



CAMDEN ADMISSIONS SERVICE

Exceptional Social and Medical Needs

August 2017

Exceptional social and medical criterion and procedures

Applicants whom the Council accepts have an exceptional social or medical need for a place at a community school.

Introduction

The Council's Executive Director of Supporting People may give priority to applicants who can demonstrate that admission to school is necessary on the grounds of professionally supported exceptional social and medical need.

Camden has an advisory panel of experts which consists of a consultant paediatrician, a senior social worker and an education psychologist who will make a recommendation to the Admissions Service. There is no statutory requirement to have an advisory panel and the panel can change from meeting to meeting. Camden will explore the possibility of having a head teacher and or governor on the panel, but they will be unable to comment on applications for their own school.

The advisory panel offers advice based on the evidence submitted and the LA reserve the right to accept or decline the advice offered. The advisory panel does not vote nor does it need a majority decision to award social and medical status and will only consider the information you submit at the time of the meeting even if it is incomplete. Neither the advisory panel nor the admission service will contact other professionals to seek information or clarification.

This policy applies to community schools which have admission criteria of exceptional social and medical within their current published admissions criteria.

Schools without an exceptional social and medical category are under no requirement to accept a child with exceptional social and medical needs agreed by the borough. Schools that have an exceptional social and medical criterion are listed at the end of this document.

Exceptional social and medical does not apply to children who have an Education Health or Care plan (statement of special education need)

Medical issues should be such that the needs of the child can only be met at a particular school. We may decide that you meet the criteria for exceptional social and medical but we reserve the right to nominate your closest community school.

Applications for the panel must be submitted by the deadlines and social medical ticked on the application form along with all evidence.

Primary Deadline: 15th January
Secondary Deadline: 31st October

Social medical received after the deadline but before offer day will be considered after the first round of offers.

The advisory panel will meet twice a year in person and there after views will be sought electronically.

Applications for social and medical will not be considered after the 1st June for the relevant academic year. Subsequent applications will be considered from the 1st September onwards.

Guidance for parents

Some schools give priority to children with significant social or medical needs. If you state on your application form a preference for a particular school because of medical or social needs, you must explain how this school specifically meets your child's special circumstances better than any other school can.

Applications will only be considered if you have completed the exceptional social and medical form and have ticked "Yes" on your application form.

Please note if you tick "No" and add a comment on the application form we will note your comment but we will NOT consider you for social and medical.

Along with your application, you should submit supporting evidence which sets out the particular reasons why that school is the most suitable, and the difficulties that could be caused if your child were to attend another school. This will normally be in the form of a letter from a suitably qualified professional, such as a medical consultant or social worker. Please ask the person to read the guidance within this document.

We will consider a parent's exceptional social and medical needs where it impacts on the child's school placement. You should demonstrate why your child needs to attend a certain school. Please note where mobility issues are cited and you have not indicated your closest school we may not agree your application or we may ask you to apply for a place at your nearest community school, if applying under social/medical criterion.

We will accept a letter from a registered professional such as your GP, however a letter from a consultant may carry more weight and must be on letter headed paper and must indicate the impact of you or your child's needs and why these can only be met at a particular school. **The Admissions Service is not responsible for contacting professionals for information about you or your child's condition.**

The evidence must not be more than six months older than the date of applying. Please note that hospital appointment letters or prescriptions for medication cannot be accepted as proof.

Your case will be stronger if you have returned your completed Social medical form **and** your professional document/s.

Information about the panel

Each application under this criterion will be considered by the admissions service and then referred to the exceptional social/medical advisory panel where appropriate, which includes a consultant paediatrician, senior social worker, and educational psychologist and admissions officers.

The panel has an initial meeting after the closing date for each admission round and thereafter a virtual meeting as necessary. Each panel member will consider the evidence submitted independently and make their decision based on their professional knowledge and experience. The admissions service will consider the panel's recommendation and then either agree or disagree based on the advice of the panel.

There is no majority needed to obtain exceptional social and medical status and the admissions service may give weight to one panel member than another depending on the nature of the application. Decisions relating to exceptional social and medical are recorded and we will advise you of the outcome in writing.

The panel should judge the impact of the exceptional medical/social need and decide what the child would need from the school placement i.e. close to home or hospital, familiar surroundings, avoiding particular areas. If the child's need/s can be met at any Camden community schools then it cannot be considered as an exceptional case.

If the case states mobility issues for either the child or the parent, the panel will look to see if the applicant has applied for their nearest community schools in Camden or another borough where this is closer that could meet the needs of the child.

