

# TAFELBERG SCHOOL

## ADMISSION POLICY

**Implementation date : 2016/01/01**

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**Mr L E Benecke**  
**Principal**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Given that Specialised Education is extremely expensive, personnel needs are highly specialised and places are limited at all Special Schools, Tafelberg recognises the importance of correct diagnosis and placement of learners. Furthermore, we recognise the policy guidelines that the aim of Special Schools such as Tafelberg is to place learners back into the mainstream education system as soon as the school identifies such learners.

This policy follows the guidelines and aims as established by the SASA, White Paper 6, the demands of National Policy on Inclusive Education, and policies regarding school admissions as set out by the DoBE and WCED. Further, it will not discriminate on grounds of socio-economic conditions, religion, gender nor ethnicity. The over-riding factor is whether the learner will benefit from the intensive and varied intervention and remediation programme offered at Tafelberg.

This policy also embodies the ethos and Mission Statement of Tafelberg Special school, and is also mindful of the need to provide special educational support to learners with special educational needs as far as it is practically possible, given the infrastructure and human resources available to Tafelberg School.

## 2. DEFINITIONS / ABBREVIATIONS

- a) CAPS : Continuous Assessment Policy Statement
- b) DoBE : National Department of Basic Education
- c) FET : Further Education and Training phase (Grades 10-12)
- d) GET : General Education and Training phase (Grades 1-9 – compulsory education)
- e) ILST : Institutional-based Learning Support Team
- f) LOLT : Language of Learning and Teaching as used at a school
- g) MNED : Metro North Education District
- h) RNCS : Revised National Curriculum Statement
- i) POS : Public Ordinary School (state mainstream school)
- j) PSS : Public Special School
- k) SASA : South African Schools Act
- l) SLD : Specific Learning Difficulties
- m) WCED : Western Cape Education Department
- n) WP6 : White Paper 6, legislation regulating specialised education and inclusivity

## 3. PURPOSE

To provide clear, transparent guidelines and procedures for the admission of learners with special education needs to Tafelberg School.

Furthermore, parents enrolling their children at Tafelberg understand, accept and comply with the admission criteria of Tafelberg School.

Since Tafelberg is a PSS with a particular focus on SLD, and that the school enrolment number is capped, all role players need to be cognisant of the fact that Tafelberg needs to admit learners who can and will benefit from the specialisation offered at the school.

#### **4. GENERAL ADMISSION CRITERIA**

- All admissions will be dealt with according to the SIAS policy document, and via formal sifting panel meetings which includes the school, MNED and WCED role players.
- Tafelberg is a co-educational school, providing education to learners from Grade 1 - 12
- Tafelberg School provides appropriate education and therapy for specific categories of learners, whose educational needs cannot be fully accommodated at a POS.
- Placement at Tafelberg School depends on whether the learner will benefit from the specialised educational intervention the school can provide.
- Tafelberg School's area of focus and expertise is in the area of SLD.
- Social and emotional difficulties should be secondary to the specific learning barrier
- Tafelberg School is a day school and does not offer boarding/residential facilities.
- Tafelberg School does not administer a transport service, thus it does not transport learners to and from school. Parents are, as per SASA, responsible to get their child to and from school.
- A winter and summer league sport programme is offered for boys and girls.
- The LOLT is English.
- Learners are assessed at the end of each phase to establish whether placement at Tafelberg should continue or whether alternative placement should be exercised
- Tafelberg is capped at 400 learners.
- Grade 4-9 class groups should not exceed 17 learners. The only exception is made in the FET phase where classes are limited to 18 learners per class, and in the Foundation Phase where classes range between 12 and 16 per class.
- The Tafelberg uniform regulations are part of the admission requirements. Thus, all learners must wear the proper designated uniform as per the School Uniform Rules :
  - School uniform
  - Physical Education uniform
  - Sport kit/uniform
- The acknowledgement and acceptance of the school Code of Conduct is an admission requirement.
- The school uniform, magazine and parent workshop fees, as agreed to by the parents at the AGM, is an admission requirement.
- Tafelberg School is a Section 21, fee-paying PSS, and as such sets annual school fees which are levied on all parents with learners at the school. Furthermore, as required by SASA, the SGB is obligated to collect such fees from each parent, including any legal means available to do so. Parents who can prove financial difficulties may apply for exemption according to the legal prescripts, and criteria.
- All therapies provided for at the school, are inclusive of the school fees.
- All learners admitted to Tafelberg must have proof of the necessary immunisations.

#### **5. ADDITIONAL ADMISSION CONSIDERATIONS**

- Learners should be 18 years or younger.
- Proof of previous intervention and support as per SIAS policy must be provided.
- Emergency transfers, and transfers of learners from other Special Schools in other Provinces will be processed as per WCED policy.
- Parents need to commit to supporting the school and the learner.
- Late referrals will be considered on merit, at convened sifting panel meetings.

