



# FARNEY CLOSE SCHOOL

## Admission Policy

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## **Who refers young people to Farney Close?**

All young people referred to the school must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which was previously "a Statement of Special Educational Needs". This means that they are usually referred by Local Authorities, though other agencies may be involved, such as Social Services or the Health Authority. The school currently works with over 30 different Local Authorities throughout the south of England.

## **Who does the school cater for?**

The school accepts referrals without discrimination. Most of our work is with pupils who have an EHCP for social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH), although many of the pupils have other diagnosis such as mild/moderate Autism, e.g. Asperger's Syndrome, Tourette's Syndrome or Pervasive Developmental Disorder. The school also works with pupils who experience Moderate Learning Difficulties, Speech and Language Difficulties, and Dyslexia.

As the range of diagnosis is increasing, we are happy to look at any referral that may have a different diagnosis, but which has some form of social, emotional, behavioural or learning impact on the young person.

## **What's the first thing that happens when a referral is made?**

The Principal, Deputy Head, Head of Care or delegated person will read the referral information to see if we can meet the needs of the young person and support the EHCP. We will then contact other parties involved with the young person who might be able to give further information such as previous school, social workers, support workers, etc. Once all the information has been gathered we will decide whether we feel that it is likely that we can meet their needs.

## **What happens next?**

We will contact the referring authority to ask for permission to visit the young person's home and meet them and their parent/carers. The visit will be made by the Principal, Deputy Head, the Head of Care or a Senior Residential Social Worker. In some cases, they may be accompanied by another member of the residential team.

The visit allows the manager to talk to the young person about what the school is like and what it has to offer. It also gives them the opportunity to ask any questions they might have and to get an idea about the young person's feelings towards their education, future hopes and ambitions.

If the home visit supports the feeling that the school can meet the young person's needs, we will arrange an interview date. The young person and their parent/carers will be expected to attend the interview, though anyone else who is involved may attend too.

### **What happens during the visit to the school?**

The interview will probably take about an hour and will normally be hosted by the person who made the home visit. A young person of the same gender will show the interviewee around, while the adults will view the school with a member of the Residential Care Staff. This allows all the visitors to ask any questions they might have and to get a picture of what life is like at Farney Close.

After the walk around, if places are available and if we feel that we can meet the pupil's needs, we will offer a place at Farney Close. The parents/carers and young people are then asked to go home, discuss their thoughts and decide if they want to accept the place. The parents/carers will also be given a New Pupil Information Pack, which gives them extra information about the school and what the young person will need to bring if they decide to join.

At the interview we will make it clear that it's up to the young person to make the final decision as to whether they want to attend or not.

We won't accept a decision at the time of the visit, because we feel that families and carers need time to discuss the offer away from the school and to read the additional information they have been given.

No one is forced to attend Farney Close. We believe a young person's decision to attend is the first step in taking responsibility for making a change in their life, and in accepting the help and guidance of our staff.

### **What if the young person is not offered a place at the interview?**

Sometimes, the person dealing with the referral may need to discuss issues that may have arisen during the interview with another Manager or other relevant people, before making a placement offer. All of this will be explained to the young person and their parent/carer at the time, but we expect any delays to be short and to pass our decision onto all parties quickly.

If a place is offered under circumstances where there is some concern, there may be a specified trial period. Throughout that period, we will monitor the young person on the areas of concern and stay in regular contact with all parties. If all goes well, we will offer a permanent place. If the trial does not go

well, then we will work with the referring Authority and do our best to help find an alternative placement before the young person leaves.

### **If a young person accepts a place, is there a trial placement?**

Every young person that comes to Farney Close is placed on a term's trial. This usually passes without the need for a review. However, if the young person is unsettled we will call a meeting to look at the best way forward.

### **What happens next?**

After the school has formally offered a place and the young person decides that they would like to accept it, the young person must personally contact the school and speak to one of the Managers, (preferably the one that has been dealing with the referral) and let them know their decision. This decision represents their first opportunity at Farney Close to make a choice and bring about change.

### **How soon can they start?**

We can usually arrange admission one to two weeks after the young person accepts place. The Local Authority need time to get transport put in place and this can cause a delay. If parents or carers are happy to transport, even if just initially, we can move the start date forward.

### **What day will a young person be asked to start?**

Young people are usually admitted to the school on a Thursday morning. This means they have a shorter week and so are less likely to suffer from any potential homesickness. If all parties involved think it would be in the best interest of the young person to arrive on a different day we are happy to be as flexible as necessary.

### **What time is it best to arrive?**

We ask new pupils and their parents/carers to arrive at 10am. On arrival, pupils will go to their house and settle into their room and organise their uniform etc.

### **Who should bring the young person on their first day?**

It's important that the young person's parent/carer comes with them on their first day and stays to help them settle in. Parent/carers will need to allow at least an hour for this.

### **Why can't pupils come alone?**

We want parents/carers to see the young person's bedroom and meet the House Unit and staff who will be caring for their child. The designated Linkworker will also be there to greet the young person where possible.

A member of staff will also be there to make sure that the parent/carer and young person have correctly completed the permission forms and medical forms that were sent out before admission.

### **What do pupils need to bring with them?**

Our "New pupils' booklet for parents/carers" explains what a young person needs to bring to school and what must be kept at home.

Farney Close will not be held responsible for any electrical goods, jewellery, money or other personal items, brought to the school by young people unless they have been handed into staff and have been placed under lock and key.

Parents /carers will need to bring the permission forms and medical forms with them on the first day if they have completed them.

### **What other support is offered to new pupils?**

During the first two days, the young person will meet with their Linkworker and go through the school's "New Pupil Care Plan". This is a standard care plan that all new pupils are given to help them settle in to the school.

The Linkworker will also go through the "New Pupil Pack". This is a child-friendly booklet that explains everyday life at the school, e.g. class groups, Linkworker's name, expectations on the house and in the classroom, and the House itself etc.

### **What's the role of the Linkworker?**

The Linkworker is a point of reference for both the young person and their parent/carer, as is the Manager or Senior RSCW, who leads the admission process. Though all our staff are there to help, it's these people who will offer support, guidance, and information, and will stay in contact with young people and their parent/carers throughout the pupil's placement at Farney Close.

*Admissions Procedure Doc: version 2*