

TEMPORARY ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

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Compiled by: Director of Admissions & Marketing

TEMPORARY ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Background

This is a temporary admissions policy which is intended to apply to children who have recently fled conflict zones and are in need of a school place. In this policy, we have referred to this group of children as ‘Children in Need of International Protection’. This phrase is more fully explained in Appendix 1.

Gayhurst is a co-educational independent school for pupils aged 3 to 11. The school has 341 pupils on the roll.

At Gayhurst, we recognise the part we can play in responding to humanitarian crises by offering children in need of international protection school places where we are satisfied that we can meet their needs. This not only benefits this particular group of children but further demonstrates our commitment to build an inclusive and supportive school community and helps our pupils to become responsible global citizens.

We recognise that fleeing conflict and leaving your home country could have a traumatic and devastating impact on a child and that circumstances for these children can change rapidly. We have identified that Gayhurst can offer a number of places for children in this group. Please note that these places are only available to children in need of international protection per the terms of this policy and at the sole discretion of the Head. These new and free school places have been created as additional places and are called “the Protected School Places”. The offer of a Protected School Place under this policy will not mean there is a reduction in the number of places offered under the school’s standard admissions policy.

Admissions Procedure

Under UK law, asylum-seeking and/or refugee children of compulsory school age have the same entitlement to full-time education as other UK children. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to provide suitable full-time education for all children of compulsory school age resident in their area and we are happy to help and support this at Gayhurst, where we can.

Therefore, for the purposes of admitting children under this policy, the process is as follows:

- a. The school will contact the Local Authority and confirm the number of available places and provide a copy of this policy;
- b. Applications for places may be received from the Local Authority on behalf of the child applicant or directly from a sponsor with whom the child is staying/resident;
- c. The school and Local Authority/ Sponsor/child’s family will consult on the application and consider whether Gayhurst is the right environment for the child, bearing in mind their needs and circumstances and the school’s ability to meet those needs;
- d. An in-person visit by the child (and their next of kin where possible) is an essential part of the application process so the child can see the school for themselves;

- e. The Protected School Places will be allocated at the sole discretion of the Head working with the Local Authority/Sponsor family and having met the child and next of kin where possible;
- f. The Local Authority/Sponsor will be asked to confirm the known details of the child (including their legal name and date of birth) and other details such as any known disabilities or special educational needs;
- g. The parents or carer will be asked to sign the school's usual parent contract (amended to remove the clauses regarding payment of fees). Where it is not possible for a parent or carer to sign the contract, the Local Authority will be asked to sign;
- h. The school will be responsible for an appropriate orientation and induction process for the child on admission;
- i. In all cases, the school must be satisfied that it can meet the child's needs and provide a suitable environment. The Head's decision on allocation of a place is final.

The school will follow this procedure for admissions under this policy on a case-by-case basis but may at the discretion of the Head amend the procedure if appropriate.

Applicable Policies and Law

- Safeguarding, mental health and well-being. All of the usual policies and frameworks of the school in terms of safeguarding, mental health and well-being are applicable to children admitted under this policy. The school recognise that children admitted under this policy may be additionally vulnerable as a result of their circumstances, experiences or needs and will therefore apply existing policies and frameworks in a way that recognises the particular circumstances of this group of children.
- Behaviour and discipline. All of the usual policies and frameworks of the school in respect of behaviour, conduct and discipline will be applied to children admitted under this policy but having regard to their particular circumstances.
- Equal treatment. Gayhurst is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's sex race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or social background.
- Special educational needs and disabilities. Gayhurst does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. The school welcomes children under this policy with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided we can offer them the support that they require and feel that they will thrive in our environment. Knowledge of any special educational needs and/or disabilities is required so that the school can assess the child's needs and consult with parents and/or the Local Authority about the adjustments which can reasonably be made and so that the school can ensure, for example, that the child will be able to access the education offered and that the school is able to ensure their health and safety, and the health and safety of others. Where a child is disabled, the school will discuss with parents and/or the Local Authority (and the child's medical advisers, if appropriate) the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if they become a pupil at the School. There may be exceptional circumstances in which we are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's disability or needs. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments, we feel that a prospective pupil is not going to be able to access the education offered, or that their health

and safety or those of other pupils or staff may be put at risk, we may not be able to offer a place at the school.

- Religious Ethos. Gayhurst welcomes children of all faiths and of no faith.
- Siblings. The school recognise that in these circumstances, it may be best to ensure that siblings are placed together where that is possible.
- Complaints. The School's Complaints Procedure is on the school's website and can be sent to prospective parents on request. The Complaints Procedure is not available for use by prospective parents.
- Record-keeping. Under this policy, applicants' details will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation and the School's Privacy Notice. The school will not hold the personal data of the child for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose. This will generally be no more than 6 months following an unsuccessful application, but reasons to retain for longer might include: dealing with any ongoing matters or queries arising from the application.

Change in the child's circumstances

If the child's circumstances change, (for example they are returning to their home country or moving elsewhere), the school will work with Local Authority/other relevant partners or authorities and the child's family to ensure a smooth transition for the child.

Review

The policy will be reviewed in December 2022.

Appendix

This policy applies only to 'children in need of international protection' who require a school place. Under this policy a 'child in need of international protection' is any of the following:

- **Asylum-seeker:** this is a person who is in the UK and has made an application for international protection (which covers both refugee status and humanitarian protection). Most child asylum-seekers will be dependants of their parents. However, an unaccompanied child can claim asylum in their own right. Children who are asylum-seekers are vulnerable to be moved to different parts of the country and do not have a stable status in the UK.
- **Refugee:** this is a child who has been granted refugee status by the Home Office. Refugees are normally granted 5 years' leave to remain as a refugee after which they can apply for indefinite leave to remain. Children accompanying a successful main asylum applicant will normally be granted leave in line with their parent.
- **Humanitarian protection:** A person who does not qualify for refugee status may be given protection on the basis that if returned to their country they would face a real risk of suffering serious harm. These individuals may be granted 5 years' leave to remain by the Home Office after which they can then apply for indefinite leave to remain.

- **Ukraine Scheme:** This is divided into three sub-schemes:
 - The Ukraine Family Scheme (for people with family already residing in the UK);
 - The Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (for people matched with UK residents offering sponsorship to reside with them)
 - The Ukraine Extension Scheme (for people who were already lawfully in the UK when the war started but whose visas have or will expired).

Successful applicants under the Ukraine Scheme are granted 36 months' permission to stay in the UK. Children can benefit from the Scheme either as dependants of their parents or in their own right (eg if they are not accompanied by their parents).

- Children who belong to families applying for any of the above types of status.

Statutory guidance for England states that an education placement should be secured for all looked after children (including unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children) within 20 school days of coming into care. Being undocumented or having a 'no recourse to public funds' condition on a visa does not prevent a child from accessing education (education is not a 'public fund' as set out in the immigration rules).