



GESHER SCHOOL
ENGAGE EMPOWER EDUCATE

Admissions Policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Nominated Governor
April 2021	April 2022	Christopher Gurney	Howard Zetter

1. Introduction to Gesher School Admissions Policy

Gesher School is a unique independent Jewish school for pupils aged 4 years to 13 years, which in 2018 received an Outstanding rating in its first Ofsted inspection. Gesher School provides a specialist, meaningful and functional learning environment for pupils with special educational needs. Currently Gesher School is considering in-year applications for pupils who, from September 2021, will be in Reception or Years 1 to 8. Gesher School will be relocating to a new site in September 2021 where it will add a secondary school to its existing provision, with a new year group being added organically each academic year until a full secondary cohort can be provided for.

Children and young people are at the heart of Gesher School where a sense of belonging and community are fostered. Gesher School is a safe, friendly and stimulating environment in which pupils are supported to learn, interact and have fun. We believe that *all* children and young people have the ability to progress to their potential; that every pupil is individual and requires a person-centred approach to learning. Our curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of the cohort of Gesher School pupils.

2. Gesher School Pupils

Gesher pupils are unique, individual and learn in their own special way. They may benefit from being educated differently in regards to communication and social interactions; tailoring and adapting their environment to their own learning style.

Gesher pupils are likely to have mild-moderate learning needs and/or autism. Many pupils have sensory processing difficulties and need support with their attention skills. Gesher School is not a school for pupils whose primary need is emotional and behavioural difficulties or severe learning difficulties. Pupils that attend Gesher School will come from a family that understands and respects the values and ethos of the school and the Jewish way of life.

Gesher pupils may have difficulty with:

A mainstream environment	Flexibility of thought
Accessing the curriculum	Sensory processing
Anxiety	Attention skills
Social Communication & Interaction	Understanding the world around them

Gesher pupils would benefit from:

Small classroom sizes	A multi-sensory approach
Predictable environment	A therapeutic approach
Personalised curriculum	A multi-professional approach
Support to make and maintain friendships	Access to specialist teachers

The Gesher School Team think collaboratively and creatively to ensure each pupil feels valued, respected and is able to access their education regardless of their special educational needs.

3. The Admissions Team

The Gesher Admissions Team consists of an Educational Psychologist, Dramatherapist, two Speech and Language Therapists, two Occupational Therapists, and the Gesher School SENDCO. The Admissions Team conduct a variety of informal assessments at each step of the application process in order to understand each child's strengths and challenges and to deem whether Gesher School is able to provide the support the child needs to succeed. At least two members of the Admissions Team are involved in any assessments that take place, whether this be via paperwork or in-person.

4. Introduction to Gesher School Admission Process

A person-centred approach enables the Gesher Admissions Team to ensure Gesher School is the appropriate educational setting for your child. All information provided is considered during the admissions process.

The admissions process may require the disclosure of personally sensitive and confidential information. The information provided is securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and full confidentiality is provided in keeping with a professional organisation. Should your application not be successful, upon written request the information provided by you will be deleted from the records held at Gesher School.

In the interest of ensuring an optimal educational experience, we require that all questions be answered honestly and all of the information required during the admissions process be disclosed. This includes any significant change in your child's medical, social, behavioural, emotional and/or educational status from the date an application is received until the first day of attendance at Gesher School. **Gesher School reserves the right to deny admission or remove a child by expulsion if the required information has not been or has erroneously been disclosed.**

5. Admissions Criteria

- The child is the correct age for provision of Gesher School at the time of admission.
- The Admissions Team being satisfied that the child or young person will fit with the existing cohort of pupils and the description of Gesher pupils as above.

- Each child or young person will be admitted on consideration of the submitted documentation and the observations conducted by the Admissions Team to ensure that Gesher School can suitably meet their needs.

6. When to Apply for In-Year Admissions (2021/2022)

Applications for in-year admissions are on a rolling basis. You are welcome to contact the Admissions Team at admissions@gesherschool.com to enquire about spaces within your child's year group.

7. When to Apply for the 2022/2023 Academic Year

The deadline for applications to begin at the start of the 2022/2023 academic year need to be received by Friday 1st July 2022. All other applications will be considered on a rolling basis.

8. How to apply

To apply, please complete the Gesher Application pack on the Gesher website.

Your Gesher Application Pack must include:

- Gesher Application Form <https://www.gesherschool.com/registration-form/>
- The pupil's most recent Education and Health Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs (if applicable).
- Any external professional and/or therapy reports, current within one year. This may include a Paediatrician, Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist and/or Creative Arts Therapists.
- Medical documentation including any diagnosis and/or prescribed medication.

