



Local Offer

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What does Sunfield do?

Sunfield is an independent residential special school and charity with over 80 years of experience in supporting boys and girls, aged 6 – 19 years, with severe and complex learning and behavioural needs, including conditions such as autism.

We offer 38 and 52 week residential placements, and day places, to children with complex and profound special needs and challenging behaviours, along with a short break provision for students already attending Sunfield. Sunfield cannot take emergency placements but we can offer swift, well planned admissions, providing we have a suitable vacancy. Our short-break provision is only offered to students who are already attending school as a day pupil or have already been referred for a residential placement but are awaiting a suitable longer term vacancy.

Who does Sunfield provide for?

Sunfield can meet the needs of students with Severe Learning Disability (SLD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Developmental Delay, Down's Syndrome and associated complexities such as epilepsy. However, as every child is completely unique, we will always assess every child individually.

What is Sunfield's approach to supporting students?

Our integrated teams in care, education, psychology, therapies, and family services work together, with children and their families, on one site. By getting to know each child, and tailoring our services to their needs, we can make a meaningful difference – often in cases where the children have been unable to thrive elsewhere.

With our individually tailored support, students' communication and life skills develop, so they can more fully engage in their learning and living, and develop positive relationships with the community around them. Our offering is based on meaningful, honest and open relationships with you and your child; helping children to feel safe, respected, confident and capable of achieving their best.

How are decisions made about who can attend Sunfield?

We offer placements to young people with severe and complex learning needs which may include a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Most of our placements are funded by the local authority and a formal referral will usually come from them, if they agree a residential placement is needed.

Initially, Sunfield will send a team of professionals, drawn from each department (Education, Care, and Psychology and Therapies) to meet your child and assess their needs, in their current environment – this maybe at home, school, a short breaks provision or a residential setting.

Based on their observations and the consideration of the identified needs within their Statement of Special Educational Needs (SSEN), or the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the team will establish whether Sunfield can offer a placement. If so, the team will identify how Sunfield will meet your child's identified needs, including the required staffing ratios to support this. The offer will be shared with the local authority, along with the associated costs, in order for a decision to be made as to whether to place your child at Sunfield.

Careful consideration is given to placing each new student within a peer group that is compatible to all children within that group, and one that offers the best opportunities for the children to live and learn alongside one another.

How does Sunfield ensure that my child will be compatible with his/her house/class-mates?

We carefully consider every child's needs when a new student is referred to Sunfield. Our observational and compatibility assessments allow us to look at the needs of your child and how these may impact on the existing student group they would be joining.

We also reflect on the needs of the group and how they may affect your child's introduction and placement. This allows us to make adjustments and plans to accommodate any specific needs that may arise from the assessments. Identifying a compatible group in which your child can safely and happily live and learn is a priority for us.

What facilities will be available to my child?

Sunfield's 12 residential houses and extensive education facilities are all located in 58 acres of parkland grounds, nestled on the slopes of the Clent Hills. The grounds themselves include a farm with pets' corner, horticultural areas and natural trails for exploration and adventure, as well as play areas with trampolines and outdoor sensory areas with calm spaces – all are designed to enable children to engage, relax, exercise and have fun - safely and securely.

We have several spacious classrooms with bespoke furnishings and interactive whiteboards, and other smaller buildings for students who need more individualised approaches. The school building also has designated rooms for cookery, arts, games and administration, along with a farm classroom, a large theatre, lecture room and meeting rooms. The children have access to a range of cutting-edge technology to support their communication and learning, including items such as iPads and other Alternative and Augmentative Communication aids.

Sunfield has a host of dedicated on-site therapy facilities, including a soft play and light therapy room, a state-of-the-art Sensory Integration Suite and a sensory room which enable children to benefit from regular meaningful therapy sessions to support their living and learning. The children also have the use of instruments, devices and equipment to support therapies such as music, speech and language, and occupational therapy, as well as toys and items to support their play therapy.

In addition to our on-site facilities, we have a fleet of vehicles that enable students to access appropriate community-based leisure facilities such as shopping, cinema, bowling and swimming. Some students also attend community-based clubs and events on a regular basis.

How will my child's learning be matched to their needs?

Learning is continuously promoted through full-time attendance at school and through our integrated waking day curriculum approach. Staff in Education, Care and Psychology & Therapies work in close liaison, creating a Team Around the Child (TAC), to ensure that teaching and learning approaches are closely matched to each student's individual learning style, and regularly monitored, assessed and adjusted accordingly.

Communication passports are in place for every student, so that consistency is maintained across all settings. The Individual Learning Plan targets challenge each student to achieve their fullest potential, across the curriculum – whether it be in a lesson at school, preparing a meal in the home setting, or enjoying an activity in the community.