## 6. EXCLUSION

The following learners will not benefit from placement at Tafelberg School :

- Learners with drug-related dependencies.
- Learners with a history of poor work ethics – refusal to do work, regular absenteeism, does not study or hand in work, regularly does not have books and equipment at school.
- Parents who refuse to be involved in the educational process.
- Learners with behaviour difficulties – conduct disorder, oppositional-defiant behaviour, criminal records.
- Learners with below average/borderline cognitive ability. Intellectual potential should fall in the average category (verbal and non-verbal scales = or > than 90)
- No history of interventions, as required by SIAS.

## 7. CURRICULUM

Tafelberg offers the CAPS curriculum and Grade 12 NSC examination.

The subjects/learning areas for the Grades 1-9 (GET) are compulsory and follows the DoBE requirements.

The FET phase learners are required to take the following subjects (7 in all) offered at Tafelberg :

- English HL - compulsory
- Afrikaans FAL - compulsory
- Math Literacy - compulsory
- Life Orientation - compulsory
- 3 electives chosen by the learner, one from each of the following groups :
  - Computer Applications Technology or Geography
  - History or Business Studies
  - Civil Technology or Design or Consumer Studies

These are the only subjects offered at Tafelberg School.

## 8. THERAPIES AND SUPPORT

The following therapies and educational assistance are offered according to the needs and age of the specific learner :

- Physiotherapy
- Speech and language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Psychotherapy
- Learning support
- Social skills training
- Alternative examination methods
- Electronic assistive devices for learning and examinations

## 9. BARRIERS TO LEARNING

- a. Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD) :
  - Average to above average learning potential with a significant discrepancy between learning potential and achievement, despite prior interventions
  - Evidence of SLD are identified in one or more of the following areas : reading, writing, spelling, spoken language, comprehension, memory, numeracy or perceptual skills
  - Underachievement should not be the result of poor work ethic, psychiatric disorders, trauma, neglect, drug addiction
  
- b. Neurological disorders :
  - ADHD is a neurological dysfunction and must be differentiated from the hyperactive type behaviour caused by trauma, certain medical conditions, severe cognitive impairment and substance-induced behaviour
  - ADHD must be identified by a neurologist/psychologist or paediatrician according to the diagnostic criteria in the DSMTV, with supportive observations by teachers and parents in different settings
  - Learners with epilepsy or cerebral palsy may be referred to Tafelberg School should the learner have the learning potential to cope with the demands of the CAPS mainstream syllabus, and where the learner's needs can be accommodated on merit
  - Tourette's disorder can also be accommodated should the learner have the potential to cope, and the school be able to accommodate such learner on merit.
  
- c. Autistic spectrum disorder :
  - Learners identified on the spectrum may be accommodated at Tafelberg School provided the learner has the learning potential, can cope with the social environment, and the school can accommodate him/her needs.
  
- d. Sensory barriers :
  - *Visual barriers* : partially-sighted learners whose needs cannot be met at POS, who do not need Braille and who have the learning potential, may be admitted on merit.
  - *Hearing barriers* : learners with hearing impairments but are not mute nor use sign language, and who have the learning potential but cannot be helped at POS can be admitted on merit.
  
- e. Physical barriers :
  - Learners with physical barriers that cannot be accommodated at POS, but have the learning potential and do not need constant medical care and or monitoring, may be admitted on merit.
  
- f. Intellectual barriers :
  - A limited number of learners with mild intellectual barriers, younger than 12 years of age, and on evidence that he/she cannot be accommodated at a POS or unit class, may be accommodated at Tafelberg on merit.
  - Learners with intellectual barriers will be referred to Schools of Skills in the year they turn 14 years of age and are no longer able to benefit from the educational programme at Tafelberg School.

- g. Behaviour barriers :
  - Learners with behaviour barriers as the primary barrier to learning cannot be accommodated at Tafelberg School.
- h. Barriers resultant of substance abuse :
  - Learners with substance addiction and or regular use of illegal substances cannot be accommodated at Tafelberg School
- i. Psychiatric / emotional barriers :
  - Learners who are emotionally vulnerable without additional barriers to learning may be accommodated at Tafelberg School if there is evidence that they do not cope at a POS. There must be written evidence of psychiatric intervention and treatment – condition must be managed medically, and the learner must be able to cope with the curriculum.

