Your Child’s School Assessment

Information for parents
ASSESSMENT AT CHAILEY HERITAGE SCHOOL AND CHAILEY HERITAGE CLINICAL SERVICES

What is the difference between Chailey Heritage School and Chailey Heritage Clinical Services?

Chailey Heritage School is a non-maintained special school in East Sussex for up to 110 pupils aged 3-19 with physical disabilities and complex needs. Chailey Heritage Clinical Services, which is part of Sussex Community NHS Trust, is based in an adjacent building and provides nurses, doctors, therapists and clinics for pupils at the school, as well as offering a wide range of outpatient services.

How do I arrange for an assessment of my child at Chailey Heritage?

We will carry out an assessment of your child’s needs at Chailey Heritage if your Local Authority is considering placing your child at our school, and has thus asked us to do so. Parents can also request an assessment be carried out if they are naming Chailey Heritage School as their preferred school in an appeal to the Special Needs Tribunal.

Why is my child having an assessment?

The purpose of the assessment is to identify in detail your child’s special educational needs including their physiotherapy, speech and language and occupational therapy needs, nursing and medical needs, and to indicate whether these needs can be met at Chailey Heritage School with support from Chailey Heritage Clinical Services.

The assessment also gives you and your child an opportunity to meet members of the school and clinical services teams who can answer any questions you may have about the school and the clinical support offered here.
How is the assessment organised?

The school assessment consists of two parts, a school based assessment and a clinical services assessment. You will be given appointments on separate days for these. You will also be requested to forward copies of any reports or letters relating to your child, including copies of your child’s current Statement, annual reviews, clinical and therapy reports to the school before the assessment takes place. These will aid our assessment teams in building a working knowledge about your child before spending the assessment time with them.

What do we need to bring to the assessment?

It would be helpful if you could bring the following with you, if relevant to your child:

- A list of any specialist posture equipment your child uses
- Any communication systems that your child uses
- Any special feeding or drinking equipment
- A list of the medication your child is currently taking
- A favourite activity to show us
THE SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT

You and your child will be invited into the school when a number of activities may take place:

There will usually be some 1:1 work for your child with a teacher and an Assistant Head. They will work with your child on activities suitable for his/her age and abilities to see how your child responds. If appropriate, our specialist teacher for sensory impairment may also work with your child. The teacher will also want to discuss with you your views about your child’s special educational needs.

Your child may also spend some time in a group with other pupils of a similar age so that his/her social skills can be assessed.

If you are looking for a residential placement at the school, a Residential House Manager will assess and discuss with you your child’s needs in this area. A speech and language therapist will observe your child eating and drinking during lunchtime. You will also meet a manual handling assessor to ensure we are aware of any issues.

The assessment will consider your child’s Statement of Special Educational Needs to determine whether we can meet the specified needs and provision and if we consider there to be other needs or provision not currently written on the statement.
THE CLINICAL SERVICES ASSESSMENT

This is a two hour assessment held in the clinical services building with a multidisciplinary team including a doctor, nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, family liaison worker and a representative from Chailey Heritage School.

Either a Doctor or a Consultant Paediatrician in Neurodisability will oversee the assessment. He/she will wish to ask some questions about your child’s medical history, health, medication and abilities and may, if appropriate and with your consent, carry out a physical examination.

One of our Physiotherapists will observe your child to get an idea of how he/she moves and what his/her physiotherapy needs may be. If possible, and you and your child are happy, our Physiotherapist may spend some time with your child on a mat supporting him/her in different positions. This will enable the Physiotherapist to have a clear idea of how we can meet your child’s physical needs.

The Occupational Therapist will want to find out how best to support your child to engage in activities. This will involve finding out about any equipment your child uses already and what he/she enjoys doing. This can be through discussion as well as observing your child during the assessment. The Occupational Therapist will also be interested in finding out how your child’s personal care needs, including toileting, and eating and drinking needs are presently met. The Occupational Therapist will be able to discuss with you activities that may be suitable for your child in the future, including sensory play, powered mobility and switch access.
One of the Speech and Language Therapists will want to find out about how you and your child communicate together – this will include details of how your child lets you know what he/she wants, how much he/she is able to understand of what you say and whether you are using any alternative ways of communicating, such as signs or pictures. The Speech and Language Therapist will discuss with you how your child eats and drinks and what he/she would need at mealtimes at school. A Speech and Language Therapist may also observe your child eating at a mealtime, if appropriate, in order to gain information about his/her eating and drinking needs. The therapist may also wish to discuss any difficulties that your child has with saliva control and any treatment he/she has received for this.

One of our Nurses will be present throughout the assessment to determine how best to support you and your child’s nursing needs. This will involve finding out about any previous and present medical issues and how these affect your child.

At Chailey Heritage we have a Jewell Trust Family Liaison Worker whose role is to support parents of children at Chailey Heritage School. She will make contact with you before the assessment and will attend the clinical services assessment to support you. Parents coming for a school assessment are welcome to contact her by phone/email to discuss any issues or worries about the process (tel: 01825 722112 ext 7736 or email: Denise.Howard2@nhs.net).

Should I visit the school before the assessment?

We strongly recommend and encourage that Parents come and visit the school before the assessment if they have not already visited informally. A visit will give you an opportunity to have a look at the school, equipment and facilities and talk to the Headteacher or an Assistant Head and other school staff, as well as seeing some of our pupils at work and play.

Please contact the school office (Tel: 01825 724444 ext 100) to arrange a school visit.
What happens after the assessment?

The whole team from both the School and Clinical Services meet to discuss what needs your child has, whether his/her needs can be met here and how this would be implemented.

You will then receive a copy of the two full assessment reports from the school and clinical services, to which all the professionals involved have contributed. The assessment reports will detail your child’s special educational needs, our recommendations for the provision they require and will highlight whether we feel able to meet your child’s needs. If a referral to assess your child was received via your Local Authority, the reports are also sent to them with details of the school’s fees. The fees for Chailey Heritage Clinical Services are sent with the multidisciplinary clinical assessment reports to your local PCT (Primary Care Trust) who normally pay for the clinical provision provided for your child.

If funding for a placement at Chailey Heritage School is agreed, the Local Authority will need to confirm this in writing to the school, and the Primary Care Trust to Clinical Services, before a placement can be arranged. Once this has been received, further information about the school and the department your child will be joining, along with practical arrangements for your child starting with us, will then be sent to you.