

Admissions Policy

Policy Control Page

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The Royal Deaf Education Trust is a registered charity. The Deaf Academy (the School and College) and Rolle House Children's Home are part of the Royal Deaf Education Trust 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, College, Post 19 and Residential care) 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 into 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, 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.

College (16-18 and 19+)

Our college provision is divided into a sixth form (16-18) and post 19+ provision. Within the college provision there are a number of different pathways that are tailored to the individual needs of the young person as laid out within our prospectus.

Therapies Team

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. Alongside working directly with the students, the team also provide universal and student specific training for education and residential staff. This joint working approach ensures students achieve the best possible outcome in and out of education.

Residential Care, Fearnside House, and Rolle House

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 Academy Day. This offers an extended curriculum within a structured and consistent environment.

Part time boarding is also possible, for example, 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.

In addition to Residential Care situated on the Academy Campus we also operate a ten bed Post 19 Residential and Learning Centre (Fearnside House) and a four bed Children's Home (Rolle House).

For more information on the above please see our prospectus.

[Deaf Academy Prospectus 2024 \(1stflip.com\)](https://1stflip.com)

5. Admission Statement

The Deaf Academy is part of the wider Charity known as the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education which has been in existence since 1826. The Deaf Academy along with other parts of the

charity are in place to support the delivery of the wider charitable objectives in supporting the educational and development of deaf young people.

All students considered for a place will be Deaf or have a decreased or reduced hearing level and/or would gain substantial benefit from being a student at the Deaf Academy, including experiencing our applied Deaf curriculum, learning within a BSL Multi-modal environment and being part of our Deaf community.

Although there are many young people that would benefit from being a student at the Deaf Academy we are ultimately a charity for the Deaf and our core purpose is to support our beneficiaries (Deaf young people) or those that would substantially benefit from our applied Deaf/SEND curriculum, Deaf community and learning environment.

6. Admissions Criteria

- All students considered for a place at the Academy, must have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of Special Education Needs (or equivalent Welsh/Scottish) in place or in the process of being agreed. The Academy carefully considers all admissions based on need. In exceptional circumstance we may place a child without an EHCP, for example, where a child has been out of education and an EHCP is pending.
- All students need to be assessed, and an agreement made by the Academy that we can meet the needs as defined within the EHCP.
- All students to fulfil the requirements of student placement as laid out in our admissions statement.
- Ordinarily we will not consider split placements other than in very exceptional circumstances. The reason for this is that our curriculum is designed for fulltime placements.
- Individual students may require a split staffing/therapeutic package arrangements that require external support staff/therapists to come regularly onto campus. This arrangement will be identified and agreed if a student is offered a place at the academy.
- We are a low to moderate behaviour provider, and we do not take students with severe behaviour needs.
- Parents and Carers will be informed of our **Parent code of conduct prior/Permissions booklet prior** to assessment.

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.

7. Admissions Team

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.

The Admissions team are:

Mark Stocks: Partnerships and Communities Manager (Lead of admissions)

Ruth Kennedy: Admissions and Attendance Administrator (Administrates admission process for new students)

Salena Hutton: Quality and Funding Officer (Coordinates offer letters and renewals)

Claire Clarke: Education Support Administrator (Coordinates Annual Reviews)

8. Admissions process

Stage 1: Enquiry

Stage 2: Visit

Stage 3: Assessment

Stage 4: Decision making.

Stage 5/6 Offer Stage/ Offer Awaiting Response

Stage 1: Enquiry

Enquiries can come direct from parents/carers, young people and professionals. If the Academy receives an enquiry or identifies a possible placement from external commissioning services, then the Admissions team will follow up requesting documentation such as EHCP/ therapeutic reports and share enquiry and application forms for completion.

Stage 2: 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, EHCP 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 Special Educational Needs (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 Deaf Academy to admit Students until a place has been requested by the Local Authority. Similarly, any change to agreements (for example, 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.

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 Deaf 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.

Stage 3 Assessment 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. Parents and Carers will be required to complete the permissions form and acknowledge the parent code of conduct before the assessment can proceed.

The Deaf Academy will consult with relevant professionals involved in the student's 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, National Deaf Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (NDCAMHS)

Once all relevant information has been gathered, key Deaf 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.

Permissions will be sought prior to assessment.

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 Admissions team 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 Deaf 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 Deaf Academy so that they are able to make an informed decision regarding their interest in a place here.

Stage 4: Decision making.

An assessment report is compiled by the Admissions Team and discussed with all relevant departments. This will be assessed in accordance with our **admissions statement** and **admissions criteria**.

If a place is available and everyone is in agreement that the Deaf Academy is confident in its capacity to meet the young person's educational, social, emotional and medical needs, an offer will be drafted by the Admissions Team. This details the Deaf Academy fees for the first year based on the assessment findings. This letter is then forwarded to the Local Authority for their consideration. Students who require support from Multi-Sensory Workers will be allocated trained staff from the Deaf Academy. Only in exceptional circumstances will external staff be considered.

Please note that no start date is offered at this time.

If the decision is that the Deaf Academy cannot meet the young person's needs, parents/carers 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/carer 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.

The Deaf 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.

Stage 5/6 Offer and Awaiting Response to Offer from Commissioning Authority

During this period, we will monitoring those awaiting offer at the Admissions team meeting.

Stage 7 Confirmation of Place and Awaiting Start Date

The Local Authority will notify the Deaf 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.

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

In addition, prior to placement Parents and Carer will be expected to abide by our **Parent and Cares code of conduct and Permissions questionnaire**. This includes adhering to our parent and carer code of conduct and compliance with core processes that support effective placements at the Deaf Academy, including agreeing to required permissions. Where reasonable adjustments are required, they will be considered as part of this process.

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
- Deaf 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 Deaf 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 Deaf Academy.

Each induction will be individualised and will depend on each student, for example tours of the provision, 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.

9. 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 Deaf 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.

10. 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.

11. Waiting List

We are a relatively small provision offering approximately 85 education and 47 residential places in total. These places are also further segmented into groups based on need, age and within our residential provision compatibility with other flat residents.

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 (Partnerships Manager) operates the Education waiting lists.

12. Additional Supporting Information

Annual Reviews

Annual Reviews are attended by the student, their parents/carers and Deaf 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 Deaf 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 offers 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 Deaf Academy, the Deaf 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

Independent Provider for Special Educational Advice (IPSEA) www.ipsea.org.uk (MS)

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/>