

# Laleham Gap School – LGS Residential Admissions and Leaving Policy

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**Kent County Council**

**Education Learning and Skills Directorate**



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Owner: Head of Care

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# Laleham Gap School – LGS Admissions and Leaving Policy

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## **1. Admissions Process**

Kent County Council are responsible for arranging secondary school placements for children with statements and the school chosen will be named within this statement. They will consider the school's views on whether the child's needs can be met and will take into account the preference of parent/carers. To enable parents/carers to decide their preference, they will have the opportunity to visit the Laleham Gap School when their child is midway through primary school, this will include visiting the residential and meeting with the Head of Care if it is felt that a residential placement may be needed to support their child's educational attainment.

If the school is their preference they will then make this known to Kent County Council when choosing their options. Relevant background information, including the child's statement, will be forwarded to the school for the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to consider whether the school can effectively meet the needs of their child. Following this, a member/s of the SLT will then attend a County Admissions Panel to discuss the suitability of the school. If decided that the school may be appropriate, the child will then be visited by a member/s of the SLT at their school or if the child is out of school, their home.

Further Guidance on Kent County Council's Admission Process can be found on the following website:

[http://www.kent.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning/special\\_additional\\_education/special\\_education\\_al\\_needs/secondary\\_schools\\_and\\_sen.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/special_additional_education/special_education_al_needs/secondary_schools_and_sen.aspx)

## **2. Gathering of Relevant Information and Transition Support**

Information gathering will commence from the start of the admissions process. Once confirmation of a placement within residential has been sent by County to the parent/carer and the school are notified, admissions forms are then sent out, these will include relevant consent forms.

Children are invited with their parents to visit the school prior to admission and are shown around by children of their own gender and near to their own age. Those who are boarding will have the chance to visit the residential accommodation.

Prior to admission, thought will be given to which floor (Hippogriff or Centaur) they will be placed on and what their room may be. This will be dependent on both availability and how their needs will best be met, taking into account factors such as group dynamics, staff skills in relation to their interests and consideration to minimising any risk factors.

Children are able to visit before admission to see which classroom they will be in and if they are boarding, which bedroom they may be in. They will have the opportunity to meet with staff and other new children.

These visits (or telephone calls if they have been unable to make the visit) give the opportunity to gather any other important background information, for the children to familiarise themselves with the environment and for the staff to get to know them. The School Nurse will learn of their medical history and any current medication. The children will also be given a guide about the residential service which they can take home with them. This will enable parents to go through this with them in their own time.

Any parent/carer and/or child, who wish to visit the residential in addition to or outside of these times, will be more than welcome to do this and can contact the Head of Care to arrange this.

From the gathered information, background information is formulated which all relevant school and residential staff will be able to read prior to their admission and which will be placed on their care file.

For children who are admitted in emergency, preferably an admissions meeting will take place on or before the day of their arrival where relevant information for the residential can be gathered. If this is not possible then a telephone consultation will take place with parents/carers/or those with parental responsibility, to ensure this information is received.

For children who have major anxieties around detachment, through agreement with parents/carers, plans can be implemented for a stepping stone approach with a shorter amount of overnight stays initially, leading up to them staying overnight from Monday to Thursday. Whilst this may be the plan, if things go better than they expected and the child wishes to stay, through consultation with parents this can be agreed.

### **3. Admission Day**

On the day of admission senior children will escort new children to their form tutor who will take responsibility for ensuring they learn the routines and lay out of the school, including where to go if they are anxious or lost. New boarders will go first to the residence with their parents/carers to unpack some of their belongings before joining their classmates. They will be greeted by their keyworker.

At the end of the school day the Head of Care and/or the child's keyworker will greet the boarders and show them to their residence. They will support them to settle in, talk through any relevant information and go through rules and boundaries. They will inform them of their role in supporting them but also make it known that they can seek support from any member of staff, of either gender, regarding any personal, academic or welfare concerns. They will be reminded of the different people/organisations they can speak to if they are unhappy about something. This will also be in their handbook in which they can take further notes if they wish.

Children will be encouraged to hand in large sums of money for safe-keeping and will sign their money in and out on their individual accounts sheets.

Children will be able to call their parents/carers in the evening to let them know how their day has been. Parents/carers are free to call to see how things are going and will also be welcome to visit and if they wish, to take their children out for tea or even home overnight. To minimise disruption of their routine and to support planning of their care, parents are requested to give notice of this to residential staff before 3.00pm of the day of their visit. During the day this can be done by speaking to the office, who will pass on the information to the residential team. Children who are being returned would be expected to be returned by 8.30pm to enable them to be settled to bed.

