

Admissions Policy

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Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education is a registered charity. The Deaf Academy (the School and College) and Rolle House Children’s Home are part of the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education charity, but managed as separate ‘operating divisions’. They share a range of services run centrally by the charity such as Fundraising, Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology, Facilities Management and Marketing.

This Admissions Policy applies to the Deaf Academy (the School and College) only.

1. Rationale

Placement at the Deaf Academy should always arise from a process that identifies the Academy as an appropriate and positive choice that best meets the educational, social and medical needs of the student.

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](#)

3. Purpose of Admissions Policy

To ensure that all stakeholders involved in the Admissions process work in partnership enabling informed decisions to be made which are in the best interests of the student.

Stakeholders include:

- Young Person
- Parents & Carers
- Local Authority
- External Professionals
- The Deaf Academy

4. Range of Provision

The Deaf Academy is a non-maintained special day and residential school and college which caters for up to 80 students from across the UK in the age range 4 – 25 years.

We are approved by the Department for Education as a school and college for deaf children and cater for students with MSI.

Students are also supported by our Therapy team (Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Physiotherapist and Education Audiologist). The team put the young people and their families at the centre of everything that they do. They aim to support students to become as independent as possible, working in partnership with students, families and colleagues at the Academy in order to achieve the best possible outcome for students.

Residential places at the Academy are offered where it is not feasible for students to travel in each day or where students would benefit from the opportunity to develop their independence and social interactions with peers.

Typically, school students will stay Monday to Friday and return home each weekend, College students will return home every third weekend.

This enables students to receive an education and independence skills programme extending beyond the school day which is implemented by the Residential Care team and Therapies team. This is designed to offer an extended curriculum within a structured and consistent environment.

Part time boarding is also possible e.g. 1-4 nights per week and can be discussed at the time of the Admissions application.

Please follow the link below for details of our prospectus which provides details of what we offer across Foundation Learning through to Pre and Post 16 pathways.

<https://thedeafacademy.ac.uk/tda-docs/uploads/2020/04/The-Deaf-Academy-Prospectus-2020-21.pdf>

We are one of the few schools which offers a bilingual environment where our students learn in both British Sign Language and English.

5. Admission Criteria

To be considered for a place at the Academy, students must have an EHCP or Statement of Special Education Needs in place or in the process of being agreed. The Academy carefully considers all admissions based on need.

All students considered for a place will have hearing loss or profound deafness but may also have additional needs.

Our intake includes students with a medical diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Multi-Sensory Impairment and those with a variety of difficulties. Typically, this includes students who have a rate of acquisition and / or degree of retention of knowledge significantly lower than normally expected.

Students may struggle to communicate their wants and needs without intensive support from skilled staff. They may have communication difficulties that limit access to the curriculum in a mainstream environment.

Sensory impairment, physical disability or emotional and behavioural difficulties may compound barriers to learning in some instances.

It is essential that the Academy is confident that we are an appropriate and positive choice that can best meet the educational, social and medical needs of students. For this reason we are not able to offer placements where Social, Emotional and Mental Health is the primary need or where behaviour is extreme and likely to put the student or others at risk and/or disrupt the learning of others.

6. Admissions Procedure Prior to the Placement Being Confirmed

The Academy works in partnership with Local Authorities when considering students for placement.

Admission enquiries are received from parents / carers, external professionals and Local Authorities, the admissions procedure set out below is the same process in all cases.

Throughout the admissions procedure, the Admissions Team will keep everyone informed of what is happening. The admissions process will be clearly outlined to prospective parents / carers and will be handled as sensitively as possible taking into account the needs of both the young person and their family.

Step 1 Parents / Carers Visit

Parents/Carers are encouraged to contact the Admissions Team to arrange a visit to the Academy, preferably before the completion of a statutory assessment, Education, Health and Care Plan or Annual Review meeting. Parents may be accompanied by a key professional or a friend.

The focus of the visit is to provide parents / carers with an opportunity to view the Academy and the education provision and if required, the residential care provision offered. At this stage it is not possible for the Academy to comment on the appropriateness of the provision for the young person.

Following the visit, if parents / carers are interested in a place for their young person, they will be asked by the Admissions Team to register this interest with the Academy by completing an Enquiry form (Part A).

Parents/ carers should also notify their Local Authority SEN Team as the Academy will need to request copies of the EHCP and related reports in respect of the young person as part of the assessment process.

A change in educational provision is normally considered at a student's Annual Review of EHCP meeting. Parents / carers may wish to indicate to the Local Authority, supporting professionals and current school their views of the Deaf Academy as a suitable placement.

Parents/carers are advised that it is not usual practice for the Academy to admit Students until a place has been requested by the Local Authority. Similarly, any change to agreements (e.g. moving from day to residential) is made in agreement with the placing Local Authority.

If requested, key staff from the Deaf Academy will attend an Annual Review meeting at the young person's existing school.

As the Deaf Academy is non-maintained, the Governing Body does have the discretion to admit fee-paying students although this is rarely exercised.

Step 2 Seeking the Engagement of the Local Authority

Upon receipt of a completed Enquiry form (Part A), the Admissions Team will contact the Local Authority:

- To confirm that we have been asked to assess the young person for a place at the Academy.
- To confirm that the Local Authority is supportive of the parents exploring alternative placement options and to request copies of the EHCP and related documentation to support the assessment.

It is imperative that the Local Authority is engaged with the process at an early stage as they will ultimately be responsible for agreeing the funding for the placement.

