



Admissions Policy

April 2025

Responsibility: Principal

Reviewed: April 2025

Reviewed by: Director of SEN

Next Review due: April 2026

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 (DfE00205-2013, January 2015), approved by governors and reviewed annually.

Introduction

LVS Oxford is an independent specialist school for students aged 11–16 with a diagnosis of high-functioning autism, often alongside related co-occurring conditions. We offer day placements over 38 weeks and the school is structured into two phases: Lower School (ages 11–14) and Upper School (ages 14–16).

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 negative school experiences 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, we strongly believe that referrals and admissions to the school should be a partnership building process with parents, the Local Authority and the school, designed to ensure that the school can meet the needs of the prospective learner.

The Admissions Team appreciates how challenging the transition into a new placement can be for young people and their families. 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 is made of a panel of Senior leaders, practitioners and other professionals from across the school.

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 and that the attendance of the young person would be compatible with the efficient education of other students already attending the school. In addition, 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
- Will have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- Are aged between 11-16
- May have additional needs associated with ASD

Additional information

- Students 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.
- Students 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 dysregulation, and sensory difficulties.
- Students will have needs and ability profiles that are compatible with an appropriate key stage peer group.
- Students 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-minute journey time each way.
- International students 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.
- Admission will not be detrimental to the needs of the other students – 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

- 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 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

At each stage of the admissions process, the Admissions Team carefully evaluates the suitability of the prospective student. This evaluation considers:

- The individual needs and profile of the student
- The composition and dynamics of the current peer group at LVS Oxford
- The profile of the incoming peer group
- The ability of LVS Oxford to meet the student's needs through its existing provision

Only if there is a strong alignment between these factors will the admissions process proceed to the next stage.

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.
- The decision is final.
- Further information about the decision will be given only at the discretion of the Admissions Team.

Stage 1

The Admissions Team will only consider an initial consultation from the Local Authority

Due to the EHCP linked funding for a placement at LVS Oxford being dependent upon Local Authority agreement; to begin the admissions process, we require an official consultation request from the Local Authority.

There is an option to initially privately fund a placement at LVS Oxford whilst you are obtaining an EHCP for your child. However, before proceeding with the admissions process, the Admissions Team would need to see confirmation from the Local Authority that they have completed an EHC Needs Assessment and have agreed to issue an EHCP.

Stage 2

Current Setting Contact and/or Visit

As part of our safeguarding responsibilities, a member of the Admissions Team will contact the student's current setting. Additionally, a visit to the setting may be arranged to observe the student in a familiar environment, interacting with known adults and peers. This helps us gather further insight into the student's suitability for the intended cohort and assess how resources can be allocated efficiently and effectively.

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 consultation. We also work with schools, parents/carers, Local Authorities and external agencies to ensure that the decision to proceed with the admissions process is based on full disclosure of complete, accurate, reliable and up to date information.

Stage 3

Online Interview

A member of the Admissions Team will arrange an online interview with the family. The interview is a conversation with the Admissions Team to find out more about the student. It is a chance for yourself to ask any questions you have about LVS Oxford and for the Admissions Team to get a better understanding of the needs and profile of the student.

Stage 4

School-Based Assessment Visit

Once it has been determined that the young person potentially meets the admission criteria and a place is available in the relevant key stage, an assessment visit to the school (minimum one full day) will be arranged. Any Year 6 student being assessed for the new September Year 7 cohort will join the current Year 7 students for the assessment visit.

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.

During the assessment period, the child will take part in timetabled activities. Their views will be gathered through a questionnaire, the results of which will be shared with the Admissions Team.

If necessary, the school may request an additional assessment visit to gather further information.

Stage 5

Offer of Placement and Transition into School (Please also see LVS Oxford's transition policy)

Following successful assessment visits, an Offer Letter will be sent to the Local Authority and parents/carers will be informed. Any placement offered will be subject to the full cost of the placement unless there has been prior agreement between the Local Authority and the school. Following acceptance of the place and confirmation of funding from the Local Authority, a transition plan will be agreed between parents, the Local Authority and the school.

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 (excluding school holidays), the family and young person are invited to a review meeting to discuss how the transition has worked.
- The young person's Local Authority 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 provisions for the student from their Local Authority (e.g. additional 1:1 therapy sessions) 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 Vice Principal.
- The school hold the right to terminate the placement under the terms detailed in the National Contract.