Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School

Admissions Policy and Procedure

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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 cannot, 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 or learning difficulties can and cannot be accommodated in the school, as every situation is unique. However, we only offer places to children who we feel will be able to access and benefit from our rigorous and broad curriculum. In addition, our school site has some challenges and 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 services and resources that we can fund from Learning Support within normal tuition fees are very limited. Please see our SEND policy for further information.

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:

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 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 and/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 staff 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 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 and stated on the offer letter. In the case of foreign languages any extra tuition would need to be arranged by, and paid for by, the child's parents.

Admission into Class 1 from Kindergarten will be reviewed by the Kindergarten teachers, in conjunction with the Early Years Lead, the Education Manager and SLT as appropriate. Parents should not assume that there is a guaranteed entry into Class 1 from Transition. During the Transition year, children will be assessed as to their readiness for Class 1, which may result in the

offer of a place, a withdrawal of a place or, in exceptional cases, the offer of an extra year in Transition. (Please refer to our Policy for Progression through the EYD and into Class 1 for further details.) If your child is offered a place in Class 1, this will be subject to half a term's probation.

We reserve the right to decline an application at any stage if we do not consider it to be in the best interests of the child or class.

Admission Procedure

1. Parents will complete an application form for the pupil in question, and submit it to the school, 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 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 an 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.
5. For children applying to join Classes 1 to 11, children are required to attend for a trial period of two weeks with the relevant class, which may subsequently be extended if deemed appropriate by the School. Our Learning Support Department may assess and/or observe your child during this trial if there is prior evidence of a need for additional support of any kind, for example learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or if evidence of need emerges during the trial period.
6. Parents are invited to attend an interview towards or at the end of the trial period where the trial is discussed, and the teachers, including a senior member of staff, will gather relevant pedagogical and social information from the parents. Children applying for a place in Classes 1 to 7 are not usually required to attend this interview. For children in Class 8 and above the young person is required to attend all or part of this interview.
7. A discussion about financial assistance is available upon request. A place may not be offered if there is no evidence of the parents' ability to pay the school fees or evidence of non-payment of fees/significant debts at Elmfield or another educational setting. Please note that a school place may subsequently be withdrawn if financial commitments to Elmfield are not met. See our Fee policy for further information.
8. The prospective pupil's application is discussed at the next departmental teachers' meeting and a decision is reached. This is ratified by SLT and parents are then informed whether a place will be offered to the pupil. If a place is not offered, parents will be

informed immediately and reasons given for this decision. 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 either 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 an 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, discussed at the next departmental teachers' meeting and a decision reached, which is ratified at SLT. This may result either in withdrawal of the child's place at Elmfield, an extension of the probation period, or full acceptance by the School. Parents will be informed in writing of the school's decision. If a permanent place is not offered, parents will be told the reasons for this decision.
10. Withdrawal of a child by the parents after full acceptance is subject to one full term's notice to the school, or a full term's fees in lieu of notice.
11. 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 refer to the school's Concerns and Complaints Policy.

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 five days at Elmfield (or longer if deemed appropriate) will be considered a trial, as per point 5 above. This will be followed by an interview as described in point 6 above. It is important to note that if difficulties of any kind have arisen during the trial period, the child/ren may not be able to remain at Elmfield.

Points 7 – 11 apply equally to families applying from overseas.

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.