



## **Admissions Policy**

**Updated August 2019**

# Admissions Policy

## Aims of policy

This policy is in place to ensure a fair, accessible and clear admissions process is available to anyone who wishes for their child to attend Social Arts for Education (SAFE). The policy is not one that mirrors the national admissions procedure (although is guided by the School Admissions Code 2014) and is therefore imperative that anyone wanting to apply for a place, reads this policy thoroughly before applying.

## Admission Numbers

Social Arts for Education (SAFE) has the capacity to take 25 students.

## Pupil Profile

SAFE is a provision that aids the recovery of students who have continually suffered from bullying and associated psychological problems. A typical student will have SEMH (social, emotional and mental health needs), displayed through passive and anxious behaviour. **We are not a suitable provision for students with SEMH who readily or regularly display any forms of aggression.**

A vast majority of our students also have mild to moderate difficulties in communication and social interaction which can affect their ability to make and/or sustain friends. Although social anxiety can be an effect of continual bullying, it can also be the symptom of another condition, for example, an autism spectrum condition. Because of this, we teach using the SPELL framework, which emphasises the need for structure, positive expectations, empathy, low-stimuli environments and links with families and agencies which was originally created to aid autistic learners.

Although there are some exceptions, we generally expect students to stay at SAFE, once admitted, for the duration of their secondary education. We do not usually plan for transitions mid primary or secondary education.

## Referrals

SAFE take private referrals, self-referrals and also referrals from schools and agencies, including local authorities. Our admission criteria are the same, whether a person is referred privately or not.

## Charity Objectives - Priority of Places Given

On the Charity Commission's website,

<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/CharityWithoutPartB.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1150485&SubsidiaryNumber=0> you can find SAFE's charity objectives and more but for clarification and for the purpose of this document, they are as follows:

TO ADVANCE EDUCATION FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT OF CHILDREN AGED 11 TO 18 YEARS OF AGE WHO ARE AUTISTIC OR WHO HAVE BEEN BULLIED BY PROVIDING SPECIALIST TEACHING AND ADAPTED CURRICULUM AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT TAILORED TO MEET EACH INDIVIDUAL'S NEEDS.

With this in mind, SAFE have decided upon a list of criteria that potential students' places are prioritised upon. The list is as follows:

- 1. Person having suffered from continual bullying**
- 2. Having a committed desire to learning (with evidence of this)**
- 3. Person having social differences (including but not exhaustively autism spectrum conditions) that may make them a target for bullying/isolation**
- 4. Person having school/peer-related anxiety or phobias**
- 5. Person not being able to access social or group learning environments due to any of the above**
- 6. Person having medical or social needs that require flexischooling**

## Enquiries/Referrals

Each enquiry or referral will be followed with a request to fill out a suitability form to decipher whether or not SAFE can meet the young person's needs and if current students' education will be negatively affected by the placement. This online form can be found here <http://safeschoolbexley.co.uk/suitability-assessment/>

SAFE's admission team, SLT and in some cases board of trustees, will discuss each potential student to decide whether needs can be met, based upon the Code of Practice:

- Special Educational Needs – can the school meet the child's needs?
- Resources – do we have the resources needed to meet this child's needs or will the placement be an inefficient use of resources?
- Current pupils – would the placement be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children with whom the child will be educated?

Once an application or referral has been received, the documentation is received by the Admissions Facilitator and discussed during the weekly admissions meetings.

## **Unsuccessful Enquiries/Referrals**

If the young person does not meet the pupil profile or there are no places available, an email will be sent to the referrer to inform them that the referral is not going to be followed up, giving reasons based upon the Code of Practice. We believe that signposting at this stage is helpful and will give the referrer as much advice as to where to go next as possible.

## **Successful Enquiries/Referrals - Admissions Process**

If SAFE feel that they are able to meet the young person's needs and that the child fits the pupil profile, the Admissions Facilitator will begin the admissions process by following the steps outlined below.

### **Step 1: Visit**

The child, along with their parent or carer, will visit SAFE either when the premises is in operation or when is free of other students and teachers (depending on child). Admissions staff will identify in further detail if SAFE is able to meet the child's needs and decipher if the placement would impact current students' education. SAFE may at this point signpost applicants to more suitable provisions or agencies if we feel our provision is not suitable. If SAFE considers the placement suitable at this point, the parent/carer or referrer is given the relevant documents to read and sign.