At the end of the evening before bedtime, children will have the opportunity to talk to a member of staff about how their day has been and talk through any worries or ask any questions.

On the first day of term of the new academic year, only Year 7 and Year 11 pupils attend school. This enables increased staff support for the new admissions.

#### **4. Reviewing Admission**

An Induction Evening is held for the parents and families of new children after approximately six weeks so that they can see how they are settling in, understand more of the school provision and discuss further the kind of help and support that the children may need. Information is also provided about the Annual Reviews and Parent Consultation Evenings with Staff, as well as any forthcoming Social Events.

All parent/carers of children who reside will have the opportunity to meet with the Head of Care and if they wish, to visit the residence to speak to staff in the evening. By this point a draft individual placement plan will have been completed and the parents will have the opportunity to input into this. Prior to this the targets within the statement will give the staff guidance around care. This will provide the general outline of a more specific final placement plan.

If there are any significant concerns for the welfare of the child within the six weeks, then all those with significant involvement will be called for an emergency review meeting to discuss these and agree with what action will need to take place. This will be arranged by the school in correspondence with those with parental responsibility.

In an emergency admission a review will be initiated as soon as possible but not longer than four school weeks after admission to discuss the suitability of the placement. This will involve (where appropriate) the school, the placing authority, the parents/carers or those with parental responsibility, those with significant involvement such as social services or health professionals and where possible, the child.

#### **5. Leaving Process and Transition Support**

During their school life at Laleham Gap, children are encouraged in a range of independent life skills, work experience programmes and through their curriculum. Guidance for children who are residing is provided by both the school and residential in partnership with parents and other professionals.

Where a child is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, any Pathway or other plan will be linked into the placement plan and life skills programme prior to them leaving, therefore supporting a smooth and supportive transition.

Annual reviews will take place midway through Year 11 and this will focus on planning and supporting the transition for post Laleham Gap, detailing who will be responsible for providing what support. Children and parents/carers will attend and for children in residence, a representative from the residential staff team. Where a likely further education establishment has been identified, representatives from here will also attend where possible. This will be chaired by the school SENCO. The Education Health and Care Plan will be integral to supporting the child with their transition.

Any children transferring to another school are prepared for the transition and are given appropriate information and guidance to assist them. All necessary records will be passed on to the new school and a receipt obtained.

Keyworkers will be responsible for maintaining pictures and memorabilia for their key child to ensure that when they leave, they have something tangible to remember their positive experiences and time at Laleham Gap.

## **6. Contact Post leaving**

The residential team recognise the huge step it is for young people leaving their care at Laleham Gap. Due to the amount of time spent within the school, including the residential environment, they would have built very close, secure relationships with staff and sense of belonging to the school. The safety, consistency and high level of support which has been provided through a significant time in their life may make it difficult for them to emotionally detach. The preparation given will support this but young people are also able to visit for open events such as Sports Day. Any further visits by former pupils outside of this should be requested and cleared by the SLT. All former residents will require the same level of monitoring as regular visitors and should not be left unsupervised.

Whilst children will have built strong attachments, part of supporting their development, is to support them to move on and recognise that this is a part of life. With the above measures being taken, children should be prepared in a supportive way for this detachment.

For the interests of safeguarding children and protecting staff, all correspondence with former pupils should be sent and received through Laleham Gap in a professional capacity. Telephone calls should also be logged in the residential log books.

If there is a specific need to further support detachment, then this should clearly be recorded in the EHC Plan and authorised by the SLT. Risk assessment and appropriate safeguarding measures should be implemented.

Staff using social networking must not communicate with former pupils via this, until the former pupil is at least twenty one years of age. Failure to adhere to this could result in disciplinary action being taken. After this staff are still strongly advised against this to ensure their own safety.

Any staff who leave the school's employment should continue to adhere to the above policy. As current or former social care/teaching employees, they are still responsible for maintaining their safety and observing professional codes of practice.

To ensure the welfare of children and employees, any pupils or parents of pupils already known to staff personally, should be declared to the SLT and a record made on their file.

## **7. Equality Impact Assessment**

This policy has been assessed with regards to its relevance to race and diversity equality. As a result of this assessment, this policy has been graded as having a medium potential impact.