

# Michael Hall

a Steiner Waldorf School

## Admissions Policy

<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>Senior Leadership Team</b>
<b>Formally endorsed by</b>	<b>Council of Trustees</b>
<b>Endorsement Date</b>	<b>February 2019</b>
<b>Next Review Date</b>	<b>February 2020</b>

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Michael Hall is a comprehensive Steiner Waldorf School. The School accepts children with a wide range of abilities and applications are welcomed on behalf of all children. The School believes that all children have individual needs, and aims to meet those needs as best as possible taking into consideration the child's age and developmental stage whilst also taking into account the available resources and expertise within the School.

Where the School operates two or more parallel classes for children in the same age group, the school will decide which class group to assign a particular applicant to, based on our objective of creating broadly balanced, socially cohesive, mixed ability classes.

The aim of our admissions procedure is to identify and admit children who will benefit from our education and who will contribute to and benefit from the ethos and activities of our school community. It is our responsibility as professionals to ensure that any decision we come to about entry into the school will be the best for the child, as well as existing pupils.

Michael Hall is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or social background. We do not discriminate in any way regarding entry to the School.

Michael Hall School is structured in three parts:

- *Early Years*, comprising Parent and Child Group and Kindergarten
- *Lower School*, comprising Classes 1 to 8
- *Upper School*, comprising Classes 9 to 12

(Applicants to Class 8 are treated as part of Upper School for admissions purposes.)

Although Michael Hall aims to provide a complete education for every child admitted, admission to one part of the school does not guarantee admission to another. A child initially entering Early Years will undergo a further admissions process before being granted entry to Class 1, a third process before being granted entry to Class 9 and a fourth process before being granted entry into Class 11.

## **ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**

### The Kindergarten and Lower School class group

Our teaching approach places a great deal of importance on the class as a social group and on the class teacher as focal point for the children's learning. We do have teaching assistants in some of our classrooms to support the class teacher/kindergarten teacher, but in most cases we are not able to admit a child who is expected to need a dedicated one-to-one assistant.

### Meeting the needs of the individual child

Michael Hall does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided that our learning support provision and teachers can offer the child the support they need and/or our site can reasonably accommodate them. The School will discuss thoroughly with parents (and, if appropriate,

their medical advisors) the adjustments that can reasonably be made to support the child should they become a pupil at the school. *If at any stage it is necessary for a pupil to be privately assessed by an outside agency such as an Educational Psychologist, this would be charged to the parents.*

We strongly advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical or mental disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the School before interview so that we can make adequate provision for [him/her]. Parents should provide with the Application Form a copy of an educational psychologist's report or a medical report if they have one.

## **ADMISSIONS PROCESS - ADVICE TO PROSPECTIVE PARENTS**

Prospective applicants to the School should contact the Admissions Registrar in the first instance. As our approach to education is distinctive, it is important that parents understand our methods and educational philosophy, as a mutual understanding of child development and our curriculum between parents and the school is highly beneficial to pupils. It is therefore essential that parents take a private tour with an experienced teacher and/or attend an Open Morning before submitting a formal application.

A formal application can then be submitted with the necessary supporting documentation and (non-refundable) application fee. If you wish to apply for fee assistance, a fee assistance application should be submitted simultaneously. New families applying for fee assistance will also be invited to attend an interview with the Bursar. Please carefully read the eligibility guidelines listed on the *New Parents' Application Form* (available to download from the Fee Assistance page on the school website), before applying. Admission interviews will be conducted for prospective pupils, usually with either the Kindergarten Teacher, designated Class Teacher or Guardian, along with a member of the Learning Support team and in some cases a Eurythmy therapist.

The candidate pupil is then assessed as described above and you will be advised of the School's decision. It may be that further assessment will be required and/or that your child will be asked to come into School, join the age-appropriate class or kindergarten group and within this time have further assessments. This is usually for the purposes of assessing whether the School has the necessary resources to support your child's education.

We reserve the right to halt the Admissions process at any point if in our judgement we feel we have clear evidence to show that we will be unable to meet the educational, pastoral or social needs of the applicant child.

Admission to Kindergarten is for a minimum of three sessions per week on entry, increasing to five sessions a week as soon as possible. Attendance for five sessions a week is mandatory for all students after their fifth birthday. All applicants for Kindergarten should be aware that we do not allow dual morning registrations and that they are required to attend Michael Hall only.

Admission to Parent and Child groups usually follows a free taster session and the completion of an application form. Children can be any age between birth and three years of age.

