

**St. Joseph's Specialist School & College**  
**Amlets Lane, Cranleigh**  
**Surrey, GU6 7DH**

Website: [www.st-josephscranleigh.surrey.sch.uk](http://www.st-josephscranleigh.surrey.sch.uk)

# **Admissions Policy**



***Christ in our Lives***  
***'No limits ... just possibilities'***

***Reviewed: September 2017***  
*Finance, Personnel & Pay Committee*  
*Annual*

**STATUTORY POLICY**  
**WEBSITE POLICY**

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## **Introduction**

St Joseph's Specialist School and College is a residential / day school offering care, education and therapy for boys and girls with residential placements of 52 weeks. The school is owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and the Diocesan Trustees are the Trustees of the school. They appoint Foundation Governors to the school's Governing Body. The responsibility for the school's Admissions Policy and actual admissions rests with the Governors, who exercise this responsibility in partnership with the Executive Principal and her staff.

St Joseph's is a school approved by the Secretary of State for Education as a day and residential school for boys and girls aged 5 – 19 years, who have either moderate or severe learning difficulties with associated speech and language impairments and Autistic Spectrum Conditions.

It is registered with Ofsted as a Children's Home within a Day and Residential School.

St Joseph's also provides Adult Supported Living. There is a separate admissions policy for this.

The school is divided into Key Stages 1/2, Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. The school prospectus and curriculum overviews give full details of the programmes of study offered at each Key Stage.

## **The Referral and Admissions Process**

The processing of enquiries and applications is co-ordinated by the Admissions Officer with the support of the Admissions Board comprising of the Director of Residential Services, Executive Principal, Headteacher and Director of Education, Director of Therapies, Head of Care and Head of Inclusion.

### **Stage 1 Initial Enquiry**

Most referrals begin with a telephone call from a family or from a professional involved in placing a child. They are usually anxious to know what the school has to offer and to describe the child's background and needs. We are happy to give and receive information or advice in this way, to send the school's prospectus and other written information and to arrange a visit to the school. Before a visit is arranged families or local authorities are requested to send a copy of the most recent Annual Review report, a statement of special educational needs or EHCP and/or any other information. The admissions board meets every Thursday, initial enquiries are discussed and either approved or rejected on the grounds of admission criteria

### **Stage 2 Visit to the School**

The initial visit by the families and other interested parties is conducted by the Executive Principal and other senior staff members, who will answer any questions that arise and will explain in more detail the organisation and curriculum of the school. The visit has most value if it takes place during term time when it is possible to see the school at work and to meet the students. All the students referred to St Joseph's have wide-ranging learning difficulties of a moderate or severe degree. In the case of each referral there is a Statement of Special Educational Needs or EHCP drawn up by the appropriate local authority. This enables the school to make its first assessment of the child's needs. It is

now necessary to determine the total package of courses and services required by the prospective student.

To this end records and statements are sought regarding the child's past record and development. Staff from St Joseph's may visit or telephone the student's present school to confer with the staff there in order to ascertain the reason for the move.

### **Stage 3 Familiarisation**

If, following the initial enquiry and visits, it is thought that the child could be appropriately placed at St Joseph's a period of residential or day familiarisation may be arranged. Before this, we would wish to have the agreement of the local authority or other agencies or a commitment from the family that they are going to tribunal and to have received relevant information relating to the child's educational, social and emotional needs from the authority, family and the present or previous school. A member of St Joseph's staff may visit the school and occasionally the family home to observe the student and to discuss the referral. Preparation for the visit is augmented with good communication between the current placement with photographs and timetables sent out by the dedicated Transition Team at St. Joseph's to ensure a smooth transition.

To enable the school to be aware of the child's specific needs the family are asked to complete a detailed questionnaire and return it prior to the assessment.

Following the familiarisation, the observations of teachers, therapists and care staff are collated in order to support the decision that St Joseph's can meet their child's needs. A detailed report is made that is ready to be submitted to the Local Authority, the Family and, if necessary, the tribunal process. It is only in exceptional circumstances that students will not be admitted following a period of familiarisation.

In exceptional circumstances students may be admitted without a familiarisation period, however, this must not be an emergency placement.

### **Stage 4 Admission**

Once an admission date has been agreed some preparatory work is needed in order to minimise anxiety or confusion on the part of the new student and the family; as before these resources will be prepared by the Transition Team. Students can be invited to initially spend shorter days at St Joseph's prior to full admission in order for the new student to get to know the staff and other students.

## **What the School Can Offer**

### **The Curriculum**

The school prospectus and curriculum overviews give details of the curriculum St Joseph's can offer. The school not only offers a wide curriculum but also offers flexibility and can be personalised to meet the needs of the student with learning disabilities often associated with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. This means using practical methods and individual programmes of study within small, well-staffed groups with additional support from specialist staff.

## Specific Provision

- Therapies
  - Speech and Language Therapy
  - Art Therapy
  - Dramatherapy
  - Music Therapy
  - Occupational Therapy

Most, although not all, students admitted with wide-ranging learning difficulties also experience communication and sensory processing difficulties. These vary from child to child and call for individual assessment and treatment.