Your child will have meaningful, relevant access to the National Curriculum or Post 16 Curriculum, working towards challenging individual targets. We will continually benchmark their academic progress against national expectations, using the Department for Education's Progression Guidance for students with special educational needs and disabilities.

Your child will benefit from small class groups, based on their age, ability, communication and sensory profile. They will undertake personalised learning programmes, supported by expert teams who work together to meet the diverse needs of all students. They will also be able to access innovative and effective creative arts, functional skills and work-related learning, where appropriate. Our Post 16 Curriculum will enable your child to learn, practice and refine the skills, knowledge and understanding they will need for their adult lives.

What specialist services will be available to my child?

Working with our expert Care and Education teams, our on-site Psychology and Therapies team, of 20 highly skilled professionals, offers a holistic range of therapies, which support development across all aspects of a child's life. Because they are on-site, they can provide a responsive and flexible approach to your child's changing needs, and are able to offer timely support, advice and intervention.

There are also Health team nurses on site to support your child with any specific health needs. They will liaise closely with you and the key professionals supporting your child's health, and will train and advise staff, according to your child's agreed health support plan. Having this wealth of on-site knowledge and experience here at Sunfield, from a variety of professional disciplines, will enable your child's needs to be understood and met by a qualified and experienced team, who will work together to create the Team Around your Child (TAC).

How will Sunfield support my child's overall well-being?

In our experience, happy and secure children and young people are more able to learn and thrive, so our priority will be to support your child's well-being and emotional needs, so they can more confidently and effectively access their living and learning experiences.

If your child needs additional intervention, our teams in Health, and Psychology and Therapies, are on-hand, and on-site, to assess, advise and further support their emotional well-being.

Sunfield has an excellent track-record of helping children to change their own life, by engaging effectively with their living and learning experiences. The resulting increase in skills, confidence and ability to communicate empowers them to make a very real difference to their life.

The educational, therapeutic and leisure activities throughout their waking day will provide your child with a range of experiences tailored to their needs – from the security of regular activities, to fresh adventures that will help them to push their boundaries and expand their world.

What training do the staff supporting my child have?

Sunfield has a rigorous selection process, aimed at securing only the highest quality team members from the outset. Once selected, all new staff undertake an induction programme of mandatory training, to ensure they have the required skills and knowledge to undertake their role.

This is followed by our programme of additional and ongoing training, which provides staff with further mandatory training, enhances any role-specific skills and supports their wider career development. Sunfield's teams continually share their own expert knowledge, experience and understanding of each child with each other, to provide the highest quality bespoke care and education.

How are families involved with Sunfield?

We see you and your family as partners in your child's journey through Sunfield. We will liaise with you on all aspects of your child's life here. We have an open-door policy, so you are welcome to request a visit at any time, and we will do our utmost to accommodate your request.

As part of your child's Individual Learning Plan, individual targets will be determined at the beginning of each term, after informed consultation with you, and are reviewed regularly. Teachers also keep in touch with families by telephone throughout the term. A report is sent to parents at the end of each term. In addition, a report on the progress of your child will be written for the Annual Review of their Statement, when amendments may be made, if necessary.

Sunfield's dedicated Family Services team support the whole family through a variety of support services, including training seminars for family members. Our sibling support programme enables brothers and sisters to get involved and have fun too; making new friends and sharing experiences. Our Family Centre has two self-contained flats available to families for overnight or weekend stays. We also have a suite of rooms for day visits, offering comfortable homely spaces where you can spend precious quality time with your child.

Sunfield has a Family Forum group, comprised of parents, siblings and grandparents, who represent the wider family population. They meet each term, with representatives from the Leadership Team and Family Services team, to discuss and reflect on organisational issues, new plans and areas of organisational development.

How will Sunfield prepare my child for the transition to the next stage of their life?

Sunfield will prepare your child for transition from the day they join us, by developing their independence skills and identifying strategies to support their communication, learning, behaviour and sensory needs; all of which will contribute to the next stage in their life.

In Year 9, Sunfield will begin to plan for the transition into Adult Services, working alongside you, your child and representatives from the local authority. The transitions officer is available to advise in this process and, when your child reaches the FE department, will work closely with all parties to help ensure a coordinated and planned approach to the transition to the new adult provider.

How do I take the next step?

At Sunfield, we aim to inform, support and reassure you, your child and your family from the moment you get in touch with us. If you would like more information, or are considering Sunfield for your child, please contact Sally Conway, Head of Referrals and Admissions, or Deb Whitford, Referrals and Admissions Officer, on 01562 881320 or at referrals@sunfield.org.uk.

You can get in touch to arrange an initial visit, or simply to discuss what Sunfield can offer your son or daughter. We take admissions throughout the year, so please feel free to contact us at any time.

We look forward to hearing from you!

