

Heathlands School Admissions Policy

Approved by PWC Committee 11th June 2019

Routine review due June 2020

1/ Introduction

Heathlands is a community Special School for Deaf children aged 3-16 maintained by Hertfordshire County Council. The admission policy has been drawn up in order to ensure that children are admitted to the school in a fair and systematic manner.

2/ Principles

- 2.1 The admissions authority for the school is Hertfordshire County Council.
- 2.2 Consultation for a place at Heathlands takes account of parental wishes, Hertfordshire County Council Admissions Guidance and the SEND Code of Practice.
- 2.3 Heathlands caters for children who need a total communication approach and is not suitable for those whose needs are met through purely oral/aural methods. Children who seek admission to Heathlands must have the requirement or preference for sign language or sign support in their Education, Health and Care Plan. Thus consideration is given to children irrespective of their audiograms so that the child's needs and functioning are prime considerations rather than medical criteria.
- 2.4 Heathlands may accept pupils with needs in addition to deafness such as learning difficulties or delay, social, emotional or mental health needs, physical impairment or other sensory needs, provided that the main need is their hearing impairment and that meeting their needs is compatible with others on roll.

3/ Procedures

- 3.1 Children will be admitted following a decision made by Hertfordshire LA provision panel.
- 3.2 Heathlands acts as a regional resource and welcomes pupils from many Local Authorities in addition to Hertfordshire. Applications are made by the Local Authority where the child is resident to Hertfordshire LA. These cases will then also be considered by the Hertfordshire LA provision panel.
- 3.3 The school will be consulted by the child's Local Authority and will make an assessment about whether or not needs can be met within the framework of the SEND Code of Practice.
- 3.4 Assessment for suitability of placement is based on:
 - The child's Education Health and Care Plan and other supporting documentation e.g. annual reviews, professional reports
 - The school's own knowledge of the child on a school visit
 - Discussion with parents and carers about their child's needs
- 3.5 Parents seeking a place at Heathlands for their child will be advised of the procedures and of the need to contact their Local Authority. They will be advised of their right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

4/ Assessment Placements

- 4.1 There may be rare occasions when the school admits a child on an assessment placement in order for the child's needs to be determined. This might include assessment of very young children or older pupils who have recently arrived in the UK for whom the process of drafting an Education, Health and Care Plan has not been completed.
- 4.2 Children will only be accepted on assessment placements at the request of the placing LA and the agreement of the admitting LA.
- 4.3 The school will contribute an assessment report to inform the drafting of an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- 4.4 If the result of the assessment suggests the child is best educated in an alternative placement the school will work collaboratively with others to ensure a phased and supported transfer.

5/ Starting at Heathlands

- 5.1 Admissions to Heathlands can start at any time by agreement with the placing local authority and parents/carers.
- 5.2 When a start date has been agreed parents of new pupils will be given a welcome information pack containing key information about the school, practical guidance and support available
- 5.3 Parents and carers are encouraged to accompany their child to school on the first day to meet key staff and complete all admissions paperwork.
- 5.4 For admissions to nursery parents will be invited to a pre-placement planning meeting. Nursery children typically attend on a part time basis and build up their hours of attendance as a planned, phased introduction to school.
- 5.5 If children have needs in addition to deafness for which specialist arrangements are required, a planning meeting with parents and professionals will be held prior to admission.
- 5.6 The school will initiate contact with previous placements and external professionals to ensure a smooth transfer of information which will support the change of school.