

Admissions Policy			
Version 1			
Approval date		Approved by	Great Oaks Governors
Next Review Date		Lead Reviewer	Headteacher

## Policy Statement

This policy explains how admissions to Great Oaks School are managed in a lawful, transparent, and fair manner for children and young people aged 11–19 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It should be read alongside the Great Oaks Core Offer Statement and Southampton City Council’s (SCC) secondary admissions guidance, available via SCC online school admissions service.

Great Oaks School is a special school providing education for students aged 11 to 19 with clearly identified special educational needs, including complex learning difficulties. Great Oaks School, as an academy within The Specialist Schools Trust, is its own Admissions Authority. Southampton City Council coordinates the consultation and referral process on the school’s behalf. Admissions are considered following a formal consultation process in line with statutory requirements. All pupils referred for admission have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), either in draft or final form.

Great Oaks School values the knowledge, experience, and insight that families bring about their child. Parents and carers are recognised as key partners in supporting each student’s education, care, and personal development, and this partnership underpins the school’s approach to admissions.

## Application

This Policy applies to all parents and families.

## Aims

- To set up good communication strategies with families the Local Authority and other agencies so that information is shared efficiently and appropriately.
- To have admission procedures which ensure that families are given all appropriate and necessary information about the school and that they have many opportunities to meet the staff who will be dealing with their child.
- To ensure that admission is implemented in a way which is appropriate for the child. This may include an integrated approach or a gradual integration depending on individual need. Personalised transitions will be considered within this.
- To ensure that by the time admission procedures are complete staff can confidently meet the child’s needs and all the required resources are in place to do so.

## **Referral Procedure**

All consultations to the Great Oaks admissions team are received via Southampton Local Authority. Any student who resides outside of Southampton must have their consultation submitted by their own Local Authority directly to the Southampton Local Authority SEN Department. Great Oaks School does not accept direct consultations from other Local Authorities.

Once a referral has been agreed, either the Inclusion and Admissions Lead or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will review the paperwork and provide a consultation response. As part of this process, staff from Great Oaks may contact the student's current placement for additional information or to arrange an observation.

In line with the SEND Code of Practice (2015), Great Oaks will carefully consider whether the school can meet a student's identified special educational needs as detailed in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Relevant documentation will be reviewed, and further clarification may be sought from the current placement or other professionals involved. The school will provide a written consultation response indicating whether Great Oaks can meet the student's needs, taking into account the school's provision, specialist expertise, capacity, and the efficient education of other pupils.

The school is unable to accept direct consultations from parents, carers or other professionals. However, we run regular Saturday open days throughout the year, as well as open mornings for our Post-16 provision, to enable families to gain an understanding of the school. Families can contact our admin team for further information on these events. If families wish to pursue a place at Great Oaks for their child, they should contact their child's SEN caseworker for advice around securing a placement.

## **Admission Procedures at Great Oaks**

### **Transfer to Great Oaks in Key Stages 3, 4 or 5**

Each year, a number of pupils from Southampton's primary special schools transfer to Great Oaks School at the end of Year 6. Pupils may also be admitted at other points during their education, where such admission is not considered to be incompatible with the efficient use of resources or the efficient education of other pupils. These admissions may be from mainstream primary or secondary schools within Southampton, or from mainstream or special schools outside of Southampton Local Authority.

Following discussion at city-wide panel meetings, Southampton Local Authority will consult with Great Oaks School regarding a potential placement. The Local Authority must be satisfied that the proposed placement is suitable for the student's identified special educational needs and is not incompatible with the efficient education of other pupils or the efficient use of resources. Where these criteria are met, and following a consultation with the school, a place will be offered.

## **Alignment with the Great Oaks Core Offer**

Admissions to Great Oaks School are considered in line with the school's published Core Offer, which sets out the range of needs, levels of learning difficulty and types of provision the school is able to meet.

The Core Offer describes the primary areas of need typically supported at Great Oaks, including complex moderate to severe learning difficulties and associated needs in communication and interaction, social, emotional and mental health, and sensory and physical development.

When responding to consultation requests from the Local Authority, the school will consider whether a child or young person's needs are compatible with the Great Oaks Core Offer, alongside suitability for age, ability, compatibility with the education of other pupils, and the efficient use of resources.

The Great Oaks Core Offer is published separately and should be read alongside this Admissions Policy and the school's SEND Policy.

## **Assessment Placements**

From time to time, the Local Authority may request a time-limited assessment placement. Any such placement will only be considered where it is formally arranged and fully funded by the Local Authority, is clearly defined with a fixed end date, and is solely for assessment purposes. A time-limited assessment placement does not constitute, nor imply, a guarantee of a permanent place at Great Oaks School.

## **Transition Arrangements**

Families are encouraged to visit the school prior to placement decisions through the schools' open mornings. Families are asked to contact the school office to make a booking for this. Priority will be given to those families who live within the Southampton area. Transition arrangements are planned collaboratively and may include visits, transition days, and liaison with previous settings when a placement has been confirmed.

During transition visits, parents are very welcome to attend the school site and wait within the reception area. To support safeguarding, confidentiality, and a positive transition experience for all students, parents are not able to remain with their child in class during these visits on any school site.

## **Published Admission Number (PAN)**

The Published Admission Number (PAN) will be reviewed annually with the Local Authority, taking account of the school's capacity and the reasonable adjustments required to meet students' identified needs.

## **Complaints and Dispute Resolution**

Admissions decisions relating to EHCP naming rest with the Local Authority. General concerns about school processes should be addressed through the school's published complaints procedure.

## **Related Documents**

Great Oaks Core Offer Statement (Found on school website)

Southampton City Council's (SCC) secondary admissions guidance