SHERFIELD SCHOOL

Admissions Policy

October 2026 | 2026–27

Nursery to Sixth Form • Day and Boarding

PARENT INFORMATION

Admissions Policy

This policy applies to all pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Contents

1 Purpose and scope
2 Responsibilities and information for families
3 Equality and fair treatment
4 Special educational needs and disability
5 English as an additional language
6 Enquiry registration and visits
7 Assessment and school information
8 Waiting lists and oversubscription
9 Nursery and Reception admissions
10 Decisions, offers and acceptance
11 Boarding and international applicants
12 Safeguarding and induction
13 Registers and personal information
14 Review complaints and withdrawal
15 Related policies and review

Policy effective: October 2026 | Review: annually

1 Purpose and scope

Sherfield School welcomes children and families into a community that recognises individual needs, develops talents and prepares pupils for life. This policy explains how applications are considered fairly and how the school plans for each child's education, care and welfare. It applies to all applicants, including children in Nursery and Reception within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and applicants for day and boarding places.

Admission depends on an available place in the appropriate year group or setting, the relevant entry requirements and the school's ability to meet the child's needs after considering reasonable adjustments. Decisions are based on relevant evidence and the child's interests. Registration, a visit or a waiting-list position does not guarantee an offer.

2 Responsibilities and information for families

The Head oversees admissions decisions, with the Admissions Manager coordinating applications and relevant educational leaders advising on assessment and provision. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), the EYFS leader, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and boarding staff are involved where their expertise is needed. The proprietor, Sherfield School Ltd, is responsible for oversight of statutory compliance.

This policy is available to current and prospective parents on request and on the school website. Families are also given access to the relevant fees, Terms and Conditions, SEND and EAL provision, safeguarding arrangements and complaints information. Accessible formats and reasonable adjustments to visits and applications can be requested from Admissions.

3 Equality and fair treatment

The school complies with the Equality Act 2010 in its admissions arrangements, offer terms and treatment of applicants. It does not unlawfully discriminate, harass or victimise. Decisions must not be based on stereotypes about disability, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or pregnancy and maternity, or on assumptions arising from a parent's circumstances.

Age and educational stage inform appropriate placement. The school considers individual circumstances and lawful adjustments when applying entry criteria. Pupils are expected to participate in school life, with reasonable adjustments and any applicable statutory rights respected. A child is not refused admission simply because they have SEND or an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

4 Special educational needs and disability

Parents are asked to share known or suspected learning, developmental, disability and health needs as early as possible, together with relevant reports, support plans and any EHC plan. This enables the school to plan an accessible admissions process and consider provision. A diagnosis is not required before concerns or support needs can be discussed.

The Director of Student Services, in their role as SENCO, and relevant leaders consult parents and, where appropriate, the child and professionals. They consider the individual needs, proposed adjustments, auxiliary aids and services, available expertise, effectiveness, practicability, costs and resources, and relevant welfare and safety factors. Reasonableness is assessed individually; it is not limited to the school's existing normal staffing or facilities.

Adjustments may include accessible information, adapted visits, breaks, suitable assessment formats, additional time where appropriate or an alternative means of demonstrating ability. The school records what was considered, what will be provided and the reasons for any decision that proposed provision cannot reasonably meet a child's needs. Parents receive an explanation and information on requesting a review.

The school does not charge parents for adjustments it is legally required to make. An external provider or additional staffing does not automatically make provision chargeable. Any separately purchased service must be lawful, clearly distinguished from the school's duties and agreed in writing before costs are incurred.

The school maintains and reviews its Accessibility Plan to improve curriculum participation, the physical environment and access to information. Where an EHC plan is involved, it liaises with parents and the local authority about provision and responsibilities. Needs identified after admission are reviewed with the family; discovering SEND does not automatically result in withdrawal of a place.

5 English as an additional language

The school considers English proficiency separately from learning difficulties and takes account of previous education and home languages. Any language assessment must be appropriate to age and the proposed course. Admissions explains the available English as an additional language (EAL) support and any lawful separate charges before acceptance. EYFS staff work with parents to understand communication in the child's home language as well as English.

6 Enquiry registration and visits

Families may attend an open event or arrange a tour. Admissions explains the relevant entry point, available day or boarding provision, assessment arrangements, timetable and current fees. For Nursery, the available age group, sessions and hours are confirmed before registration.

To register, parents complete the registration form and pay the fee specified in the current published schedule. Its refund terms are explained before payment. Registration records the intended entry date and year group or setting; where no suitable vacancy exists, Admissions explains the waiting-list arrangements.

Registration and acceptance documentation identifies the people with parental responsibility and the contracting parties. Admissions normally seeks signatures from both parents where applicable, but considers sole parental responsibility, court orders and other family circumstances individually. A rigid requirement for two signatures must not prevent appropriate consideration of an application. Relevant legal advice is obtained where authority or consent is disputed.

