



## Admissions Policy and Procedure

### General information

Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School accepts children with a wide range of abilities and the admission of any individual applicant is subject to the criteria set out below. The school believes that all children have individual needs, and aims to meet those needs as far as possible, taking into consideration the child's age, developmental stage and other circumstances. The school aims so far as possible to create balanced, mixed-ability class groups. This policy, alongside others where relevant, is subject to current legislation, the school's policies for Equal Opportunities and in particular The Equality Act 2010.

Applications are welcomed on behalf of all children, although not all applicants can be admitted to the school. Decisions on admission of a pupil and assignment to a particular class take into account the needs of the individual pupil, the likely impact on other children in the class, the balance of the class group and the resources available to the school.

Although admission to the school at the beginning of a term is preferable, this is not a fixed policy. Children joining Elmfield School are allocated to classes according to their age. It is only in very exceptional circumstances that the school will place a pupil in a class that is 'inconsistent' with their age.

### School's resources

We will consider applications on behalf of children with physical, medical and special educational needs. The school will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate these needs. However, there are some children whose needs may not, in our view, be met by the School, and such children will not be admitted. No definitive statement can be made about which children with special educational needs can and cannot be accommodated in the school, as every situation is unique. However, we only cater for children who fall within an academic ability range which enables them to benefit from our rigorous and broad curriculum. In addition, our school site is not suitable for children and young people with some physical limitations. Some pupils have access to the services of our Learning Support Department, on the basis of need. However, the resources that we can fund from Learning Support within normal tuition fees are very limited.

### Assessment of applicants

We do not hold a written entrance examination. Nevertheless, all applicants to the school are assessed for suitability by the following methods, in addition to the Equality Act 2010:

1. Consideration of the existing constellation of pupils in the target class and the likely impact of the new applicant were they to join the class. For example, we may not admit a child applying to join a class if

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there is evidence of disruptive behaviour from the applicant. Furthermore, we may not admit a child whose admission would mean the introduction of a second Learning Support Assistant into the class.

2. Review of reports from previous schools, educational psychologists or other relevant, reputable sources.
3. Consultation with our Learning Support Department.
4. Interviews and/or observation of the child by the prospective class teacher or class guardian, the Learning Support Department or another relevant teacher.

Applicants are also assessed in line with the following criteria, which will increase the likelihood of admission:

1. Whether the child has siblings already attending Elmfield or going through the application process at Elmfield
2. Children of teachers appointed to work at Elmfield
3. Children applying from other Steiner Waldorf schools
4. Children from families with a clear commitment to Steiner Waldorf Education

Candidates are assessed against the above criteria using reports from previous schools (where applicable), interviews with pupils and parents, and an assessment of the existing class into which the new applicant would be placed. Children are usually first accepted on a half term's probation or equivalent period, but we may ask for a longer probation period in certain cases. Initially a new child might need some extra tuition in certain areas, such as foreign languages, and this would be a condition of entry.

Admission into Class 1 from Kindergarten will be reviewed by the Kindergarten teachers and often by our Child Development Consultant, with the College of Teachers; Education Lead and the Early Years Lead. Parents should not assume that there is a guaranteed entry into Class 1 from Kindergarten / Transition. Children will be assessed as to their readiness for Class 1, which may result in a withdrawal of a place or, in exceptional cases an extended period in Kindergarten.

We reserve the right to decline an application if we consider it is not in the best interests of the child or class.

### **Admission Procedure**

1. Parents will complete and submit an application form for the pupil in question, together with the pupil's most recent school report.
2. We will contact previous educational settings to request references for prospective pupils and/or to find out more about them.
3. We normally require parents to have attended an open event or tour prior to joining the school.
4. For children applying to join the Early Years Department (Nursery, Kindergarten or Transition) parents will be offered a pre-joining interview whereby the parents and the child meet with two members of staff. The child will often interact with one member of staff whilst the other discusses the child's biography with the parents, gathering relevant pedagogical and social information.

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5. For children applying to join Classes 1 to 11, children are usually required to attend three consecutive trial days or more if this is deemed appropriate. Our Learning Support Department may assess and/or observe your child during this trial if there is evidence of a need for additional support of any kind, for example learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties.
6. Parents are invited to attend a meeting towards or at the end of the trial period where the trial is discussed and the teachers will gather relevant pedagogical and social information from the parents. Children applying for a place in classes 1 – 7 are not required to attend this meeting unless there is a specific need to address. For children in Class 8 and upwards the child is required to attend all or part of this meeting.
7. A finance discussion is arranged by phone or in person to ensure parents are aware of the notice periods and the requirement to maintain timely fee payments. A discussion about financial assistance is also available upon request. A place may not be offered if there is evidence of an inability to pay fees or non-payment of fees/significant debts at another educational setting. A school place may be subsequently withdrawn if financial commitments to the school are not met.
8. The prospective pupil's application is discussed at the next departmental teachers' meeting and ratified at College and parents are informed whether a place will be offered to the pupil. If a place is offered, you will receive a written offer of a place and an enrolment form along with other relevant forms. The signed enrolment form is a legally binding contract, and the child will be admitted immediately or at an agreed date in the future. The offer of a place is always subject to a probation period. This is usually half a term or equivalent period but in some instances alternative and conditional review dates may be stipulated.
9. Towards the end of the probationary period a child's progress and social integration will be reviewed by the class teacher/guardian. This may result either in the ending of the child's stay at Elmfield, an extension of the probationary period, or full acceptance by the School.
10. Withdrawal of a child by the parents after full acceptance is subject to one full term's notice to the school, or a term's fees in lieu of notice.

## **Overseas Admissions**

Families applying to Elmfield from overseas will normally find it difficult, if not impossible, to manage points 3 – 6 above before moving to the UK. In these cases we will sometimes arrange an interview or informal discussion by Skype and if a place is offered, the child/ren's first three days at Elmfield (or longer if deemed appropriate) will be considered a trial, as per point 5 above. This will be followed by a parental meeting as described in point 6 above. It is important to note that if difficulties have arisen during the trial period, the child/ren may not be able to remain at Elmfield.

Points 7 – 10 apply equally to families applying from overseas.

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We will not normally consider applications from overseas pupils wishing to come to Elmfield for less than a year, unless these are for boarding places. If you wish to apply for a boarding place, please refer to the Boarding section of our website.

### **Complaints**

If you are not satisfied with the school's admissions process or the decision that we reach, in relation to your child/children you should put your complaint in writing to the Bursar within five days of the date of our admissions decision. The complaint will then be dealt with in accordance with the school's complaints procedure, a copy of which is available on our website.

Policy last reviewed August 2017  
Bursar and Education Lead

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