### **Step 2: Admin Fee**

An admin fee of £150 is to be paid to secure a child's place at SAFE. Once the payment is received, the place is held for three weeks from that date. The admin fee covers: administrative work, outreach teachers, taster sessions and transition planning.

### **Step 3: Documents and Character References**

From the date we receive the admin fee, parents/carers or referrers have three weeks to produce: ID for their child in the form of a passport or birth certificate, contact details for 2 referees from people that know the child from an educational setting and all documents given to the referrer from SAFE to be completed, signed and dated in all applicable areas.

### **Step 4: Outreach**

Depending on the child, SAFE will offer outreach session/s to visit the child at their house or neutral place (for example, a library) to start to build a relationship of trust and prepare the child for taster days at SAFE. This step may be bypassed if we are confident this is not needed (for example, we know the child).

### **Step 5: Taster Sessions**

Taster sessions can begin only after the first four steps have been fulfilled. Taster sessions will usually consist of three sessions and will help SAFE identify in more detail the new student's needs. It is at this stage where concerns are reported to parents/carers or referrers and discussions of what SAFE can or cannot offer the child are had. SAFE reserves the right to discontinue the admissions process at this point if they feel they are not a suitable provision and not offer a placement.

### **Step 6: Transitional Term**

A transition plan will be made shortly after (or throughout) the taster sessions are complete and if funding is secured, a place will be offered to the child. The gradient of the transition will depend on the child, current students, resources needed and funding limitations. After one term (or in some cases, two to six weeks where the limitation of funding and resources have a detrimental impact on current students' education), SAFE will request a Review of Placement Offer meeting with parent/carers and referrers (if applicable) to evaluate the success of the current placement offer.

It is at this point that SAFE reserves the right to set new offers, including funding agreements, for example, to reduce the timetable or introduce 1:1 support, should SAFE struggle to make the placement inclusive. This could be because students' needs have changed or they masked needs/behaviours within the taster sessions. All reviews after this will be best met at a child's annual review or Individual Care Plan (ICP) meeting (for students without EHCPs).

### **Parents are required to read our key policies, as listed below:**

Safeguarding and child protection, Complaints, Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy.

In the event that you have any issues reading these documents, please inform the head teacher or induction lead who can make arrangements to support parents and carers in accessing these documents.

All parents and carers are required to sign that they have read the above policies and are aware of processes and procedures followed by the school.

### **Our expectations of commitment**

In order to promote a cohesive student body, and to ensure places are filled effectively, we require families to commit to a minimum of 4 sessions weekly, with a vision to have their children stay with us until the end of their secondary education. We are not a transitional provision, however in extremely exceptional circumstances, we will consider students who require a shorter-term placement. We therefore strongly advise that **before** families pay the £150 admin fee, they consider whether this commitment is appropriate for them and their child, apprise themselves fully of the fees they will be liable for, and find out from us whether they will be eligible for a bursary. Bursary application forms may be obtained from the Admissions Facilitator.

### **Waiting lists**

SAFE will operate a waiting list where the school receives more applications for places than there are places available. The list will be maintained by admissions staff and they will contact those on the list, either on a yearly basis to check whether or not applicants would still like to be on the list or at any point if spaces become available.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely by a 'first-come-first-served' basis. The waiting list will be reordered whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list. All applicants on the list will have been through step one of the admissions procedure and will still have to complete the remaining steps to be offered a place.

## **Appeals**

All applicants refused a place have a right of appeal to the governing body. Such applicants should follow the Complaints Procedure which can be given upon request or found on our website under Policies.

## **Home Educated or Flexi-Schooled Students**

Although SAFE are pleased to offer flexi-schooling as and when it can be offered (based on suitability of child and funding limitations) it is important to note that SAFE adhere to all guidance that the government set regarding elective home education.

All families, including EHE families must be aware that Social Arts for Education is obliged to inform relevant local authorities of education choices of families that are home educating whilst flexi-schooling with us, both when they register and also when they off-roll.

## **Review**

This policy was last updated on 16th August 2019 and will be reviewed within one year of this date.