7 Assessment and school information

Assessment for Year 1 and above is appropriate to the entry point and may include academic assessment, discussion with the child, a taster day and review of school reports and references. Admissions explains the arrangements in advance and agrees reasonable adjustments. Information from the previous setting is considered in context; missing records are followed up and do not automatically determine the outcome.

Discussions explore educational interests, learning and pastoral needs, and the support the school can offer. A parent's availability to provide support at home is not used as a proxy for a child's suitability. Assessment results are considered alongside other relevant evidence rather than used in isolation.

Nursery and Reception follow the EYFS arrangements in section 9. International assessments and interviews may be arranged remotely. Sixth Form applications are coordinated by Admissions with the Head of Sixth Form; course requirements and any examination-result conditions are explained in writing before acceptance.

8 Waiting lists and oversubscription

Where there are more eligible applicants than available places, Admissions will explain how places are allocated and whether a waiting list is operating. Any published priority criteria will be applied fairly and consistently, taking account of equality duties, each child's needs and the number of places available. A place on a waiting list does not guarantee an offer.

Families may share exceptional circumstances with Admissions. The Head of School will consider any such information fairly, with decisions recorded and explained where appropriate.

Capacity is assessed by year group, setting and boarding provision. No priority category permits statutory EYFS ratios, space requirements or safe accommodation capacity to be exceeded. Sibling discounts are governed by the current fee schedule and offer terms, separately from admissions priority.

9 Nursery and Reception admissions

EYFS entry arrangements focus on understanding each child and planning a safe, supportive start. Formal academic entrance testing is not used for Nursery or Reception. Parents meet relevant staff and are offered appropriate opportunities to learn about the setting. Age-appropriate observation and discussion inform planning for a child's transition, with reasonable adjustments where needed.

Before confirming attendance, the EYFS leader checks the relevant age group, session availability, qualified staffing, required staff-to-child ratios, suitable space and welfare arrangements. The child's start date and attendance pattern are confirmed with parents. Requests for a different Reception starting pattern or year-group placement are considered individually with the Head, taking account of development, SEND and compulsory school age.

Each child has a named key person. Parents are told who this is and how the key person supports the child and family. Settling-in arrangements reflect the child's needs; staff agree how parents will receive updates and review progress after the start. Personal-care needs, including toileting, are discussed supportively and are not used as a blanket exclusion criterion.

The information obtained before attendance includes:

The child's full name, date of birth and home address; names and addresses of known parents or carers, parental responsibility and whom the child normally lives with.

At least two emergency contact numbers, wherever reasonably possible; arrangements for authorised collection and relevant court orders.

Health needs, medication, allergies, food intolerances, dietary requirements and preferences; individual care plans and necessary permissions.

Developmental and communication needs, home languages, sleep and personal-care routines, and relevant information from previous settings or professionals.

Parents must update changes promptly. Information about allergies and dietary or health needs is shared with staff who need it, including those preparing and handling food. Medication administration and personal care follow the relevant school procedures and agreed plans.

Before the child starts, families receive information about learning and activities, daily routines, food and drink, SEND support, staffing, the key person, emergency contact arrangements, and relevant policies, including safeguarding, absence, missing children and late or non-collection. The school follows up unexplained absence promptly and escalates welfare concerns to the DSL.

Transition information is sought from the previous setting where relevant. Staff explain applicable EYFS assessment and information-sharing arrangements. Nursery attendance does not itself guarantee a Reception place: Admissions confirms the transition arrangements and availability with parents in good time, applying this policy and the agreed contractual terms.

10 Decisions, offers and acceptance

The school communicates the outcome in writing. Offers state the proposed entry date, year group or setting, day or boarding status, any specific conditions, the acceptance deadline, deposit and applicable Terms and Conditions. Conditions must be relevant, clear and lawful. Assessment of needs and agreed support should be sufficiently complete for parents to make an informed decision.

Acceptance requires the completed acceptance documentation, the specified deposit and identity documentation and other information reasonably needed to confirm the place. Fee amounts, discounts, deposit treatment, cancellation and notice requirements are governed by the current fee schedule, offer letter and Terms and Conditions. Families have access to these before acceptance; contractual terms do not override statutory rights.

Where no offer is made, Admissions explains the decision and whether the child can remain on a waiting list. Parents may request that the Head review the application of the policy and the evidence considered. Concerns about the process are handled as described in section 14.

11 Boarding and international applicants

Boarding admissions include consideration of pastoral, medical and educational needs, appropriate accommodation, supervision and the pupil's readiness for boarding. The school agrees parental contacts, collection and travel arrangements, emergency care and any required guardianship arrangements before arrival. Responsibilities during holidays and periods when boarding is closed are made clear.

Boarders receive an induction explaining routines, safeguarding, how to seek help, the independent person available to them and complaints arrangements. Relevant support and care information is passed securely to boarding staff. A day-school place does not automatically confer a boarding place.