Step 3 Preparation for Assessment

If parents / carers wish to proceed with the assessment, the Admissions Team will ask that they complete the Application Form (Part B) which provides a more detailed picture of the young person's needs in preparation for the assessment.

The Academy may consult with other professionals, or in collaboration with the student's current school/college in preparation for the assessment.

This will include gathering information relating to:

- Current educational or additional needs of the student
- Qualifications already achieved.
- Matters that may make the student vulnerable or a risk to others
- Information about previous involvement with Children's Services

Once all relevant information has been gathered, key academy staff will meet to evaluate and confirm that an assessment should take place and dates will be agreed. The Admissions Team will then notify parents and the Local Authority.

Step 4 Assessment

Prospective students are invited for an assessment visit by the Admissions Team. The visit may include an overnight stay if a residential place is also required.

Typically, assessment visits take place over two days / one night but these timeframes may be extended for students with more complex needs.

The Lead teacher for the assessment will send details of the assessment programme, including named key workers, in advance of the assessment taking place so that students and their families know what to expect.

Key Academy staff may also visit the young person at home and /or at their current school / college in order to observe the young person in a setting which is comfortable and familiar to them. It is also an opportunity to liaise with staff and parents who know the young person well.

The assessment allows the Academy to evaluate whether we are able to meet the young person's education, social and health needs. It is also an opportunity for the young person to experience life at the Academy as part of a typical school day so that they are able to make an informed decision regarding their interest in a place here.

Step 5 Post Assessment

An assessment report is compiled by the Admissions Team and discussed with all relevant departments.

If a place is available and everyone is in agreement that the Academy is confident in its capacity to meet the young person's educational, social and medical needs, an offer letter will be drafted by the Admissions Team. Details of the fee bandings based upon the assessment findings and a proposed start date are notified to the Local Authority for consideration.

If the decision is that the Academy cannot meet the young person's needs, parents will be informed after an assessment has taken place. Following this the Admissions Team will advise the Local Authority of the reasons for this decision.

The SEND Code of Practice states that if a child's parent or a young person makes a request for a particular education setting the Local Authority must comply with that preference and name the setting in the EHCP unless it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person, or the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources.

Step 6 Confirmation of Place

The Local Authority will notify the Academy and parents / carers whether a place and funding have been agreed.

If a place is not agreed, parents have the right to appeal the decision – please see the Appeals section below.

The start date for the student's placement will depend on current staffing levels, the students already residing here and the most appropriate time for the individual student to start.

Step 7 Induction Programme

Prior to admission, all students and families are sent a comprehensive information pack that includes the following:

- Letter from the Principal
- Information regarding uniform, clothing and equipment, including sports kit
- Academy Behaviour Policy and Anti Bullying Policy
- Term dates, school calendar and exeat arrangements
- Permissions booklet (including medical treatments, input from therapeutic services, media permissions, and activities/visits)
- Contact names and information
- Bursary information (post-16 students only)

An induction programme, appropriate to the individual student, will be drawn up to support their transfer to the Academy.

This may include:

- Visits by key staff between schools
- Additional visits/part-time placement to support move by the young person to the Academy.

Each induction will be very individualised and will depend on each student e.g. tours of the provision during school time, after school sessions but sleeping at home and part week placements can all be used to help the student settle. Most students settle very quickly once they are aware of their new routines.

The Local Authority will arrange transport in accordance with its own Home to School transport policy.

8. Post Admission Support

The management of new students is overseen by an allocated main Teacher. Each student is also supported by their keyworker in the care setting to familiarise them with the school or college's expectations and the daily routine. For the majority of students who join, induction into the life of the Academy is carried out both in care and school in the first weeks. This process will vary depending on the age and personality of the student. Each student is given a handbook which contains key information about the school/college/residential care.

While the keyworker relationship is very important, all students are able to contact any member of staff with personal, academic or welfare concerns.

9. Appeals

If a young person's application for a place at the Academy is unsuccessful, parents/ carers will be informed by the Local Authority why admission was refused and given information

about the process for hearing appeals and taking decisions to tribunal. If parents / carers wish to appeal, the grounds for this must be set out in writing.

10. Additional Supporting Information

Annual Reviews

Annual Reviews are attended by the student, their parents and Academy staff. Invitations are sent to key professionals within the Local Authority to attend also. This provides an opportunity for families to celebrate the student's achievements, discuss overall progress over the last year and input to the plans and targets for the following year. It is also the time when longer term future plans are discussed so that students, their families, Local Authorities and other supporting professionals are collectively aware of the young person's aspirations.

Planning for the Future

The majority of students remain at the Deaf Academy to at least the age of 18, although support is provided to families of young people who are leaving in Year 6 or 11. In addition to developing daily living skills needed for young people in all years, the Academy undertakes a detailed programme in Years 12 and 13 to prepare young people for transition to college, university or the world of work.

The Deaf Academy offer support to students following transition. If there are difficulties, our staff are available to offer advice and talk to the appropriate member of staff, should that be necessary. A small number of past students will continue to seek and benefit from our advice and support long after they have left.

Where a student will be leaving care or leaving the Academy, the Academy makes an agreement with that student's responsible authority as to what contribution it should make to implement any plans or pathways before the student leaves. This will support the young person's needs and promote a smooth transition.

Helpful Websites

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) www.ndcs.org.uk

British Deaf Association (BDA) www.bda.org

Action on Hearing Loss (RNID) www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD) www.royaldeaf.org.uk

Each Local Authority has their own equivalent Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS). For example, Devon's equivalent is Devon Information and Advice Service (DIAS) <https://www.devonias.org.uk/>

