



GESHER SCHOOL
ENGAGE EMPOWER EDUCATE
supported by the Ronson, Wohl, Wolfson Partnership

Admissions Policy 2025-2026

| Coordinator | Nominated Governor | Reviewed by Coordinator | Date Ratified by Governor/HR | To be reviewed |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Christopher Gurney | Rama Venchard | August 2025 | August 2025 | August 2026 |

1. Introduction to Gesher School Admissions Policy

Gesher School stands as a distinguished independent Jewish educational institution catering to students between the ages of 4 to 16 years with a range of mild to moderate special educational needs, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia and Downs syndrome. In recognition of our commitment to excellence, we were conferred an "Outstanding" rating by Ofsted in 2022. We pride ourselves on offering a meaningful, holistic and functional educational environment tailored to support students with special educational needs. Currently, Gesher School is in the process of reviewing in-year applications for students who, as of September 2025, will be enrolled in Reception or Years 1 to 11.

Gesher School is based on a child-focused approach, ensuring every student is both acknowledged and valued. Our establishment fosters a nurturing sense of community and belonging. This provides a secure, conducive, and intellectually invigorating environment where students are empowered to interact, enjoy, and thrive. Our foundational belief remains that each student, irrespective of their background or needs, possesses the innate potential to excel. Accordingly, our curriculum is meticulously designed, taking a person-centred approach to resonate with the unique needs and aspirations of the Gesher School student body.

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 and 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 to 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
- Accessing the curriculum
- Anxiety
- Social Communication & Interaction
- Flexibility of thought
- Sensory processing

- Attention skills
- Understanding the world around them

Gesher pupils would benefit from:

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

The Gesher School team thinks collaboratively and creatively to ensure each pupil feels valued, respected and is able to access their education regardless of their special educational needs. Gesher pupils are typically educated within a developmentally and socially appropriate age-based cohort, and limitations apply to how many children can be admitted per year group so as to maintain the small classroom sizes.

3. The Admissions Team

The Gesher Admissions Team consists of a Dramatherapist, an Art Therapist, three Speech and Language Therapists, two Occupational Therapists, and one of the Gesher School SENDCOs. The Admissions Team conducts a variety of informal assessments at each step of the application process in order to understand each student's strengths and challenges and to determine whether Gesher School is able to provide the support the student 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 each 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 an application not be successful, upon written request the information submitted 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 a 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 shared or has erroneously been disclosed.

5. Admissions Criteria

- The child is the correct age for provision of Gesher School at the time of admission, or has been authorised by the Local Authority to be educated outside of their chronological year group
- The Admissions Team is 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.
- Applications will only be reviewed in-depth if there is an available placement within the appropriate class, otherwise they will move on to the school waiting list with agreement from the parents. Within each primary-age class there are up to 8 placements available, with this number increasing to 10 placements per class for the secondary cohort.

6. When to Apply for In-Year Admissions (2025/2026)

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 2026/2027 Academic Year

The deadline for applications to begin at the start of the 2026/2027 academic year is Monday 13th July 2026. 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://gesherschool.com/about-us/admissions/application-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. Recent and relevant school reports may also be included.
- Medical documentation including any diagnosis and/or prescribed medication.

9. Initial Application Stage

Website applications will be reviewed by the Admissions Team and a decision will be made as to whether or not the potential student 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. These decisions may be communicated to the parents of applicants via telephone call or email.

Alternatively, applications may be received via Local Authority consultation. Decisions on these applications are communicated to the Local Authority only, and it is their discretion as to whether this information is shared with parents.

Applications will not be considered in any other way. Members of the school community, including governors, trustees, the headteacher, and parents of existing students, do not have any influence over the process and are aware that it is not appropriate for them to intervene at any stage.

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 not able to accompany their child during the observation, and are invited to wait in our reception area. In some circumstances, we may request a further observation period which would involve the child or young person attending the school for an extended period of time.

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 they are asked to return to the school with details of their funding situation.

12. Oversubscription

In the event that there are more suitable applicants than available places for a particular class, Gesher will operate a waiting list where prospective applicants can be registered. In the event that a placement becomes available, 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. Children 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. Children/young people from a Jewish-faith background.

13. Tie – Breaker

In the event of there being more suitable pupils within criteria 1 to 3 (listed above) 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 firstly prioritising children of Jewish faith in line with the school's ethos, and then subsequently by whichever child is decided to be the more socially compatible with the existing cohort.

14. 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). Fees are paid in advance per term.

15. Starting at Gesher School

As an Independent school, Gesher has the final say in who is admitted. 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 time frame, 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 2025, 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.