## **10. REFERRAL PROCEDURE : GRADES 1-12**

The referral procedure is in accordance with that prescribed by the WCED Special Education Directorate, and in accordance with the SIAS document :

1. The correct WCED application documents must be used
2. All referrals are conducted via the learner's present pre-school / school's SBST, which send said referral to their local District Office. MNED processes referrals/applications for Tafelberg School.
3. The MNED SLES component will screen all applications.
4. Applications that are deemed suitable by MNED, are then captured on a data base.
5. The application is then referred to Head Office (WCED) for approval of Directorate : Special Education (Mrs B Daniels). Once it is signed, it is sent back to MNED.
6. MNED then forwards the application to Tafelberg School.
7. A multi-professional team will then screen all the applications at a sifting panel meeting.
8. Interviews with the parents and learner may be conducted to ascertain more information.
9. Suitable applications are then placed immediately, if there is a vacancy in the particular Grade.
10. Should there be no vacancy, the applicant is placed on a waiting list at the school.
11. Parents are informed in writing whether their child has been placed, or whether they are on the waiting list.
12. If a vacancy arises, the waiting list is consulted and a learner identified for the placement, and an interview with the parents and the learner will be conducted.
13. Should a learner be on the waiting list for more than a year, the parents need to inform the school, in writing, that they wish their child's name remain on the waiting list.
14. Should a learner remain on the waiting list for more than three years, the learner will be removed from the waiting list, and a new, updated application must then be made.
15. The psychologist may request any additional information with regard to any of the applications received, if needed.
16. Incomplete applications will not be processed for admission.
17. A parent is entitled to submit, together with the application, such additional documentation that may demonstrate compliance with the admission criteria.
18. Except for Grade 1, neither parents nor schools may contact Tafelberg School directly to place a learner.

19. A learner may be admitted for a trial period of no longer than 4 weeks, if request by the multi-disciplinary team at Tafelberg, after screening of such an application.
20. The psychologist is responsible for processing applications, but may consult with other therapists. The psychologist must also inform the administrative staff and teachers when a new learner is admitted.

## **11. REFERRAL PROCEDURE : GRADE 1**

1. The following documentation is required with all Grade 1 applications :
  - Covering letter of application, with parent contact details
  - Private Psycho-Educational assessment
  - Medical reports
  - Proof of immunisations
  - School reports
  - Certified birth certificate of learner
  - Certified I.D. documents of BOTH parents

## **12. TRANSFER PROCEDURE**

1. For learners transferring between Provinces, the same procedure as for Discharge is followed.
2. For learners transferred within the Western Cape Province, the application from the parents, and a report and motivation from the school as well as the official referral form must be forwarded to MNED, which will forward it to Head Office.
3. Upon receipt of the signed document, the procedure follows that of a learner leaving the school.
4. Parents removing their child from Tafelberg School because they are relocating to another city / Province must make a written request for the documents and transfer-out forms at least one month before the child is to be removed.
5. Parents must request in writing, that the relevant documents be forwarded to the next school.

## **13. DISCHARGE / DE-REGISTRATION OF LEARNERS**

1. The parent must provide the school with a letter informing the WCED of :
  - The reason the learner is leaving Tafelberg
  - The name, address and contact details of the new school
  - Last day of attendance at Tafelberg
2. Psychologist will send the parents a WCED Parental Request for Discharge/Transfer document to complete.
3. WCED document (2 copies) will be completed by the Psychologist and Principal
4. Transfer of Learner form will be completed by the Psychologist and signed by the Principal.
5. All documents will then be forwarded to MNED.
6. When the signed documents are returned to Tafelberg, the parents are informed in writing.
7. Any relevant documents etc (eg reports, medication is any etc) will be handed to the parent on the learner's last school day at Tafelberg School, by the class teacher.
8. The learner must hand in all textbooks, readers etc before, or on their last school day.
9. Grade 12 learners who pass the final NSC examinations, are automatically discharged from the CEMIS by the WCED.
10. Learners emigrating or enrolling at private schools / colleges will be de-registered from CEMIS

## **14. PLACEMENT AT POS/MAINSTREAMING**

It is expected, as per Policy, that Tafelberg recommend learners be mainstreamed as soon as it becomes necessary.

### *A. Recommendation from Tafelberg School :*

1. Learners for mainstreaming will be identified by a multi-professional team.
2. The learners will be screened.
3. The psychologist will contact the parents with the recommendation.
4. The psychologist helps parents arrange placement at a POS, and discharges the learner.

### *B. Parental request :*

1. Parental requests for mainstreaming will be forwarded to a multi-professional team, who will make a finding on the request.
2. This finding will be forwarded to the parent in writing.
3. Should the team agree, the same procedure as above will be followed.
4. Should the team disagree with the parental request, it will be communicated in writing to the parent.
5. Should the parent disregard the Tafelberg School's recommendation against mainstreaming, and unilaterally remove their child, Tafelberg School cannot be held responsible should the said learner not cope at the POS, and returning to a Special School is not guaranteed. Their vacated place will be filled immediately when Tafelberg School has a suitable application.

Parents must inform Tafelberg immediately their child has been accepted at a POS.

## **15. ASSESSMENTS / SCREENING**

The following assessments / screenings may be conducted by the therapy department on a learner, as and when required, should time allow :

- Social-emotional
- Intellectual
- Physio
- Speech
- Occupational

Parents will be informed of any assessment.