

# Elmwood & Penrose Federation Admissions Policy

# Admission of Pupils Policy

## Purpose of this Policy

- To describe and clarify school policy with regard to the admission of pupils to The Elmwood & Penrose Federation.
- To describe the aims and procedures, which will maximise educational benefit on the admission of a pupil.
- To establish an agreed admissions policy between special schools and Somerset County Council.

## Aims

- To achieve as smooth a transition as possible into the school in order to maximise educational benefit for all pupils.
- To ensure that placement at our schools is prioritised for those students for whom mainstream school/provision does not enable the individual to grow and thrive to their potential.

## Principles

- Pupils with an EHC (Educational Health and Care) plan as defined in the 2015 SEN D Code of Practice will be eligible for admission to Elmwood & Penrose Federation.
- Penrose has an agreed number of 40 places within the Primary Phase, there is a small margin of 10% in terms of additional places. Elmwood School including the Jean Rees Centre has agreed numbers of 80 places overall. There is a small margin of 10% in terms of additional places.
- To admit normally, pupils within an age range of 4-19 years. (Reception year to year 14).
- To admit boys and girls.
- Any decision regarding the admission of a pupil to The Elmwood & Penrose Federation will be considered on an equal opportunities basis, regardless of gender, race, religion or background.
- Pupils will at the point of entry be subject to an EHC Plan.
- Where additional places are requested by the Local Authority over the agreed number, careful consideration is made about each request.
- Pupils without an EHC Plan naming the school will only be admitted in one or more of the following circumstances:

- a. The pupil is already the subject of a current EHC Plan or Statement naming another school that makes similar provision and requires a change of school due to a family move or change of social services arrangements
- b. There has been a sudden and significant change in the circumstances for the pupil. This will relate to medical or social circumstances rather than a change of school, there has already been a prolonged absence from school and the pupil would be considered vulnerable should this continue until the statement process has been completed.

In these cases the statement will be drafted or amended within statutory timescales.

The Governors, through the Executive Head Teacher, will be consulted prior to admission of a pupil. The Executive Head Teacher will be mindful of issues of confidentiality.

All admissions will take place through close and joint working between the Somerset County Council (SCC) and the school.

The Executive Head Teacher and Chair of Governors have the right to question a potential admission with the LA on the following grounds:

- If the child is outside the age range catered for by the School
- If the school is already at its planned admissions limit
- If a group within any particular age range is full
- If the child does not meet the designation of the School
- If the pupil's admission may be incompatible with the progress and welfare of pupils already on the school roll (e.g. if there are medical needs over and above those catered for by the school).

However, the SEN panel on behalf of the local authority or Special Needs Tribunal will make the final decision on placement. A prospective parent/guardian should be aware of their right to represent the interests of their child to the county council.

## **Admissions Process**

- Receipt of proposed Statement and paperwork
- Parents/pupils visit school – recommended (sometimes parent/pupils may visit more than once – negotiated as necessary)
- Casework Officer and consultation within school, school view sought
- SEN panel decision on placement

- School informed
- School entry planning meeting – to plan admission and ensure relevant information shared
- School entry pack issued to parents

## Responsibilities/Guidance

- SCC shall be responsible for the decision as to placement through the SEN panel
- The **Executive Head Teacher** shall be primarily responsible for implementing the admissions procedures and reporting to governors
- The **Senior** and **Middle Leader** of the relevant phase will plan in conjunction with the family an appropriate transition
- The **Head of Phase** (Senior Leadership Team) along with **Class Teacher** will be responsible for obtaining full relevant information concerning a potential admission, as soon as he/she has been notified of the possibility. This will include participating fully in the School Entry Planning meeting processes.

The **Parent/Guardian** shall:

- Endeavour to become as familiar as possible with the school
- Provide the school with all relevant information to assist easy entry

The **Induction Process** of the school will be implemented.

The Child's **Social Worker** (where relevant) will liaise between the parent and school in order to ensure the school receives full relevant social contextual information, where appropriate.

