Admissions FAQs

Thinking about Sallygate? Start here.

Choosing the right school for a child with SEND or SEMH needs can feel complicated. Families often come to Sallygate after a long journey through education, and we know that visiting another school, explaining your child's needs again and understanding the admissions process can feel daunting.

We've answered some of the questions parents and carers most often have below.

What type of school is Sallygate?

Sallygate is an independent specialist school for children and young people aged **8–16**.

We specialise in supporting pupils with **Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs**, often alongside additional needs such as autism, ADHD, communication differences, sensory needs, difficulties with emotional regulation and experiences that may have affected a child's relationship with education.

Our approach combines education, therapeutic practice, strong relationships, Outdoor Learning, enrichment and preparation for life beyond school.

Does my child need an EHCP to attend Sallygate?

Most pupils placed at specialist schools such as Sallygate will have an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**, with their placement usually arranged and funded by a Local Authority.

If you are unsure whether Sallygate could be considered for your child, we would encourage you to speak with your child's SENCO or Local Authority SEND team and contact us to discuss your circumstances.

Can parents apply directly to Sallygate?

Parents and carers are very welcome to contact us and find out more about the school. However, a conversation with Sallygate is not the same as securing a placement. Specialist placements are normally considered through the EHCP and Local Authority consultation process.

We are always happy to help families understand how that process works.

What needs do you support?

Every child is considered individually.

Our pupils may experience SEMH needs alongside autism, ADHD, communication differences, sensory processing needs, anxiety, difficulties with emotional regulation or previous difficulties accessing education.

Rather than asking only **"What diagnosis does this child have?"**, we want to understand the whole child: their strengths, needs, experiences, interests, relationships, communication and what helps them learn successfully.

My child has struggled in previous schools. Could Sallygate still be suitable?

Potentially, yes.

Many children arrive at specialist provision because previous educational experiences have been difficult.

A history of disrupted education, low attendance, anxiety, exclusions, difficulties with behaviour or finding the classroom challenging does not, by itself, tell us whether Sallygate is the right school. We look at **why** those difficulties have occurred, what the child needs and whether Sallygate can safely and effectively meet those needs.

My child is anxious about attending school. How would you support them?

We recognise that simply arriving at school can represent significant progress for some children. Transitions are therefore personalised rather than expecting every pupil to manage exactly the same process.

Depending on the child, this might include visits, meeting key adults, seeing their classroom, photographs or visual information, conversations with parents/carers and professionals, and a carefully planned introduction to school.

The aim isn't simply to get a child through the door.

It's to help them begin to feel that they **belong once they're here**.

Can we visit Sallygate before a placement is agreed?

Where appropriate within the admissions process, families and children can have opportunities to learn more about Sallygate and see the school.

We understand how important this can be. A website can tell you about a school's curriculum and provision, but visiting can help you understand something equally important: **how the school feels**.

How do you decide whether Sallygate can meet my child's needs?

We take admissions seriously because the right placement needs to work for the individual child **and** the wider school community.

When we receive a consultation, we consider the information available about the child's educational, SEND, therapeutic, communication, social and emotional needs.

We consider whether our curriculum, environment, staffing, expertise and peer group can appropriately meet those needs.

Sometimes we may request further information or discussion with the professionals who know the child.

Will you speak to my child's current school or other professionals?

Where appropriate and as part of the formal process, information from the professionals already supporting a child can be extremely valuable.

Understanding what has worked, what hasn't worked and what adults have learnt about the child helps us plan more effectively.

We don't want children and families to feel as though everything has to start again from zero.

What will my child's first few weeks look like?

There isn't one standard answer because there isn't one standard Sallygate pupil.

The early weeks are about establishing relationships, routines and expectations while beginning to understand how the child learns and regulates best.

There will still be learning and clear expectations, but staff will also be paying close attention to communication, sensory needs, relationships, regulation, confidence and how the child responds to different parts of the school day.

SEND should change how we teach, not automatically what we expect.

What does learning look like at Sallygate?

Our children receive a broad and adapted curriculum alongside opportunities for practical learning, Outdoor Learning, physical activity, enrichment, life skills and therapeutic support.

We want children to make academic progress, but preparation for adulthood matters too. Communication, independence, emotional regulation, resilience, relationships, problem-solving and being able to advocate for yourself are all important outcomes.

Do you have therapists at the school?

Yes. Sallygate works closely with its **own therapy team**, enabling educational and therapeutic practice to work together.

The important part of our approach is that therapeutic thinking isn't confined to an appointment. Strategies can be understood and reinforced by the adults working with a child throughout their school week, helping to create greater consistency around them.

How do you manage behaviour?

We start from the understanding that behaviour communicates something, but that doesn't mean there are no boundaries.

Children need adults who are curious about **why** something happened while remaining clear about safety, responsibility and expectations.

Our approach therefore combines relationships, co-regulation, SEND-informed practice, predictable boundaries, reflection and opportunities for children to develop greater independence and accountability over time.

Will my child be expected to wear uniform and follow school routines?

Yes. Sallygate has routines and expectations because predictability and boundaries can help children feel secure and understand what is expected of them.

Where a child's SEND creates a genuine barrier, we consider appropriate adaptations individually rather than assuming the same approach will work for everyone.

How will you communicate with us?

Parents and carers are an important part of the team around the child.

We want communication to be open, direct and constructive – including when things are going well. Families should hear about progress and achievements, not only receive contact when something has gone wrong.

What happens if Sallygate isn't the right school for my child?

Not every specialist school will be right for every child.

If the information available indicates that we would not be able to meet a child's needs appropriately, this will form part of our response to the Local Authority consultation.

A decision that Sallygate isn't suitable is not a judgement about the child.

The important question is always whether the provision, environment and peer group can safely and appropriately meet their individual needs.

Still have questions?

Admissions into specialist education can contain unfamiliar language and processes, particularly for families navigating it for the first time.
So please ask.
There is no expectation that parents and carers should already understand consultations, EHCPs, placement decisions or specialist provision.
Your child is much more than the paperwork that arrives with them.
We want to understand their strengths, interests, personality and aspirations alongside the things they find difficult.
Because finding the right school isn't simply about finding somewhere that can manage a child's needs.
It's about finding somewhere they can **belong, learn and move forward**. **This is Sallygate.**