In all cases, applicant parents must sign and return the school contract before their child will be permitted to join the school.

## **ASSESSMENT OF APPLICANTS**

Applicants to the school are assessed (subject to the above) for entry to the school by the following methods:

1. Review of reports from previous schools and attendance records.
2. Formal assessments by our Learning Support Department and our Eurythmy Therapy Department. The former assesses Special Educational Needs and the latter assesses the child's development in movement. If an applicant is asked to return for further assessments, these assessments will be carried out by the above and/or an experienced Class Teacher. These further assessments do not normally apply in Early Years with the exception of applicants who are expected to transfer to Class 1 within 12 months of entry.
3. Interviews and/or observation of the child by the prospective Class teacher or Class Guardian.
4. In cases of doubt or where more information is required the school may contact the applicant's present school, and/or require a report from an educational psychologist and/or hold discussions with the child's medical advisors in order to assess the child's needs before reaching a decision on a particular application. We may also invite your child to join the class for a few days before a final decision is made.

There is no formal assessment of applicants to Parent and Child Groups, though the school does reserve the right to refuse admission at its discretion.

## **COMPLAINTS**

If you are not satisfied with the school's admission process or the decision that we reach, you should put your complaint in writing to the Admissions Officer within five days of the date of our admissions decision. The complaint will then be dealt with in accordance with the Concerns and Complaints Procedure, a copy of which is available on our website. In the event of the complaint not being resolved you are entitled to contact the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information). A list of ADR providers can be found on: <http://www.tradingstandards.uk/advice/ADRApprovedBodies.cfm>

## **DATES FOR ADMISSION**

Although exceptions are sometimes made, our normal dates for entry to the school are:

- Kindergarten: the first day of autumn and spring terms
- Classes 1 - 7: the first day of any term
- Classes 8 - 12: the first day of the school year

Kindergarten applicants who are only a term away from Class 1 entry may be accepted at the start of summer term at the school's discretion.

We will accept applications for admission at any time, but cannot guarantee to process any application received on or after 15<sup>th</sup> June in time for a September entry to the school.

## **CLASS SIZES AND PRIORITY FOR PLACES**

Classes are normally considered full at the following sizes:

- For the Parent and Child Group, a maximum of 7 children from birth to 3 years old
- For the Kindergarten we regard a class as complete at 18.
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- For Classes 1 to 8, a class is deemed to be complete when, taking into account the resources available in the School, the addition of further students to the class would, in our opinion, have an adverse impact on the students already in the class. Although there is no fixed size for a Lower School class, this limit is typically reached at around 25 students
- For Classes 9 to 12, it is usually possible to adjust teaching arrangements to suit any size of year group, although in some cases availability of teaching spaces may place a practical limit on year group size
- When a class or year group is deemed to be complete, the School reserves the right to close the class or year group to new admissions. The decision to close a class is taken by the Senior Leadership Team after appropriate consultation. All other admissions decisions are taken by the Faculty Chair.

## **SIBLINGS POLICY**

Most siblings join us at Michael Hall. However, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where the school judges that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **1. Application Form**

Please complete the enclosed application form and return to us together with the supporting documents listed at the bottom of the form. We expect that you provide as much information about your child as possible, including full disclosure of special needs and I.E.Ps so that we can be sure we can meet their needs responsibly. Failure by parents to make the necessary disclosure of information may prevent the School from providing adequate support and may jeopardise the entry or advancement of the pupil through the school.

### **2. Interview**

Once we receive your application, our Admissions Registrar will contact you to discuss the next step. The nature of any interview will vary according to the age of your child:

#### **Kindergarten interview (3-6 years)**

You will be invited to bring your child along to talk with the appropriate kindergarten teacher and Learning Support teacher if necessary.

#### **Lower School interview (7-14 years)**

You and your child will be invited to meet with the prospective Class Teachers. Your child will also then be assessed by our Learning Support and Eurythmy departments to determine whether we can meet your child's needs.

#### **Upper School interview (14-18 years)**

Potential Upper School students - including Class 8 applicants - are interviewed by an Upper School teacher and a member of the Pastoral Care team or Learning Support will also be involved.

## **RELEVANT POLICIES**

Promoting Positive Behaviour in the Early Years  
Admission to Class 1 Procedure  
Lower School Behaviour & School Rules Policy  
Upper School Behaviour & School Rules Policy  
Concerns & Complaints Procedure for Parents  
Exclusion Policy