

# St Vincent's School for Blind and Partially Sighted Children

Policy Document Title:	Admissions, Placements and Visits Protocol
To be read in conjunction with:	
Updated:	07/09 AMcM/BB/JBr
To be reviewed:	07/10

## *St. Vincent's School Mission Statement:*

*Inspired by the example of St. Vincent, we work together in a safe and caring atmosphere, where a high standard of education and care are provided.*

*We encourage a sense of achievement, self-worth, moral responsibility and mutual respect, honouring all faith traditions and beliefs.*

*Each one of us in our community is special and unique. Gifts and talents are valued and nurtured through all our work. We are outward looking in our approach to the wider educational and social community and we encourage all our young people to become independent and to integrate fully into society.*

## **School Aim**

St Vincent's is a non-maintained special school administered by the Catholic Blind Institute. It is officially approved by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) as a specialist centre of excellence in the North of England for the education of visually impaired children, with day and residential provision for pupils aged 4 -19.

Although St Vincent's is a Roman Catholic school and has a predominantly catholic ethos the school embraces all faiths in harmony and understanding. Provision is made for those of non-christian faiths to practice their faith in an appropriate manner.

Application for admission to the school is made to the Principal by the Local Authority (LA) in which the child lives. This normally follows, or is part of, the Special Educational Needs Statementing Procedure for that child. Local Authorities are responsible for the fees.

## **Catchment Area**

The current population comes from a wide geographical catchment.

## **Statement of Special Educational Needs**

All pupils at St. Vincent's have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, and are registered Blind or Partially Sighted on their Form BD8 (Ophthalmic Report). The Statement will identify a visual impairment as the main requirement for special education, but pupils may have in addition other associated difficulties.

## **Day Pupils**

Pupils' may attend the school on a daily basis. Transport costs and arrangements to and from school are generally made and are paid for by the placing LA. Day pupils travel from across the conurbations of Merseyside and outlying districts.

## **Residential Pupils**

Residential accommodation is provided on a part time or weekly basis, (Monday-Friday). A facility is also available for pupils to benefit from an 'extended day' arrangement. School closes at 1.00pm each Friday.

For those pupils who transfer from a day to residential placement, the placement decision is requested and recorded at the annual review of the pupil's statement of special educational need.

When a firm decision has been made to offer a residential placement to an individual, discussions take place within the staff team to accommodate the young person in the most suitable group.

## **Admissions Procedure**

- ❖ Initially by telephone call or letter to the Principal by an LA representative, Educational Psychologist, Voluntary Organisation or Advocacy Service on behalf of the parent/carer or child.
- ❖ A visit by parent/carer and child to the school will be arranged if considered appropriate. Prospectus and basic information sheets are given to the parent/carer. If the approach has not been made by the LA, the school will routinely inform the host authority.
- ❖ Visit by St. Vincent's staff, if appropriate, to see the child in current educational setting.
- ❖ Assessment of child, if appropriate, within our school environment by St. Vincent's staff, (one day – one week), or longer if required
- ❖ Letter sent to LA and parent/carers, together with a written assessment report, offering the child a place as a day pupil, part-time resident, or weekly residential pupil.
- ❖ A pupil may be admitted at any date within the school year providing appropriate financial arrangements have been finalised.
- ❖ Further administration forms sent to parent/carers re: school uniform, medical details etc.

## **Assessment Procedures**

To assist in assessing the appropriateness of a potential placement at the school, a range of assessment services are offered to both LA's and parent/carers. This has proven to be a most successful tool in helping local authorities and parent/carers coming to a more detailed and informed judgement about an individual child's specific need.

## **Placement**

Subsequent to the appropriate procedures being undertaken and where necessary an assessment placement, a statement will be written identifying St. Vincent's as the named school, providing it is the most appropriate be it day or residential.

Once this has been finalised detailed admissions arrangements will be made. In exceptional circumstances pupils may be admitted, on an emergency basis, prior to the arrival of the statement.

The following stages are followed at St. Vincent's when offering a placement:

- ❖ The staff team familiarise themselves with basic information that has been collated from the pupils referral form.
- ❖ Additional information will be requested from all agencies on the specific needs of the pupil.
- ❖ This information is collated and should include key issues such as strong likes/dislikes and details of specific needs.
- ❖ Members of staff talk through the transition plan with the parent/carer to support the child's placement.
- ❖ The child or young person is given an opportunity to visit the school and residential care group, with their parent/carer.

#### **If Resident:**

Appropriate documentation is sent out to parent/carer and child regarding the care group this will always include –

- ❖ Information for parent/carer booklets.
- ❖ Introduction to boarding questions – identifying key issues and possible risks.
- ❖ Home-School Agreement.
- ❖ Check list for clothes and toiletries.
- ❖ Pupil Medication Consent Form (Prescribed and Home Remedy)
- ❖ Information sheet for emergencies – parental and GP contact details.
- ❖ All of the above is collated into a pupil profile, an identified keyworker is responsible for.
- ❖ Any outstanding issues are then fed back to the staff team via the team meeting these may include –

1. Parental questions and concerns
2. Student questions and concerns
3. Open communications with the family/carer are maintained through regular contact links with the residential care staff and the Family Liaison Officer.

## **Admissions Protocol**

### **Parental Enquiry**

- ❖ Outline details on basic request form
- ❖ Inform LA
- ❖ Request written papers
- ❖ Arrange visit/assessment
- ❖ Copies of papers to –
  - Principal
  - Appropriate Personnel: to compile overview.
  - Overview to all staff
- ❖ Compile Subject Assessment
- ❖ Collate report for decision on admission
- ❖ Inform of decision

### **Agency Authority Enquiry**

- ❖ Outline of details on basic request form
- ❖ Request statement papers
- ❖ Arrange visit/assessment
- ❖ Follow up as parental/carer enquiry

### **School Visit**

- ❖ Welcome visitors to school
- ❖ Introduce visitors to Principal and other staff
- ❖ Give overview of school purpose/provision/ethos

- ❖ Tailor visit to residential/day/flexible residential and day placements
- ❖ Collate paperwork details:
  - statements
  - reports
  - additional provision
  - contact details
- ❖ If residential request, outline care group provision

## Conducting the Visit

- ❖ **Bridgman/through playroom to Caulfield area shows-**
  - Range of accommodation
  - Facilities opportunities
  - Youth club – after school activities programme
  - Soft play/swimming pool/grounds
  - Light room
  - Extended curricular provision
  - Reprographics – resources
- ❖ **Corridor walk**
  - Tactile surfaces
  - Floor change
  - Echo location
  - Dining facilities/menu choices
  - Photo display – range of activities
- ❖ **Chapel**
  - Tolerance/respect/multi faiths
- ❖ **Primary**
  - Classroom visit
  - Intro to staff/ratio mix

- Meet children – great advocates
- Review resources
- Point out suitability of environment
- Access of primary children to whole school facilities/expertise/staffing
- Extended curriculum programme
- Additional therapies
- Visit to secondary department as appropriate
- ❖ **Secondary**
  - Highlight primary department
  - Intro to staff
  - Meet children – helps to show progression – range of needs met
  - Point out suitability of environment
  - Highlight – group sizes, curriculum access
  - Extended and fully inclusive curriculum
  - Partner schools
  - Extended school links – advantages to our pupils
  - Additional therapies on offer
  - Accreditation system
- ❖ **Within and Beyond School**
  - Mobility
  - Independence skills
  - Stress extended provision opportunities
  - Further education placements
  - Social/personal development/work experience