

Referrals and Admission Information



An information sheet for families/
carers of new students or those going
through the referral process at
Options Higford.

Referral process

Our admissions manager, Rory Maguire, will support you through the process. There are two routes students can come through our referral process:

Local authority referral

If the local authority feel a new placement would be more suitable for a child then they may send us a selection of a young person's paperwork to review. This paperwork is sent to our central referral team. As a school, we will review this and decide whether we may be a potential good match for the young person. If this is the case they will offer a referral visit to site. We will also contact the previous school placement for further information regarding how the young person presents in an education setting.

Following this the senior leadership team will meet to review all of the information they have about the young person and will make a decision on whether we can offer a placement. This offer is then communicated to the local authority via the admissions manager.

Once an offer of placement has been made the local authority will take some time to review our offer and any other offers they may have for placements for a child. This can take some time to follow their internal processes and may also include going to panel to agree to the placement.

All placements are accepted on a 'first come, first serve' basis in line with when offers are accepted by local authorities.

Parental/carer request.

Sometimes parents feel a new placement would be more suitable for their child. If this is the case we can engage in a preliminary review of paperwork and assessment visit. If we feel we may be able to offer a placement the person who made the referral must request a formal consultation through their local authority SEND team. We would then follow the above process.

Following acceptance of a placement

Admission planning meeting

Once a placement has been accepted a member of our administration team will contact the parents/ carers and other relevant professionals in order to arrange an admission planning meeting.

During this meeting a number of key information is discussed including a start date, any support needed to ensure a positive transition, transport requirements and also further communication with parents/ carers.

Although we would like to be able to begin placements promptly there are some situations that lead to a slight wait. We stagger start dates for new students in order to ensure each individual receives the focus needed. There are, on occasions, times when we cannot offer any placements within the next term etc and we will always try to communicate this to the best of our knowledge during the referral process. The start date is also impacted by staff recruitment. All students at Higford have at least 1:1 staffing and so when a placement is accepted it can take some time to recruit a staff member and engage in the safer recruitment processes required. This time frame has a natural impact on start dates and we will always work with this in mind.

Transport

Options Higford do not provide student transport. Most student's transport is provided by the local authority although this will be decided by the local authority SEND and transport teams and will be discussed within the admission planning meeting. If this is the case parents/ carers are usually required to complete paperwork regarding this. The process of sourcing transport can also add additional time to an admission process.

Following acceptance of a placement contd.

Uniform

Higford provides a number of sets of uniform tops when a young person starts school. We provide school polo shirts (royal blue) and jumpers (navy blue) and ask that parents/ carers also provide appropriate bottoms. We do not stipulate that these are formal school wear, instead, would prefer options that promote independence, such as joggers with elastic waists, or those which a child is more comfortable in.

We also ask that students have in school:

- Spare clothing as we can sometimes get a bit messy in our learning!
- PE kit- black/ navy shorts or joggers and a white t-shirt.
- Outdoor waterproof clothing- waterproof trousers/ coat/ puddlesuit and wellies/ boots. All of our children take part in Forest School each week as well as utilising our amazing outdoor facilities on a regular basis in a wide range of weather.
- Labelled suncream and sun hat when appropriate.

Snack/ school dinners

All snacks and dinners are provided by the school as part of the placement as we know how important these experiences are for developing our students' communication and social skills. Our older students run our daily 'snack shack' for all of the students to access. Students can choose from toast, fruit or a cereal bar for snack as well as a selection of drinks.

We have an incredible team of kitchen staff who create a wide range of dinner options on a rolling menu. This is available on our website. Each day there is a meat/ halal/ vegetarian option as well as a salad bar and a selection of sandwiches. We can also cater for food allergies or restrictive diets on most occasions.

Admission paperwork

Parents/ carers will be sent a wide range of admission paperwork following an admission planning meeting. This needs to be returned to the school prior to the young person starting at Higford.

Key contacts

Rory Maguire- Admissions manager- Rory.maguire@ofgl.co.uk

Eloise Thrower- Pastoral Lead- Eloise.thrower@optionsautism.co.uk

Richard Winzor- Head teacher- Richard.winzor@optionsautism.co.uk

Samantha Denniss- Deputy Headteacher- Samantha.denniss@optionsautism.co.uk

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