The panel will also consider if the needs of the child can be met at the schools indicated or if another school closer can meet the same needs.

The panel makes their recommendation based on the information received even if it is incomplete.

There is no appeal about the decision but parents can make an appeal to the Independent Admissions Appeal Panel for a place at a specific school.

You are unable to submit a new case for social and medical applications until six months have elapsed from your last application and only if new evidence is submitted.

Timings for the panel

The admissions service gets an increasing number of requests to be considered for the exceptional social and medical criteria.

For secondary transfer and reception a date will be advised for consideration.

For in year admissions from September 2015 applications will be considered during the third week of each month. Evidence for the panel must be submitted in full by the second Monday of each month. Incomplete evidence will be considered on the information supplied if the full evidence is not received on time.

A parent is only able to apply to the panel once during the current academic year. We will not consider new evidence until at least six months have passed from the last application irrespective of year and **only** if there has been a significant change in the circumstances.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all information is submitted by the appropriate time. The admissions service will not remind parents to submit additional information or contact professionals to get this information. The parent should ask for copies of the supporting evidence to be sent to them rather than directly to the admission service.

Full evidence should be either posted or emailed to the contact addresses at the end of this document. The admissions service is not responsible for information delayed in the post or sent to the wrong email address.

Guidance for medical / other professionals submitting supporting evidence:

Please indicate the full case history, how long you have known the child or parent including the last time you saw the child or parent and the impact of the medical issue for the child and or parent. Include any medication / interventions the child or parent is receiving or support offered.

Please indicate why the illness or social need will mean the child must attend a certain school or their closest school.

What do we consider as exceptional social and medical

The situation for each child and their family is unique but in order to meet the exceptional social and medical criteria it must have a significant impact on the life of the child or the family. Exceptional social and medical should not be considered as a way of increasing a child's chances of getting into a particular school.

The Panel will objectively assess the evidence submitted on why the child can only attend a particular school. The Panel will make its decision in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010.

Based on previous decisions, the Panel did not agree as exceptional social and medical the following;

- Asthma
- Eczema
- Allergies
- Diabetes
- Car / travel sickness
- Dispensing of medication that may require some training as this can be undertaken by any school
- Speech and language delay / use of a hearing aid / or because an Education Health and Care plan has not been completed– all our schools are able to draw on resources and experience to support pupils with these issues.
- Need for the child to stay in friendship groups.
- Attendance at the nursery and not obtained a reception place.
- Care arrangements where the carer lives close to a particular school

If you feel that one of these examples should be considered you can apply but you would be expected to demonstrate how this has a significant impact on your child and why a particular school can meet the child's need.

Applications for a place out of chronological age.

In the first instance these should be discussed with the school in conjunction with Camden's Out of Chronological age group policy.

The exceptional social and medical panel is asked for a view on the suitability of a child being out of chronological age group especially at Reception and or secondary transfer where the school has limited information to make the decision.

List of Voluntary Aided / Free School and Academy schools that do have exceptional social and medical criteria:

Camden School for Girls, Holy Trinity CofE Primary School NW3, Kings Cross Academy, La Sainte Union Catholic Secondary School, Maria Fidelis Roman Catholic Convent School FCJ, Our Lady's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rosary Roman Catholic Primary School, St Luke's CofE Primary School, St Mary's Kilburn Church of England Primary School, St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School, UCL Academy, William Ellis School

Exceptional social and medical criteria are considered by the school's above directly and not the borough. You should contact them to discuss how to submit your application. The borough will not make contact with these schools.

These schools are able to ask the panel for advice if this is helpful but there is no requirement for them to do so and to date no requests have been received.

Out of Borough Schools

Where there is an application for an out of borough community school the information supplied will be passed to the borough where the school is located. You should contact Voluntary Aided / Free School and Academy schools in another borough to discuss how to submit your application.

Please note deadlines in other boroughs may differ and you are responsible to ensure your application is submitted on time.

Contact

Exceptional social and medical application
School Admissions Service
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

Tel: 020 7974 1625

Email admissions@camden.gov.uk

Please ensure all supporting evidence is supplied with your request. We must have both your social medical form and professional documentation. Incomplete applications will be considered on the basis of the information available

You will not be able to make a new application for six months from the date of the application even if the information is incomplete.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all information is supplied in a timely fashion.

The Admissions Service will not remind you that this information needs to be provided or contact professionals to obtain information your behalf.

Applications not submitted on the application form may not be considered.

Applications for Reception class and Secondary transfer received after the deadline but before offer day will not be considered until after the first round of offers. All applications received after the 1st June will not be considered until 1st September.

