



Admissions Policy

FIRWOOD SCHOOL

Written and reviewed on behalf of Woodbridge Trust
Reviewed March 2025

Introduction

The purpose of this policy document is to establish an acceptable framework for the admission of pupils which will:

- ◆ Accommodate the statutory duties of the Local Authority in ensuring special educational provision is in place to meet the needs of secondary aged pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties(PMLD);
- ◆ Enable the school to provide a structured environment which will maximise the effectiveness of the educational and social opportunities provided by them in order to meet the individual needs of each pupil;
- ◆ Contribute to the development of the Local Authority's overall provision of education for pupils with Cognition and Learning Needs within the over-arching policy of inclusion.

Role of the School

The co-located school has a capacity for up to 155 pupils. It caters for pupils aged 11 to 19 (secondary and post-16) who have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. However, pupils may also have a range of other complicating medical, behavioural or sensory difficulties.

School Values and Aims:

At Firwood School our mission statement is;

'Learning Without Limits'

Community

We aim to:

1. Strive to develop valued roles for our pupils in the Bolton community.
2. Work closely with parents, carers and other professionals to maximise learning opportunities.
3. Develop partnerships with community groups or members that help our pupils.
4. Involve other schools and the wider educational establishment in learning at Firwood, including both sharing our expertise and learning from them.

Achievement

We aim to:

1. Personalise pupil's learning experience so it is motivating, engaging and matched to each individual's needs, aspirations and learning style.
2. Use external expertise and networks to keep up to date with new developments that help our pupils learn and improve.
3. Expect a high level of achievement from all pupils and record, analyse and act upon our student progress information.
4. Employ, develop and retain highly skilled and enthusiastic staff, who are accountable for their work and the achievements of Firwood pupils.
5. Capitalise on the use of ICT to help pupils learn and contribute to the school and wider community.

Respect

We aim to:

1. Ensure pupils have a strong voice that is listened to and acted upon, in school decision making.
2. Create wide opportunities for inclusive experiences, both widening our pupils learning and contributing towards them being understood and valued in the community.
3. Ensure we have comprehensive improvement plans based on our pupils' need.

Enjoyment

We aim to:

1. Ensure learning experiences are fun and provide many opportunities for success.
2. Ensure relationships are based upon a high level of respect for all our pupils and the wider school community.
3. Ensure positive behaviour and effort is frequently rewarded.

Admission Criteria

Pupils referred for admission to Firwood School should typically have:

- ◆ Have an Education, Health & Care Plan which identifies severe or profound learning difficulties except in rare unusual situations (e.g. where an assessment place is required when new to our country / locality)
- ◆ In addition to severe learning needs, may also have significant difficulties such as physical difficulties, sensory impairment, and/or a severe medical condition;

- ◆ The pupil's general cognitive ability will normally be below 50;
- ◆ Be achieving less than age related expectations in most curriculum areas on entry;
- ◆ The pupil's learning needs will be best met through the delivery of a developmental / highly personalised / sensory curriculum;
- ◆ The pupil will require teaching of self-help, independence, and social skills through a life skills / skills for life programme;
- ◆ The pupils will require a high level of support for their learning needs; some will also need a high level of support for their personal care.

Admission Procedures

In order that parents and pupils may be better informed in exercising their right to express a preference, non-prejudiced visits may be made to the school by arrangement with the Headteacher at a mutually convenient time.

- ◆ Admissions to Firwood School are agreed through an Admission Panel made up of the following personnel:
 - Headteacher, Firwood School
 - Manager, Inclusion & Statutory Assessment Service
 - ISA Officer for Firwood School
 - Educational Psychologist for Firwood School
- ◆ The Admission Panel meetings is held in the Autumn Term of the year prior to admission. However, emergency panel meetings can be facilitated as and when required.
- ◆ Admissions for pupils who transfer into the authority throughout the year will be considered by the Inclusion & Statutory Assessment (ISA) Service in conjunction with the Head of school / Exec Head Teacher.
- ◆ The Panel meetings are chaired by the ISA Officer.
- ◆ Pupils' papers are circulated to all panel members at least two weeks prior to the Panel meeting. There should be comprehensive documentation to enable the panel to come to a view on placement. Papers should include the most current Education Health & Care Plan

and last annual review documents, plus any more recent and relevant reports/information.

- ◆ A decision on placement will be made by the panel members. When panel members are unable to reach a unanimous decision, the final decision will rest with the Local Authority representative.
- ◆ Following the Panel meeting the ISA Officer for Firwood School will provide feedback to the relevant ISA Officer for each individual pupil.
- ◆ The ISA Officer will inform parents and the current school of the outcome of the Panel meeting and where placement has been agreed liaise with the Head of School or member of the Senior Leadership Team to arrange for parents and the pupil to attend for a visit, if required.
- ◆ It is essential that transition planning is in place, through liaison with the pupil's present educational establishment and support services, to ensure a positive transition to Firwood School.
- ◆ For pupils admitted outside the normal transfer times the Head of School will offer an admission date following agreement of a place by the Local Authority and a visit to the school by the parents and pupil. Firwood School will then inform the ISA Officer for the pupil who will make the necessary transport arrangements.
- ◆ ISA Officer to issue the amended EHCp, in accordance with SEN legislation, naming Firwood School.
- ◆ If a pupil is not successful in gaining a place at Firwood School, parents are able to appeal and should contact the ISA Officer in the SEN Department (01204 332121) for further information on the procedures for this.

Children Looked After

The school is required to accept pupils who are classed as 'Looked After' if they meet the requirements for attending Firwood School, even if the school is deemed full.