

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

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- Portal House is a secondary school for boys who experience significant Social, Emotional and Behaviour difficulties. Many have in addition, mental health needs and diagnosed health conditions such as Attachment Disorder, Autism, ADHD, ADH, ODD and OCD.
- A high proportion of students are ‘Children in Care’.
- All students have national average/above average academic potential according to recent formal academic assessments and/or have attained national average expectations for their age (potential to achieve 5 or more high grade GCSE including English and Maths). Year 7 students have attained scaled scores of 90+ in their KS2 SATS and age related expectations at KS1.
- Behaviour is their biggest barrier to accessing mainstream education.
- The school offers a fresh start in a modern fit for purpose facility and is committed to reversing patterns of failure associated with school and learning.
- Our curriculum offer is broad, balanced and academic. All students follow a secondary school timetable that leads to 11 GCSE (English Language, English Literature, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, ICT, Geography, R.E., P.E., Art and Design), plus weekly life skills lessons in PSHE and Cooking. In addition KS3 go swimming every week and KS4 undertake work experience and preparation for College, Apprenticeship and work sessions.
- Students are taught in small year group classes by qualified staff and supported by class and subject T.A.’s. Class sizes vary dependant on need (4 – 6 per class).
- At 16+ our students go to either 6<sup>th</sup> form, College, Apprenticeships or work after achieving on average 10 or more GCSE.

Portal House is currently a single sex school for boys aged 11 – 16.

All pupils are referred to the School by the Local Authority Special Educational Needs officers from the two areas listed below. The school then reads all information provided with the referral and then makes a decision as to whether they are able to meet the child’s needs. The SEN Area offices are responsible for liaising between parents and the School.

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| South Kent | (Dover, Shepway & Ashford)<br>Kroner House, Ashford <a href="mailto:SENSouth@kent.gov.uk">SENSouth@kent.gov.uk</a>   |
| East Kent  | (Swale, Canterbury & Thanet)<br>Brook House, Whitstable <a href="mailto:SENEast@kent.gov.uk">SENEast@kent.gov.uk</a> |

All pupils referred to the school have an Education, Health Care Plan which provides details of their main special educational needs. The SEN Code of Practice describes children who have social, emotional and mental health needs as:

“Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder”

Most students will present with some or all of the following behaviours:

- distractibility that inhibits the progress of the young person even with significant adult support and increasingly individualised curriculum
- unpredictably and intensity of the pattern of behaviour which significantly affects the learning of peers
- behaviour which is bizarre and/or self injurious and/or endangers others and leads to a significant level of rejection by peers increasing the social isolation of the young person.
- significant unhappiness, stress and/or disaffection over a sustained period often accompanied by prolonged periods of absence associated with an increasing awareness by the young person of their situation, which has led to a negative attitude towards education.

Students may also be on the Autistic continuum but respond well to Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs provision.

Students often require an intensive multi-agency approach and appropriate out of hours support.

Wherever possible students will be given opportunities to access mainstream inclusion with the percentage of inclusion being determined by the students individual level of need and readiness for adjusting to a different learning environment. The amount of inclusion may well begin at a low level and for some students this may remain appropriate.

In considering the parental request for placement at Portal House School the Local Authority must have regard to the following admission criteria:

The young person will benefit from a placement at a school committed to reversing patterns of failure associated with school and learning. These patterns of failure usually manifest themselves in emotional, social and mental health difficulties as described in their Education, Health and Care Plan. They will include students whose present needs are the result of deep-seated and long-term emotional, behaviour and social needs but have the potential to achieve as well as most pupils in mainstream of similar age i.e. national average or above.

All pupils will need to live within reasonable travelling distance from school. Transport is provided by the Local Authority.

#### The 'Five Step' Admission Process

1. A child is referred to the Special Education Needs Department, KCC, identified as likely to benefit from specialist provision.
2. A named SEN Caseworker sends sets of relevant paperwork on that child to the Headteacher, and requests a response within 2 weeks.
3. The Headteacher responds to the SEN Caseworker and states clearly whether she feels that the child's educational needs could be met at Portal House and if the school has a vacancy in their year group.
4. If the response is positive, the school invites the parents/carers and child to visit the school. The purpose of this meeting is to enable the child and parents/carers to tour the school, meet pupils and staff and ask any questions they may have about the provision on offer. This meeting also enables the school to explain the schools aims, policies and procedures. At the end of the meeting, the school will make the final decision as to whether the school can meet the child's needs and a start date agreed if appropriate. The school and parents/carers will then contact the named SEN Caseworker who referred the child to the school and confirm that a place has been offered and accepted.
5. The SEN Caseworker will then inform KCC transport and send the parents/carers transport forms to complete to receive home to school transport.