



Admissions Policy

1. Introduction

Gretton School is an independent specialist provision for children and young people who have been diagnosed with autism spectrum condition (ASC) as their main presenting need and meet the criteria listed below. The school offers co-educational, day and weekly boarding placements for students aged 5-19, currently with a provision to admit up to 124 students. Gretton School is part of a wider group of specialist schools operated by Cavendish Education for children and young people with a range of special educational needs and disabilities, including social and communication disorders and Specific Learning Difficulties.

Student class sizes are managed to ensure small groups (generally no more than 6-7 students) per class, which provides students with an appropriate peer group, according to key stage and ability levels. Where possible, placements will commence at the beginning of an academic term, although consideration will be given to individual circumstances. Where appropriate a gradual transition will be planned, involving multi-agency liaison and school visits.

As a registered independent school (not listed by the Secretary of State under Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014), those with parental responsibility and the young person concerned may request that Gretton School be named in the young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and the local authority will consider this request. However, the local authority is not under a specific duty to secure a place, and nor is Gretton School under a (section 43) duty to admit a particular student.¹ However, Gretton School follows the spirit of the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2015, and Admissions Code (December 2014) when considering placements.

2. Criteria for admission

Places are usually offered for the start of September. However, Gretton School appreciates that students may be out of education for a variety of reasons, when it is important for them to return to full time education. Therefore, Gretton School does take admissions at other times of the year, subject to the Head Teacher's discretion. All referrals are considered on an individual basis. Where students meet the eligibility criteria, a place will only not be offered if, after assessment, it is considered that Gretton School would not have suitable provision to meet the student's needs.

¹ Education and Skills Funding Agency (4th May 2018). *Guide for independent special institutions on applying for inclusion on the Secretary of State approved list*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-to-be-on-the-approved-list-of-independent-special-institutions/a-guide-for-independent-special-institutions-on-applying-for-inclusion-on-the-secretary-of-state-approved-list>



2.1 Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria for students seeking a placement, before a referral will be taken forward, include:

- Gretton School having space in an appropriate class/peer group. Gretton School does not hold a waiting list, as it is felt this may hinder the process of students being placed at another suitable provision, and potentially remaining out of education;
- the student having a diagnosis of autism. Due to the variation in diagnostic terminology, students may be diagnosed with an autism spectrum condition (ASC), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), or Asperger Syndrome;
- the student must have a proposed draft, or final, Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- the student being of average or above average cognitive ability (and, in addition, academically no more than 2 years below their chronological age expected levels²);
- that all those with parental responsibility are in support of the placement and in agreement with the strategies and ethos of the school. Continued support of those with parental responsibility and partnership with Gretton School is essential for the success and viability of any placement; and
- that the student may be private (including international) fee paying or local authority funded. Referral circumstances of private fee paying students will be at the Head Teacher's discretion.

2.2 Assessment of whether Gretton School is a suitable provision for the student

All referrals are considered on an individual basis and Gretton School will only decide *not* to offer a place, to a student that meets the eligibility criteria, if:

- (a) it considers Gretton School to be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs of the student;
- (b) and/or that the placement would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for others, and/or the efficient use of resources.³

Where an application for boarding has been made, there will a separate assessment to determine whether the student's needs can be met by the boarding provision and that the boarding environment is suitable for the student.

² It should be noted that Gretton School is an independent and selective school, and so may select students based on 'general or special ability or aptitude' in accordance with Schedule 11, Paragraph 8 of the Equality Act 2010.

³ This follows the spirit, and reflects the wording of, section 39(4) of the Children and Families Act 2014



The Equality Act 2010 applies to all schools and school admissions, and Gretton School does not discriminate on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Gretton School will take reasonable steps to avoid the substantial disadvantage to a student with disability under the Equality Act 2010. It will use its best endeavours to make reasonable adjustments, where possible, to ensure equality of outcomes.

Gretton School provides a broad and balanced curriculum of education for all of its students, and the national curriculum is an important element of this. Drawing on the Statutory Inclusion Statement (2000) Gretton School follows the three guiding principles by 'setting suitable learning challenges; responding to pupils' diverse learning needs'; and 'overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils'. Admissions into Key stage 4 and 5 will also take into account current programmes of study, to ensure the effective delivery of accredited qualifications which relate to desired destinations and outcomes.

There may be circumstances where the assessment process indicates that a student will require a higher level of support and resources to meet their additional complex needs. On these occasions Gretton School would require complex needs funding in addition to the standard school fee.

3. Admissions Procedure

Gretton School's admission procedure has five stages: enquiry; application; assessment; and (if applicable) offer & transition stages. These stages are outlined below.

3.1 Enquiry Stage

- Gretton School strongly encourages those with parental responsibility to visit the school prior to applying for a place at Gretton School.
- Those with parental responsibility or the local authority are able to contact the Marketing & Referrals Administrator by:
 - Email: admissions@grettonschool.com
 - Website: <http://grettonschool.com/admissions/>
 - Telephone: 01223 277438

They may request a copy of the school prospectus, discuss the school provision and/or enquire about the admission procedure.