For applicants needing immigration permission, the school confirms the appropriate route and its current sponsorship requirements before a sponsorship decision. Identity, parental consent, care arrangements and immigration documents are checked as applicable. An educational offer does not guarantee sponsorship or a visa. Any offer conditions, separate fees and responsibilities are stated in writing. Admissions liaises with the school's designated sponsorship lead and seeks specialist advice when necessary.

12 Safeguarding and induction

Sherfield School follows Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children and its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Safeguarding concerns arising at any stage of enquiry, assessment, taster visits or admission must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy. Staff must not delay a referral to children's social care, the police or other appropriate agency where a child may be at risk while awaiting an admission decision, records or parental consent where consent would increase risk. Admissions obtains relevant identity, previous-setting and contact information, including confirmation of any child-in-need, child-protection or looked-after arrangements where lawfully and appropriately disclosed. The DSL considers the safeguarding implications and any safe transition support required; a child is not disadvantaged simply because they have experienced safeguarding concerns.

The DSL arranges the secure, confidential transfer and receipt of child protection information with the previous school or setting, separately from the main pupil file, as soon as practicable. Where a child leaves Sherfield, the DSL ensures the child protection file is transferred securely to the receiving school or college as soon as possible and within five days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of the new term, and obtains confirmation of receipt, in line with KCSIE 2026. The receiving DSL and other key professionals are alerted to relevant support needs on a need-to-know basis. Missing administrative information, including a UPN, must never prevent timely safeguarding enquiries or referrals.

Before the pupil begins, relevant educational and pastoral staff receive necessary support plans. Induction covers safe reporting routes, attendance, key contacts, behaviour expectations and welfare arrangements. Taster sessions and visits must have appropriate supervision, emergency contacts and safeguarding arrangements. Staff follow up any concern promptly through the DSL.

13 Registers and personal information

The school maintains statutory admission and attendance registers where required and appropriate EYFS records. A pupil is entered on the admission register on the first day agreed by the school and the person with control of the pupil's attendance. Non-arrival triggers prompt enquiries about the child's whereabouts and safeguarding action where necessary. The school follows statutory attendance and children-missing-education requirements, including procedures for children who cannot be located or whose onward destination is unclear.

The school makes the required local-authority notifications when pupils are added to or removed from the admission register, including required notifications for non-standard admission and departure points, within applicable statutory deadlines. A pupil's name is deleted only where a lawful ground and all relevant conditions are met. Contractual withdrawal or unpaid fees alone do not justify unlawful deletion. Admissions, attendance and safeguarding teams share relevant information securely so that pupils do not become missing from education.

Admissions records, assessments and decisions are processed under the school’s privacy notices, UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, as amended. Access is restricted to staff who need the information, with secure sharing for education and welfare purposes. Records are retained and disposed of under the school’s retention schedule. Optional publicity consent is obtained separately from acceptance of a place.

14 Review complaints and withdrawal

Parents should raise admissions enquiries with the Admissions Manager and may request a review by the Head where they believe the policy has not been correctly applied. The school explains how to raise a formal concern about the admissions process; prospective-parent concerns receive a fair written response through the route confirmed by the school. Statutory complaints rights and external remedies are not restricted by this policy.

For enrolled children, the school's published Complaints Procedure applies. Written complaints about fulfilment of EYFS requirements are investigated and the complainant is notified of the outcome within 28 days. Records of those complaints and outcomes are maintained. Families are given information on contacting Ofsted about EYFS requirements and the applicable inspectorate or regulator for their provision.

An offer or place is not withdrawn automatically because information about SEND was omitted or needs later change. The school establishes the facts, discusses them with parents, considers reasonable adjustments and obtains relevant professional advice. Any proposed withdrawal is considered lawfully and proportionately, with reasons and the applicable review route explained.

Behaviour-related suspension, exclusion or required removal follows the school's Behaviour and Exclusions policies and relevant contractual and statutory requirements, including equality and safeguarding duties. The admissions policy does not replace those procedures or remove rights of review. The school considers the child's continued education and safe transfer of records when a place ends.

15 Related policies and review

Read this policy with the current Terms and Conditions and fee schedule; SEND and EAL arrangements; Accessibility Plan; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Behaviour and Exclusions policies; Complaints Procedure; Attendance Policy; Children Missing Education procedures; privacy notices; medical and intimate-care procedures; EYFS policies; boarding and guardianship arrangements; and the school's policies on safer recruitment and allegations where applicable. Statutory sources include Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children and relevant legislation and attendance guidance.

The policy owner reviews admissions decisions and practice at least annually with the Head of School, DSL, SENCO, EYFS and boarding leaders as relevant. The Head and proprietor review equality, safeguarding, statutory and operational requirements and record formal approval of amendments. The policy should be reviewed sooner where statutory guidance changes or an incident identifies a need to revise practice.