

CEDARS ACADEMY

ADMISSIONS POLICY- ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-24

Reviewed: September 2023

Next review date: May 2024

Introduction

We are a specialist school for young people aged 3 to 19 years with physical, sensory and medical needs, speech, language and communication disorders, autism, and a wide range of other complex needs often associated with emotional vulnerability.

Principles

The admissions authority for the school is Gateshead LA

All of the pupils at Cedars must have an Educational Health Care Plan (Single Plan), although it may be possible for this to be drawn up whilst they are in attendance. The Single Plan has protection in law, and describes the education provision to meet the child's individual need. The Single Plan protects the child's individual needs and is formally reviewed at least annually.

Pupils are admitted at any time during the school year, referred via a range of routes. We work closely with all involved professionals to ensure pupils are correctly placed and that they receive appropriate provision for their needs.

Range of learning difficulties of children who attend Cedars

The Academy would expect that all pupils referred to them for admission would have a learning (cognition) difficulty. In addition to this learning difficulty the child may also have other barriers to learning that may include:

- Communication difficulties
- Autism
- Medical needs
- Sensory impairment
- Physical difficulties
- Behavioural difficulties

Assessment Placements

It is not always possible when pupils are very young to determine their level of need. Where necessary, Gateshead LA may request the Academy admit a pupil on an assessment placement in order for the child's needs to be determined.

If this is the case the school will produce a report prior to statement at the end of the first term in which the child attends the school. This report will outline the outcome of the assessments undertaken as well as the Academy's view on the suitability of its provision.

Procedures for admissions

Children can be referred to the Academy from a variety of places but can only be admitted to the school following a decision made by Gateshead LA Provision Panel which studies all the documentation relating to a child prior to determining the type of provision required.

Children may be referred to the school through a variety of routes, including the LEA, pre-school, other schools, Educational Psychologists and Sensory Support Service.

Where the school is requested to take a pupil, if the appropriate class group is full but there are places available within the school, the Academy will enter into discussion with the LA about the admission arrangements in the individual case.

Children would not normally be admitted to the Academy without the parents having visited. Parents will be encouraged to bring their child with them on the visit. The visit will ensure that parents are happy that the provision at the school meets their child's needs, and that the Academy has met the child and the parents and feels that they are able on initial assessment to meet the child's needs.

Even where following a visit the Academy and parents are happy that the Academy can meet the needs of the child no offer of a place will be made. It is for the LA Provision Panel to discuss any assessments available in order to determine the provision necessary.

Where a child is to be admitted to the school the LA will inform the Academy in writing of its decision. The LA will provide the Academy with any reports, assessments or documents relating to the child. The school will not be expected to admit a child without receiving any relevant paperwork outlining the child's needs.

Following the notification of placement the Head/LA will write to the parents to notify them that a place has been offered, of the type of placement e.g. (assessment, part time), and of the admission date.

The Head of School/College will also write to the LA to notify them of the admission date and to request that transport be provided from that date if the child has special transport needs.

Prior to admission a member of classroom staff (normally the Teaching Team Lead) will arrange a home visit to meet the parents, complete the admission forms and also introduce the Academy's 'All about me' document which parents will be asked to complete.

Other agencies involved with the child will consult their counterparts in order to ensure an efficient hand over.

Children of statutory school age will start school as soon as arrangements for admission have been completed.

Arrangements for children being admitted from other schools

If there are concerns relating to an individual child the existing school will be expected to consult the Educational Psychologist attached to the school as well as discuss their concerns with the child's parents.

Where it is felt that Cedars Academy may be an appropriate alternative provision it is hoped that the Head Teacher from the existing school would contact the school so that a visit to see the child in situ can be arranged.

Where a meeting is to be held to discuss the child's needs and their placement, and it is felt that Cedars Academy maybe an option Cedars Academy would expect to be involved in that meeting.

Parents should visit the school prior to any decision being made about placement. No offer of placement should normally be made prior to the visit taking place.

Where the Academy is concerned that we would be unable to meet a child's needs or where we feel that the child should be able to be educated within mainstream provision the Academy will notify the LA of these concerns.

The LA Provision Panel will make the final decision relating to the placement of the child having studied the documentation and any relevant assessments available.

Following notification from the LA that place has been offered the Head Teacher will write to the parents of the child notifying them of the decision and determining an admission date. The Head Teacher will also notify the parents of the transition arrangement made for their child.

The Head Teacher of Cedars Academy will liaise with the existing school to determine a phased transition for the child. The transition will involve:

- Visiting the child in their existing school / Early Years setting.
- Child being brought to Cedars Academy for planned introductory visits.
- LA and existing school to forward any documents and reports relating to the child prior to admission.
- Multi-disciplinary team to liaise with their counterparts in order to ensure that all information is available once the child begins school.
- Staff from Cedars Academy to visit parents at home in order to complete admission papers and the complete the 'All about me'.

When the child turns 16

Students may choose to leave at the end of Key Stage 4 to move on to Further Education locally or to specialist provision out of borough. Other students prefer to move up to our College provision based at Walker Terrace to continue to develop their core skills, literacy and numeracy, life skills and vocational qualifications to prepare them for their next move into university, college, training or employment.

Conclusion

This policy aims to outline the criteria used for admission to Cedars Academy.

Although the LA is the admissions authority, the school is best placed to ensure that children who can be educated within a mainstream setting have that opportunity. Where children admitted to the school for assessment are felt able to be educated within mainstream the school will liaise with the LA to ensure that the child has a phased, supported move from Cedars Academy to appropriate mainstream provision.