

Admissions Policy

Policy Control Page

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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 operates a Non-Maintained Special School (NMSS) and Residential School and a Post 19 Adult Specialist Post 16 Provision (SPI).

Our provision is divided into three areas School, College and Post 19 (adult).

School

Our School provision is divided in a Middle School and Upper School. The Middle School operates broadly within an age range of 9-13 years and the Upper School 13-16 years. However, we do appreciate the complexity of our student profiles and seek to find a balance between 'stage' and 'age' in admission. This means that when assessing a child, we take a holistic view and age, where appropriate, will consider admissions younger than 9 years if we agree that we can meet their needs within our middle School curriculum and it is appropriate.

We are approved by the Department for Education as a School and a College and cater for Deaf with additional needs students.

Students are supported by our Therapy Team (for example, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Physiotherapist and Educational 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 stay Monday to Friday and return home each weekend, College students return home every third weekend.

This enables residential students to receive an informal education and independence skills programme beyond the School day. This offers 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, although this is subject to availability.

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://bit.ly/TheDeafAcademy-Prospectus>

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 a hearing loss as well as additional needs. In exceptional circumstances we may accept somebody who has some form of deafness, or communication difficulties, and uses BSL as their first language.

It is essential that the Academy is confident that we are an appropriate and positive choice that can best meet the educational, social care and medical needs of students. We are a low to moderate behaviour provider, and we do not take students with severe behaviour.

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 for all.

The Education, Residential Care, Health and Therapies and Safeguarding teams check the enquiry form, application and EHCP to ensure needs can be met and assessment is appropriate prior to placement.

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 request copies of the EHCP and related professional reports in respect of the young person; reports must be received before assessment in all cases.

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, a representative from the Deaf Academy may be able to attend an Annual Review meeting at the young person's existing School.

As the Deaf Academy is non-maintained, the Governing Body has 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 will consult with relevant professionals involved in the students care.

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
- Information from relevant therapy teams, such as Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, NDCAMHS

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 to allow us to gain a better understanding of the needs of the student.

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, emotional and health needs. It is also an opportunity for the young person to experience life at the Academy 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, emotional 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. Students who require support from Multi-Sensory Workers will be allocated trained staff from the Academy. Only in exceptional circumstances will external staff be considered.

If the decision is that the Academy cannot meet the young person's needs, parents will be informed after the 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 staffing levels, the students already residing here and the most appropriate time for the individual student to start.

The Academy will hold the placement offer for 6 weeks for the Local Authority to agree placement. After this period of time the offer will be moved to our waiting list.

All start dates are subject to appropriate staff being in place, both in Education and Residential Care where required.

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 exact 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/Colleges
- Additional visits/part-time placement to support move by the young person to the Academy.

Each induction will be individualised and will depend on each student e.g. tours of the provision 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 should arrange transport in accordance with its own Home to School transport policy.

8. Post Admission Support

Each student is supported by their keyworker in the Education and Care setting to familiarise them with the School or College's expectations and the daily routine. Induction into the life of the Academy is carried out both in Education and Care in the first weeks. 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

We place a lot of emphasis on our assessment process and ensuring that we are able to meet the needs of our young people. There are various situations where we may,

- Decide not to offer an assessment due to concerns over meeting need.
- Discontinue an assessment due to concerns related during the assessment and withdraw offer of assessment.
- Not offer a place after an unsuccessful assessment.

Where situations like this occur we will clearly set out the reasons for this in writing to parent/carer/young person/Local Authority within 10 working days of the decision including within this letter the process of appealing this decision. You will have the

right to appeal this decision by submitting a letter to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will convene a panel within 10 working days of receipt of this letter to review the decision and respond to the complaint. The complainant will receive notification of this appeal decision within 10 working days of the panel review date.

10. Waiting List

On occasion the Academy may not be able to offer a place within education or residential care provision because we are full or technically full* (full based on offers made). We operate two waiting lists to support this process.

Waiting List- A: Prospective Students who have been assessed, offer agreed, funding agreed and are awaiting a place.

Waiting List B: Prospective Students who have been assessed. Offer made but funding not yet agreed.

We recognise that different funding authorities work in different ways, tribunal process can be slow and we therefore aim to manage our waiting lists in as fair/transparent ways as possible. James Heaver (AP Safeguarding & Care) operates the residential care waiting lists and Mark Stocks (AP college) operates the Education waiting lists.

11. 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 post 19, 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/>