



Ackworth School

Admissions Policy Autism Resource

Introduction

1. This Policy has been authorised by the School Committee (Governing Body) of Ackworth School. It is addressed to prospective parents and students and to all members of the teaching and administration staff.

Ackworth School Policy Statement

2. The Autism Resource is a part of Ackworth School, which is a Quaker co-educational, independent boarding and day school for pupils from ages 2½ to 18 (or up to 25 if they are under an EHCP). The School has approximately 470 pupils, 120 of whom are Boarders. Deciding on the right school for your child is very important, and we believe that a personal visit is invaluable. We very much hope that you and your child will visit Ackworth School. We hold two Open Mornings, one in the Autumn term and one in the Spring term, which give a general introduction to the school. Details are published on our web site. We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their children at other times for a personal visit. Please contact, our Admissions Secretary, Rebecca Stephenson, on 01977 611401 or email on Admissions@ackworthschool.com to arrange a visit or Lynne Ward (01977 611401/Lynne.Ward@ackworthschool.com) for Autism Resource.

The Policy

3. Our aim for all pupils admitted to Ackworth is summarised thus:

‘Ackworth School's purpose is to create a happy and secure environment in which all pupils realise and develop their own special abilities in constant awareness of the needs and claims of others.’

4. The aims of this policy are:

- a. To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes. Ackworth is a School with the ethos of the Religious Society of Friends and is a selective school for pupils aged 2½-18. (in mainstream).

b. To identify and admit children who will benefit from the special educational provision of the Autism Resource and who will contribute to, and benefit from, the ethos and activities of our school community.

5. We welcome children from many different ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds. Human rights and freedoms are respected, but must be balanced by the lawful needs and rules of our school community and the rights and freedoms of others. All prospective pupils for admission will be treated equally irrespective of their, or their parents', race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, orientation, property, birth, gender re-assignment, pregnancy, maternity or other status.

6. We expect all of our pupils to attend a daily Meeting for Worship which is fundamental to our ethos. Pupils in Autism Resource have their own assembly which includes a period of silence, although reasonable adjustments can be made for individual pupils if necessary.

7. We welcome those with disabilities and will do all we can that is reasonable to ensure that all aspects of our Schools' educational experience are made accessible to children with disabilities. The nature of our buildings, which are historic and on several floors, currently places limitations on access. When a disability or special educational need is made known to us, we will consult with parents and make reasonable adjustments to our admissions procedure and arrangements.

The Entry Procedure to the Autism Resource

8. Admissions Policy Appendix: From 2017 (Review 2020)

Ackworth School accepts pupils with autism or autism conditions/presentations into its Autism Resource. These pupils will have a statement of needs and will be accepted if it is felt, after assessment and discussion with relevant parties, that the school is in a position to fulfil the objectives in the statement and able to meet the pupil's needs. If the requirements of the pupil develop or change, or if key information about pupil needs is unknown at entry, and the school is unable to meet these needs, this will be discussed at Annual Review and alternative placements sought. – *this is from our handbook and, I think, the SEN policy – is this relevant here?*

8. **RENUMBERING TO FOLLOW** Although there are no set criteria for admission in terms of behaviour, language or social or cognitive ability, the Autism Resource will admit any pupil whose needs the Head of Autism Resource and the Head of Ackworth School feel we are able to meet. Pupils who are able to benefit from our balanced and well rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the school may be referred by their own Local Authorities.

Summary of the Entry Procedure

9. We accept referrals and tender consultations from Local Authorities (LA).
10. We are able to give parents information regarding our assessment and admission process. We encourage parents to engage in a dialogue with their local authority and make a joint application.
11. Once a referral has been received from a parent and/or LA, the application will be read by the Head of the Autism Resource, (Lynne Ward) and discussed with the Deputy Head Pastoral (Guy Emmett). If we are not able to meet that pupil's needs (Appendix 1) or there are no places available, a letter will be sent to the parent and/or Local Authority to inform them that the referral is not going to be followed up.
12. If the referral is suitable for assessment, the parent/carer will be invited to visit the school, if they have not already done so.
13. The next step will usually be that the child is invited to attend the Autism Resource for a brief visit with a parent/carer/member of staff from current school.
14. The Head of the Autism Resource may arrange to visit the child at their existing school (or elsewhere if not in school) to carry out an initial assessment.
15. If the visit is successful, a further programme of visit or visits, normally without external support, will be arranged. These will be evaluated and a decision on suitability of placement made by the Head of the Autism Resource, Deputy Head Pastoral and Head of the School with the relevant Local Authority.
16. The assessment will typically consist of:
 - a. Discussions with parents and staff who have regular contact with and know the child well.
 - b. Observations in class and/or in the playground.
 - c. Discussions with and paperwork from involved professionals.
17. Once the initial assessment has been completed and all relevant information has been gathered, a brief initial assessment report will be compiled and a decision may be made, at this stage, as to whether the Autism Resource at Ackworth School will be an appropriate placement for the child that will meet his or her needs.

18. The decision will be made in line with the Code of Practice:
- a. Special Educational Needs – can the school meet the child’s needs?
 - b. Current pupils – would the placement be incompatible with the ongoing educational needs of the other children with whom the child will be educated?

19 Depending on the source of the referral, the LA and/or parent/carer will be notified in writing of the outcome of the assessment. The process is deemed to be complete when all information has been gathered.

20. If the Autism Resource at Ackworth School is able to meet the child’s special educational needs, an offer of a place; and a start date (which may include a period of transition) will be suggested to the Parent and/or the LA. When the parent and/or LA confirms that the offer of a place is going to be taken up and funding is in place, Ackworth School will send a letter confirming this to the LA and to the parents.

21. The parent is responsible for making transport arrangements with the LA and will inform the school accordingly.

22. Transition plans will be made with the LA, the current school placement and the parent/carer. Transitions are often difficult for children who have autism. It will be essential to consider mechanisms/strategies (e.g. phasing) that may make the process easier for the child.

Equal Opportunities

23. Equality is one of the Quaker testimonies. Therefore, our aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today’s world.

Ackworth School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate’s race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background.

Religious Beliefs

24. Ackworth School is a Quaker School, founded by the Society of Friends. Although Ackworth has very strong Christian roots, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we encourage applications from those of different faiths and those of no faith.

Disclosures

25. Parents must, as soon as possible, disclose any particular known or suspected circumstances relating to their child’s health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties.

School's Contractual Terms and Conditions

26. Contracts are usually with the pupils' Local Authorities.

Complaints

28. We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about our admissions process; but a copy of the School's complaint procedure can be found on the School website or a copy can be sent to you on request.

Appendix

For Consideration for Admission to the Autism Resource at Ackworth School:

- The child's needs should arise out of their diagnosis of autism or related conditions e.g. Sensory Integration Disorder.
- The child will have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), issued by their Local Authority.
- The Local Authority or the parent(s) will accept financial responsibility for the pupil's education at Ackworth School.
- The child will have the commitment and support of their parents/carers to the educational approaches used in the Autism Resource at Ackworth School.
- The Resource is able to meet the needs of the child according to their age, ability and aptitude.
- The child's attendance in the Resource is compatible with the provision of the education needed for the other children already being educated in the Resource.
- The attendance of the child in the Resource is compatible with the efficient use of school resources.
- Admissions are made on the basis of availability of placements, taking into account the above factors, plus a child's level of functioning, learning difficulties and age.
- Should the Autism Resource at Ackworth School be identified as an appropriate place for a specific child, a place within the Resource cannot be guaranteed unless full funding has been successfully secured.