suitability of placement.
- For year 6 students being assessed for the new cohort of year 7s, a group assessment day may be arranged for potential year 6 students. This will involve time working individually with staff but mainly group-based activities to show the interactions between peers.
- A decision on the prospective admission will be made at the next Admissions Team meeting immediately following the assessment.
- The placing authority and other interested parties will be informed of this decision as soon as possible following the Admissions Team meeting.

**Please note**

- Failure to disclose information that may affect the validity of the admissions process at any stage may lead to the process being terminated.
- Should the Admissions Team consider the school an unsuitable placement for the young person for any reason as detailed above in 'admissions criteria', the application will not be progressed to the next stage.
- This decision is made only after careful and sensitive consideration by the Admissions Team at any of the stages 1, 2 or 3.
- The decision is final.
- Further information for the decision will be given only at the discretion of the Admissions Team.

**Stage 4: Offer**

- Following successful assessment visits, a placement will be offered
- An offer letter will be sent to the Local Authority and parents/carers with an expected date of entry.
- Any placement offered will be subject to the full cost of the placement unless there has been prior agreement between the placing authority and the school

**Stage 5 – Transition into school** (Please also see LVS Oxford's transition policy)

- Following acceptance of the place and confirmation of funding, a transition plan will be agreed
- The family receive a parent pack which includes useful information about the school and forms (such as a code of conduct) to be signed and returned.
- Sometimes, a graduated transition and reduced timetable is required in order to re-engage the young person in learning
- Each young person is supported by relevant staff as determined in the transition plan

## **6 Week Review**

- After approximately six weeks, the family and young person are invited to a review meeting to discuss how the transition has worked.
- The young person's SEN Officer will also be invited to attend.
- The purpose of the meeting is to review the initial 6-week assessment period to confirm the details and level of support required for the placement at LVS Oxford.
- The school holds the right to request further provision for the student (e.g. one-to-one sessions with the Occupational Therapist) if this is considered necessary to ensure the placement is a success for the student and further supports their needs.
- The meeting is also an opportunity to reflect on the successes of the transition or organise a further plan if the student needs more time to settle into the school routine and demands. If this is required, the management of this plan will pass to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- The school hold the right to terminate the placement under the terms detailed in the National Contract.