

Never look down on anybody unless you are helping him up. Jesse Jackson

Barley Lane School

Hard work, humility, kindness

Admission to the school 2017-18

We are a day primary and secondary special SEMH school for boys and girls and when we meet with parents and carers often their first concern is the other children in the school and this is not unreasonably prompted by the label we and they are given of “SEMH”; social, emotional and mental health and we would like to explain directly how we see this. All of us will experience times when how we feel and then behave negatively impacts our relationships and consequently our wellbeing and happiness and in school our learning.

Our children and young people’s dignity and their enormous worth and their progress as people and learners are all better supported by the clear acknowledgment that we are all “SEMH” at some time but that it in no way defines or limits us and more than that it is often a characteristic of the most talented and good people and that is how we see our students and your son or daughters as talented and good.

The school has up to seventy two places with approximately 20 in in each of the key stages two, three and four. The school can go over numbers by 10% but in doing so must consider its capacity to maintain the whole community safely.

Children and young people can and do return to mainstream (two successfully returned in 2016-17) and most go on to college and in doing so join their peers in a mainstream setting.

The school invests in and relies on good relationships between the team and the children and young people to secure good behaviour and learning. Relationships require time to embed and therefore nearly all our students enter the school at key stages two and three.

Any student admitted at key stage four is considered very carefully because it is harder to build the trust and rapport that in turn give us influence and authority and a greater level of goodwill and compliance is needed from students joining us later in their school lives and close support for carers and parents and professionals working with them.

Our children and young people are placed in the school by the local authority (Devon County Council) specifically the 0-25 team ryan.merchant@devon.gov.uk velda.woodruff@devon.gov.uk

Often parents, carers and families need support navigating the sometimes daunting process of having a child placed in a Devon special school and we alert them too to the Devon Parent Partnership there to support and guide them: www.parentpartnershipdevon.org.uk.

The importance of those currently teaching and supporting a child or young person: head-teacher, SENCO, the link educational psychologist in exploring and deciding change is shared with parents. Parents need to know too a panel will meet and consider the best fit for a student and only then is the school engaged with.

Throughout this process parents should seek the support and guidance of the Devon Parent Partnership and the diverse professionals involved in the process and be reassured their views as parents and carers are important. If a consensus emerges and change agreed it is at this point the school engages with you.

We will be sent a formal request alerting us that the team in the council judges our school a suitable placement for a youngster and parents will also be written to. We will receive paperwork describing the child’s needs and history.

It is at this point our own in-house procedures begin. Firstly and most significantly the person key to the process is admissions and pastoral care officer Katrina Campbell Crocker 07848457022 kccrocker@barleylane.devon.sch.uk with significant others being listed below also.

- Your child is in KS2 (primary) Mike McDaid 07848457024 mmcdaid@barleylane.devon.sch.uk
- Your child is in KS3/4 (secondary) Simon Robinson 07436104049 srobinson@barleylane.devon.sch.uk
- General enquiries when or if you are not sure who to speak to? Wendy Hoaken will guide and support you and make sure you get to speak with the right person; 07848028342 whoaken@barleylane.devon.sch.uk

At this point you will be offered:

- An initial informal meeting in school (we will make a home visit if you prefer) where your priorities, questions and yes concerns can be addressed because we understand moving from the mainstream to a special school can be a tough and challenging and emotionally bruising process sometimes.
- The head-teacher (07848 028341 mmaccourt@barleylane.devon.ssch.uk) will do everything possible to be present at this meeting and answer your questions and if not offer at the parents convenience an additional meeting.

We welcome any family members and or professionals working with and supporting families to attend and support them throughout the admissions process.

- You can see the school in operation and meet the staff; we will all seek to make you feel welcomed and supported and valued.
- With your support and agreement we will then meet with you and your son and at this point we can also agree with you to discreetly visit and observe you child in his current school.
- If and as your confidence in us builds and we all come to understand each other better up to two “taster” sessions will follow for the child or young person so they can experience the school and experienced staff can observe and feedback (in our experience such human interaction an essential element as paperwork and documents lack the humanity and insight meeting and working together bring).

Parents are welcome to stay in school for these visits and have a cup of tea and continue their informal discussion with the school’s admissions officer.

- A conversation will continue throughout this process and in the vast majority of “referrals” a consensus does emerge and parents and carers seek a place and the school happy to offer one. It is true not all parents wish to take up a place and equally the school may sometimes feedback early and or during the process that it does not believe it can meet the child’s needs.
- If we are proceeding together any induction is negotiated with parents and each student’s method of entry to the school is negotiable and rooted in their needs and the views of their parents and carers.

From the time of the referral to the school this process should happen within a fifteen day cycle.