9. Initial Application Stage

The Application Pack will be reviewed by the Admissions Team and a decision will be made as to whether or not the potential pupil will progress to the Observation Stage in the school. All such decisions are made in the absolute discretion of the Admissions Team and shall be final and binding

All applicants will be informed in writing of this decision within 3 term-time weeks from receipt of application.

If your child is invited to the school for the Observation Stage a choice of up to two dates will be offered.

10. Observation Stage

The observation is conducted within school hours. It will begin promptly at the time provided and will last approximately between 60 and 90 minutes. During this time, the child or young person alone will accompany two members of the Admissions Team into various areas of the school, and will be encouraged to participate in a number of tasks presented in the form of games and activities. Parents are invited to wait in our reception area. In exceptional circumstances, we may request a further observation period which would involve the child or young person attending the school for up to 1-3 days.

11. Admissions Decision Panel

Following the observation, the Admissions Team may need to speak to professionals that have worked with the child or young person. A decision will then be made by the Admissions Team as to whether the applicant will be offered a place in the school. All such decisions are made in the absolute discretion of the Admission Team and their decision shall be final and binding.

Applicants will be informed in writing of the decision within 2 term time weeks following an observation.

Successful applicants will be sent an Admissions Response Form as well as an offer letter, which you are asked to return to the school with details of your funding situation.

12. Oversubscription

In the event that there are more suitable pupils than available places for a particular class, priority will be given to pupils in the following order:

1. A child/young person who is looked after, or a child/young person who was previously looked after by the local authority, and has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education and Health Care Plan that names Gesher School or with local authority agreement that Gesher School will be named.
2. Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education and Health Care Plan that names Gesher School or with local authority agreement that Gesher School will be named.

3. Any other potential pupils, including those without a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education and Health Care Plan.

Provided that in each of the criteria listed above, pupils whose families can demonstrate practice of an aspect of Jewish faith, as set out below, will be given priority.

13. Tie – Breaker

Subject always to the Jewish faith priority referred to above, in the event of there being more suitable pupils within criteria 1 to 3 than places available, priority will then be given to pupils living nearest to Gesher School. The distance will be measured from the main entrance of the home address to the main gate of Gesher School using the local authority's computerised mapping system. In the cases where more than one suitable applicant lives equidistant from Gesher School, and places cannot be offered to all these pupils, the available place will be determined by random allocation. This allocation will be supervised by a person independent of Gesher School.

14. Evidence required to demonstrate practice of an aspect of the Jewish faith

Demonstration of practice of an aspect of the Jewish faith is by evidence of any one of the following criteria:

1. Attendance by a parent / legal guardian at a minimum of 7 synagogue services in the 12 months before the closing date for admissions; or
2. A child's enrolment in informal Jewish education (either at nursery or pre-school having a Jewish character) for at least 6 months in the 24 months before the closing date for admissions; or
3. A parent / legal guardian's regular (at least monthly) involvement as a volunteer in any Jewish communal, charitable or welfare activity of at least a year's duration in the 2 years before the closing date for admissions; or
4. A parent / legal guardian's regular involvement on at least 7 individual occurrences either in organised Jewish learning or organised Jewish community activities in the year before the closing date for admissions.

For criteria 1 to 3, verification will be required from the organisation involved in order to demonstrate practice and thereby gain the faith priority.

For criteria 4, participation in each event must be verified with its own separate letter and author in order to demonstrate practice and thereby gain the faith priority.

15. Funding

Gesher is a fee paying school so all admissions are subject to approved and confirmed funding. All fees are payable in advance and are set for each academic year. Details of our school fees can be found here:

<https://www.gesherschool.com/admissions/>

Parents of pupils with EHCPs can apply to their Local Authority for funding for Gesher School. Parents are also welcome to self-fund for their child to attend Gesher School.

Parents wishing to self-fund are referred to our self-funding Terms & Conditions and Fee Schedule on our website (at the same link as above). Upon conditional acceptance for pupils starting in the upcoming academic year, a deposit will be required to hold the placement. This deposit will be retained in the general funds of the School until the pupil leaves and will be repaid by means of a credit without interest to the final payment of fees (or other sums due to the School on leaving).

16. Starting at Gesher School

Successful applicants will be sent a Gesher School Starter Pack. The pack includes forms to be completed and useful information for parents/guardians and pupils. These are required to be completed and returned to the school at least one week prior to the child's start date; if the paperwork is not received within the stated timeframe, the start date will be postponed to a date that will be determined by the Admissions Team. Pupils start full-time on the first day of term in September 2021, or at an agreed start date for in-year admissions. There will be a three-to-five-day trial period commencing from the child's start date and if during the trial period or otherwise Gesher School feel that they are unable to meet need or that the child is not appropriate for the cohort of the school, then we reserve the right in our absolute discretion to terminate the placement immediately.