

St. Joseph's Specialist Trust
Amlets Lane, Cranleigh
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Website: www.st-josephscranleigh.surrey.sch.uk

Admissions Policy



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

Reviewed: June 2025
Cycle: Annual

STATUTORY POLICY
WEBSITE POLICY
GOVERNOR POLICY

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Introduction

St Joseph's Specialist Trust comprises a specialist school, college, registered children's home and adult supported living houses, together "St Joseph's". The responsibility for the Trust's Admissions Policy and actual admissions rests with the Trustees, who may delegate their responsibility to the Governors who exercise this responsibility in partnership with the Executive Principal and staff.

St Joseph's non maintained special school 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, with complex and severe learning difficulties. St Joseph's has excellent provision for students, within the above categories, who are on the Autistic Spectrum. Based on their conditions and future, our students enter one of our three vertical curriculum pathways. Pupils are placed in both school and college by ability and to meet their social needs, rather than by Key Stage. This allows focused teaching to meet the individual developmental needs of the young people and the opportunity to access accreditations. St Joseph's also provides Adult Supported Living. There is a separate admissions policy for this.

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 the Director of Care, Executive Principal, Headteacher and Director of Education, Director of Therapies, Director of Business and Head of Safeguarding and 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, an EHCP, academic levels and other relevant information/reports. The admissions board meets every Thursday during term time, 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 a member of the School Leadership Team, or another senior staff member, 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 complex or severe degree. In the case of each referral there is an EHCP drawn up by the appropriate local authority. This enables the school to make its first assessment of the child's needs. It is then necessary to determine the total package of courses and services required by the prospective student.

To this end records and reports 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 to ascertain the reason for the move.

Stage 3 Assessments

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 assessment may be arranged.

The assessment is usually a series of three-day assessments (plus 2 nights if a residential placement is being sought). There are a minimum of two assessment visits with a third only held if we see a behaviour or a concern seen during a visit that requires further assessment. 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 various documents including a detailed questionnaire and return them prior to the assessment.

Following the assessment, 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 for submission 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 assessment.

If a student is already at St Joseph's as a day student and an application is made to become a residential placement, then this will require a further assessment to determine the level of need required.

Following all assessments, St Joseph's may request further assessments from external professionals to determine specific psychological needs.

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.

The following summary of the admissions process is provided to all parties with whom any form of consultation is entered into or may be so;-

Admissions Process and Safeguarding

St Joseph's operates a comprehensive admissions process every part of which must be completed. No representation about ability to meet need will be made until the entire process is completed in order to comply with St Joseph's safeguarding standards;-

- i) Admissions Panel review of all necessary documentation and information only once all such is received.

- ii) Communication with and further information from previous setting and any other relevant parties.
- iii) Parent/ guardian visit to St Joseph's
- iv) St Joseph's visit(s) to current setting and/ or home to observe and assess need.
- v) Young person's assessments at St Joseph's. Up to 3 visits each of 3 days during term for a day placement. At present no residential assessments are being held as the children's home is at capacity and will be so with the current cohort for the next 2 years.
- vi) St Joseph's prepare Assessment Report after assessment is completed (this takes a minimum of two weeks after the final date of onsite assessment) and send to Local Authority and family.
- vii) Where the Assessment Report determines that need can be met, a conditional offer letter with fees will be sent to Local Authority.
- viii) Written agreement to offer and completed documentation must be received from Local Authority to confirm any placement.
- ix) Start date confirmed subject to receipt of all contractual documentation and first term's fees from Local Authority and available staffing.

All local authorities are made aware that any attempt to bypass the full admissions process will be treated as a safeguarding matter and taken up with the appropriate agencies.

All local authorities are made aware that any student whom St Joseph's is compelled to take (for example by a tribunal naming St Joseph's at section I in the EHCP) without the full admissions process being completed and an offer of placement made, will be placed on a "safeguarded non-assessed placement" with enhanced staffing and associated fee tariff for the safety of all until the first full Annual Review at which it will be decided whether the student is appropriately placed and at what level staffing is required. Fees will be adjusted in relation to the placement where necessary once the final amended and non- contested/ appealed EHCP has been issued by the Local Authority.

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 offers a wide curriculum including flexibility to meet the needs of the students 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 offer in-house occupational therapy and works closely with external providers of physiotherapy to support any physical/motor needs. The division of the school into small groups, and the supervision of the House Groups by trained care staff, means that 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 are two Health Care assistants who 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 drama psychotherapy 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, Therapy and Surgery Staff are trained in Positive Behaviour Support Approaches including Team Teach.

St Joseph's has its own in-house CAHMS style provision consisting of a visiting on-site Psychiatrist and Clinical 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 support at an emerging stage from 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, therapists 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 old:

The students at St. Joseph's are divided into Explorers, Discoverers and Adventurers, while the opportunities of the wider curriculum remain accessible to all. The Pathways are best described as 'Stages before Ages' and are closely aligned to the aspirational future Outcomes of the students in their adult lives.

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 young person
2. A successful assessment period
3. The availability of a place in the appropriate teaching and residential homes
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 from the Local Authority to pay the Trust's fees

The Safeguarding Team

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

Nick Durling – Head of Safeguarding and Inclusion, Deputy DSL

Alan Day – Director of Care DSL

Annie Sutton – Executive Principal, Deputy DSL

Simon Jaggard – Director of Education and Headteacher, Deputy DSL

Karen May – Director of Therapies

Lorraine Kelleher – Deputy DSL

ANNEX A: THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

During the Coronavirus Pandemic the provisions of this Policy shall be interpreted in relation to meetings, visits to the school and on-site assessments in line with the Government guidance on www.Gov.uk as amended from time to time.

Date Policy Reviewed

Updated	Changes	By	Version	Trustee Ratification Due by	Trustee Ratification Received
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	-	-
September 2018	Updated to Trust	Alan Day	V1.11	-	-
December 2019	Minor amendments	Alan Day	V1.12	-	-
Summer 2020	Amendments in light of the Coronavirus Pandemic and minor amendments	Lizzie Hurst	V1.13	-	-
Summer 2021	Minor amendments	Alan Day	V1.14	-	Bernard Smith
June 2021	Minor amendments removing historic reference to key Stages	Simon Jaggard	V1.15	-	Bernard Smith
June 2022	Minor amendments	Alan Day	V1.16		
June 2023	Minor Changes	Alan Day	V1.17		
June 2024	Minor changes	Alan Day	V1.18		
June 2025	No changes	Alan Day	V1.19		
July 2025	Amendments to Stage 4 Admission	Lizzie Hurst	V1.20		