- Appointments to visit the school are available on request, providing an opportunity to tour the school and meet with various staff members.



3.2. Application Stage

- Applications for student placement can be made by parents or carers with parental responsibility directly, or by contacting the local authority, and sending Gretton School the student's final or draft EHCP, in addition to the appendices (supporting documentation) referred to in Section K of the EHCP.
- Following a letter of consultation and receipt of paperwork from the local authority, the Assessment Team will review the documentation and, where possible, respond to the local authority within 15 working days to:
 - confirm receipt of documents;
 - request further information from the local authority, if required;
 - send parent or carer questionnaires and school questionnaires to provide further current information on the student's needs and to support their assessment;
 - confirm in principle that Gretton School may be able to meet the needs of the student and to arrange further assessment; or
 - advise that Gretton School are unable to meet the needs of the student at this time.

3.3 Assessment Stage

- Where Gretton School may be able to meet the needs of the student in principle, an assessment will be arranged. Assessments vary depending on timescales, availability and the student's needs and may involve:
 - attending Gretton School, for approximately half a day;
 - visiting the student's home; and/or
 - visiting their current education provision.
- Following assessment Gretton School will notify those with parental responsibility and the local authority that Gretton School is either:
 - offering a day and/or boarding place, and will prepare a report outlining the offer;
 - unable to meet the student's need at this current time, and will prepare a report outlining reasons why;
 - recommending a further assessment visit, to explore other aspects of the placement (such as exploring social and educational compatibility with another class group);
 - seeking further clarification from professionals as to suitability of placement (this might include an Educational Psychology assessment);



- An assessment report will be sent to those with parental responsibility and the local authority within 10 working days of the final assessment, outlining Gretton School's decision regarding placement. Any offer letter will include details of fees, support level, proposed amendments to the EHCP and a start date.
- It should be noted that Gretton School is unable to reconsider applications made for placement within 12 months of an assessment decision declining to make an offer.

Typical Assessment Visit

Where students are invited to Gretton School for an assessment visit, this may include, but not be limited to, the student having:

- a tour of the school;
- a meeting with a member of the senior leadership team;
- an educational assessment;
- a Theory of Mind social story;
- a classroom observation; and, where applicable
- a boarding assessment; where those with parental responsibility will be invited to meet with the Assistant Head of Boarding to discuss their child's boarding needs.

Discussion will take place with those with parental responsibility prior to an assessment visit, to discuss how best to prepare the student for the assessment. Where appropriate a schedule and social story will be sent to help in this preparation.

3.4 Offer (if applicable)

- Where an offer is made, it will be held open for a period of 6 months from the date of the offer letter, in which time the local authority should notify Gretton School of its acceptance or decline of the offer.
- Where the local authority declines an offer, and those with parental responsibility choose to appeal the local authority decision not to support placement, the offer will be held open until the outcome of the tribunal has been determined. Gretton School will comply with assessments and visits as required by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Tribunal (SENDIST).

3.5 Transition (if applicable)

- Where the local authority confirm acceptance of an offer, the school will contact those with parental responsibility and the current school (if applicable), to commence transition planning and an Individual Placement Agreement (IPA) will be issued. An IPA is the



agreement between a school and local authority (or private fee payer), that sets out the terms and conditions of the student's placement at Gretton School.

- A start for the student will be agreed, and the IPA must be signed by the local authority (or fee payer) and received by Gretton School at least 2 weeks before placement starts. A student will only be able to commence their placement at Gretton School once the IPA is finalised.
- Gretton School will liaise with those with parental responsibility, and the local authority to devise a Transition Plan for the student, which may include:
 - visit days to Gretton School before the student is on roll;
 - a part-time timetable and schedule for gradually increasing attendance;
 - aims for the student's transition including individual strategies relating to each student and their autism needs.
- Gretton School will send a welcome pack to those with parental responsibility, including information about the school, consent forms and student information forms, including 'My Profile' documentation.
- Previous school files and other relevant professional reports will be requested from the local authority, including safeguarding records.
- The Pastoral Manager will implement therapy support as outlined in the Statement / EHC plan and recommendations from the assessment report.
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) will be sent to those with parental responsibility within three weeks of admission and will be reviewed on a termly basis.
- Gradual transition plans will be reviewed regularly with an aim to move towards full-time attendance as soon as is appropriate.

4. Distance from School

Gretton School note government-issued guidance that the travel distance from home to school as a general rule should not exceed 45 minutes for primary and 75 minutes for secondary students.⁴ Gretton School appreciates that due to the limited nature of SEN provision that longer journey times may be unavoidable, and so will not necessarily preclude a referral. Also, journey times may be longer for boarding placements, as travel will only be at the start and end of each school week.

⁴ Department of Education (2014). *New home to school travel and transport guidance*. Retrieved from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/295189/Home_to_School_Transport_Consultation_Document.pdf

Appendix I: Admissions Flowchart