The **Health Trust**, where appropriate, will be responsible for ensuring the school has all relevant information to enable them to effectively meet the child's medical needs.

## Review and Evaluation

This Admissions Policy is subject to continued review and amendment in order to reflect changing educational policy.

**Date Policy adopted** January 2018

**Date for review** July 2019

**Signed**   
**(Chair of Governors)**

## Admission of new students to Elmwood & Penrose Federation

Elmwood & Penrose Federation is a partnership of 2 special schools in Bridgwater, and includes a separate Post 16 centre which is called The Jean Rees Centre. Students can enter the Federation at any age.

Students at the Federation all have either Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education Health Care Plans (EHCP's). These are assessment documents that guide the education system in how best to meet the needs of the individual child/young person.

Before an EHCP is considered, there are a number of steps which will have been put in place by your child's school or nursery in consultation with you, or by health visitors contacting Get Set in Somerset to start to understand the child/young person's needs.

There are a number of steps that schools and nurseries can put in place to support your child and it should be noted that **remaining in mainstream is beneficial for the vast majority of children**. However for a very small percentage of school aged children (approximately 2%) the experience of the school's organisation, curriculum and the size of mainstream school classes does not support their learning and development, and they are unable to thrive in this environment.

The agreement to consider a special school placement should be part of this process, and involve, family, child where possible, health and education professionals.

For children and young people who are in the process of receiving an EHCP the county council will allocate a Casework Officer. It is often the casework officer who makes the approach to the school by preparing documents and information on which the school can make their decision about offering a place.

The process for the school is outlined below:

### Initial enquiry

- Casework officers contact school referring a new child for us to consider for placement.

### SLT

- The information presented is discussed with senior leaders of the school and decisions are then communicated to the case work officer.

### Response to panel

- Criteria for refusing a place may be lack of peer group, safeguarding concerns, whether the child's attainment levels are too high, child would be better placed in mainstream provision with outreach support.
- SLT to agree wording of response and the PA to Executive Head Teacher to reply on behalf of school.

### Parental contact with school

- Parents may be encouraged to contact the school at any point in the process of gaining an EHCP. School to check that the family has a casework officer involved in school placement. If not school advise to contact **casework team at Somerset County Council** on 01823 356707.

### Information from school to families

- Parents making enquiries receive prospectus.
- If parents wish to visit the school, receptionist to take contact details and arrange with SLT/MLT member on appropriate site time and date for visit

### Transition into school

- There are a number of opportunities planned for families to get to know the school before the start date. Our aim is for all relevant information to be exchanged and for families to be confident.
- Parents receive information about start dates, times, uniform etc.
- They have invitations to meet class team and receive resources to prepare their child for transition into school.

### **What happens if we are over- subscribed:**

- Somerset County Council commission places within each of our schools. This figure can change each year, but remains within an agreed margin.
- For 2017-18 Penrose has 40 agreed places, Elmwood and The Jean Rees Centre have 80 agreed places, giving us a school population of 120
- For 2018-19 Penrose will remain at an agreed 40 places. Elmwood and the Jean Rees Centre will have the flexibility to increase to 86-88 as required.
- If we have already achieved the agreed place number and other children/young people are looking for places, we are able to agree places in negotiation with the county council – casework panel. The strongest reason to cap numbers within our schools would be the ability to keep every child safe, given the constraints of the buildings or the make-up of the group of students. Obviously the main benefit of being in a special school is specialist support and intervention, reduced class size and increased access to teachers and specialist teaching assistants. If this is compromised then we may defer accepting your child until a time when other children leave and we have capacity to agree the place. For example: we may be asked to consider your child for a place in May but have no places available until September. In this case we may agree to put support into the current school until a place is available within the Federation.
- We assess every request based on:
  1. Whether your child would have a friendship group at school – are there other children who are learning in the same way?
  2. Whether your child will be safe within our schools,
  3. Whether your child is developing typically in terms of academic attainment
  4. Sometimes it may be that your child could remain in their local school with their friends but receive support from our Outreach Team