To meet this demanding need the school has full-time speech and language therapists and occupational therapists, who work with the students throughout the age range. This is done in both individual sessions and alongside teachers and other staff in many areas of the curriculum. There is also support during the evening from therapists to ensure consistency of provision. In order to support the student to develop his/her use of verbal language Makaton signing and symbols are used throughout the school.

- Delayed or impaired motor development

Some students seeking admission suffer from motor disabilities e.g. hemiplegia. While St Joseph's cannot cater for severe cases of physical disabilities it can, and does, offer physiotherapy and occupational therapy and provision for physical/motor disabilities. The division of the school into small groups, and the supervision of the groups by trained care staff, means that the children with physical limitations can be observed and encouraged, as far as possible, to overcome their difficulties.

- Sensory impairment

St Joseph's can offer help for those experiencing mild impairment in sight and/or hearing.

- Medical support

The school can offer medical support to minimise and stabilise the effects of conditions such as asthma, eczema and epilepsy. There is a trained nurse who together with two Health Care assistants oversee the Student Medical Centre.

- Social Emotional & Mental Health difficulties (SEMH)

A number of students with learning difficulties experience emotional problems and exhibit challenging behaviour. We offer art, music and dramatherapy to students who need it and assess each one for suitability. Staff at St Joseph's are experienced in the management of aggressive and challenging behaviours and use a wide range of approaches to modify behaviour and to minimise emotional disturbance. All Education, Care and Nursing Staff are trained in Positive Behaviour Support Approaches including Team Teach.

St Joseph's has its own in-house CAHMS style provision consisting of an on-site Psychiatrist and a Psychologist as well as access to specialist neuroscience therapists as needed. This service seeks to work in a complimentary way alongside any existing mental health and wellbeing services that a student may be accessing. This is seen as an early intervention strategy enabling our students to access rapid and effective access at an emerging stage to these services.

- Delayed Social Development

The difficulties in this area may take many forms but the school is well provided to aid the development of practical and interpersonal social skills leading to greater independence.

## **Community Care and Support**

One of the strengths of St Joseph's is that it offers all its facilities in the context of a day and residential school with a strong sense of community.

Many of the associated needs experienced by those with learning disabilities (e.g. flexibility of thought, transition, behavioural problems, delayed development of practical and interpersonal social skills) demand not only well trained, experienced teachers, teaching assistants and residential care workers but a 'family' into which the students are welcomed and within which they can feel valued.

From its foundation, this aspect of St Joseph's has been emphasised and is now a tradition which is strengthened by the strong Christian ethos of the school. Hence St Joseph's can offer much for students in need of the development of their identity and self-worth.

## **Age**

The school caters for students from 5 – 19 years in three main age ranges:

from 5 – 14 years	-	Key Stages 1/2/3
from 14 – 16 years	-	Key Stage 4
from 16 – 19 years	-	Key Stage 5

Key Stages 4 and 5 integrate courses which are designed to aid the development of those practical and interpersonal skills which enable the students to achieve greater independence.

St Joseph's takes great care to support students with appropriate placements for those who complete their education - usually at the end of the school year in which they are 19 years of age. St Joseph's is committed to working with external stakeholders such as Adult services to find suitable placements and ensure effective transitions occur.

In order to provide flexibility and individual and personalised development St Joseph's residential provision is divided into house groups in order to provide a homely and welcoming environment.

## **Our Catholic Foundation**

Founded in 1916, St Joseph's has a rich tradition of providing a distinctive education based on Christian values. In a truly Christ-like spirit, our welcome extends to all those who can benefit from our school and our expertise.

Our aim is to recognise and celebrate the gifts to be found in each and every student, and to enable them to grow and develop skills, knowledge and understanding to the full extent of their potential.

Cardinal Hume, said of Catholic schools:

*'The dignity of the human person is at the heart of Catholic teaching. Each and every person is to be valued as God's creation. The Church's vision is firmly rooted in the example of Jesus who turned no-one away but made himself available for all.'*

## **Admission**

The offer of a place is dependent upon the following:

1. The careful determination of the needs of the student
2. A successful familiarisation period
3. The availability of a place in the appropriate teaching and residential groups
4. The agreement of the family and child
5. The positive support of psychologists and other professionals involved in the case
6. The agreement of the families and local authority to support the school by attending reviews and other meetings and by working with the staff
7. The agreement to pay the school's fees

## **The Child Protection Liaison Officer**

The Designated Child Protection Officers for St Joseph's are:

Alan Day – Director of Residential Services (Lead & Single Point of Contact)

Annie Sutton – Executive Principal

Jay Shekleton – Head of Care

Karen May – Director of Therapies

Nick Durling – Head of Inclusion

## Date Policy Reviewed

Updated	Changes	By	Version
June 2003	Policy Developed	Unknown	v1
October 2005	Unknown	Unknown	v1.1
October 2006	Unknown	Unknown	v1.2
May 2007	Unknown	Unknown	v1.3
June 2008	Unknown	Unknown	v1.4
October 2009	Unknown	Alan Day	v1.5
February 2012		Alan Day	v1.6
May 2013	Minor changes	Alan Day	v1.7
June 2014	Change of CPLO – delete Simon Charleton and instate Sarah Kennedy	Alan Day	V1.8
September 2016	Change of Names – Minor changes	Alan Day	V1.9
September 2017	Amendments to job roles & minor amends Changed learner to student	Alan Day	V1.10