

## **Arkansas School for the Deaf: Admissions Policy**

The Arkansas School for the Deaf (“ASD”) was established for the education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children of Arkansas (AR Code § 6-43-301 (2020)). ASD is a division of the Arkansas Department of Education (“ADE”), an agency of the State.

The Arkansas School for the Deaf considers applicants on an individual basis, reviewing eligibility based on standardized criteria and requirements approved by the Board of Trustees and in accordance with State and Federal guidelines. Should a family consider relocating to Arkansas or the Little Rock area for the purpose of enrolling their child in ASD, it is strongly encouraged that Parents/Guardians contact the Arkansas School for the Deaf Admissions department prior to relocating. Not all prospective students who apply for admissions to ASD are eligible. Applicants who do not meet the ASD’s admission criteria will not be eligible for enrollment. If ASD determines that a prospective student does not meet the admission criteria, ASD can provide resources to the family or the local education agency (LEA) upon request. To qualify for admission, a student must meet the following criteria:

- A. A disability of hearing loss [defined as Deafness and Deaf-Blindness] (ADE Eligibility Criteria and Program Guidelines for Children with Disabilities, Ages 3-21);
- B. Between the ages of three (3) and twenty-one (21) years;
- C. Legal resident of the State of Arkansas (students from other countries may be admitted to the school upon approval of the Board of Trustees) (AR Code § 6-43-107 (2020))
- D. School age programs –
  - a. Arkansas Code 6-18-207 concerning enrollment for Kindergarten students:
    - i. A student may enter kindergarten in the public schools of this state if he or she will attain the age of five (5) years on or before August 1 of the year in which they are seeking initial enrollment;
  - b. All students with hearing loss are considered for enrollment from age five (5) through age twenty-one (21);
- E. Pre-K/Kindergarten through Grade 12 students should meet the following criteria as related to intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior:
  - a. adjust socially and psychologically to day program and/or residential environment, presenting no deficits in adaptive behavior which would interfere with either their own or other students’ welfare;
  - b. demonstrates and exhibits, by observations and/or assessment from school staff members, a range of abilities that warrants placement;
  - c. exhibits and demonstrates by observations and/or assessment by school staff members, independent self help abilities (such as eating, dressing, bathing, toileting, adaptation to new environment, etc.);

NOTE: In the event that it is not possible to determine a child’s level of intellectual functioning due to inability to carry out the tasks presented during intellectual and/or educational evaluations, including immaturity or emotional disorders, a child may be accepted for an observation period when considering admission.

## ADMISSION & ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

### **Admission Procedures:**

All prospective students are required to complete the admission process according to the requirements outlined below.

1. Complete the online Intake Application for Potential Enrollment;
2. Schedule and attend a Meet & Greet at Arkansas School for the Deaf;
3. Submit the child's most recent audiogram to Admissions department;
4. Complete the "Student Records Request" from the child's Local Education Agency, including-
  - a. Current IEP Notice of Action indicating Arkansas School for the Deaf as the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Upon receipt of this information, the ASD Admissions Team will review the materials to determine eligibility. The Admissions Team may consist of the following: Admissions Director, Special Education Supervisor, Principal, Superintendent, Residence Life Director, etc. If all information is in order, and eligibility for admission has been determined, (educational placement within the school's programs will be determined by the student's Individual Education Plan), students will be instructed to complete the enrollment process and a start date will be determined following completion and acceptance of all required documentation.

*Students who are expelled, suspended, or enrolled in an alternative learning setting from other school systems will not be allowed to enroll in the Arkansas School for the Deaf. Any discipline action or sanction from another district will be recognized at ASD and will be referred to as a reason for declining enrollment eligibility.*

### **Admissions & Enrollment Processes:**

1. ASD serves students who are residents of Arkansas.
2. Students must have been determined by their local school districts to be eligible for educational services as students with a hearing loss.
3. Referrals for consideration for admission can be initiated by the student's Parents/Guardians or the local school district. The local school district would need to hold a Due Process Committee Meeting to request admission to ASD.
4. The school is intended to serve students who require specialized or intensive educational or related services related to Deafness, also defined as hearing loss. All students' applications will be reviewed by the ASD Admissions Team.
5. The first point of contact at ASD is the Director of Admissions at 501-324-9751, 501-541-7062, and/or [admissions@asdleopards.org](mailto:admissions@asdleopards.org).
6. The Special Education Supervisor will explain the admissions process to the representative of the local school district. It is advised that an ASD representative be invited to the IEP conference in which placement at ASD is discussed. The local school district representative will be asked to send a copy of the student's IEP Notice of Action indicating a *change of placement*, ASD as the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

- a. The IEP Notice of Action must indicate ASD as the least restrictive environment under one of the following-
  - i. Day program
  - ii. Residential program
    1. Eligibility for ASD's Educational Services does not mean that the child is automatically eligible for residential services. Enrollment into ASD's residential program is a separate consideration and process, even for a student currently enrolled in ASD's day program.
    2. ASD's residential services mirror home-like settings with supervision and support for children. (See our Student Life Program section for more information.)
    3. ASD's residential program is not intended to be a treatment program. To qualify for residential services, the child must meet specific criteria that include the following:
      - a. Child lives too far to commute daily; defined as a 50 miles radius from ASD;
      - b. Child is five years or older by the first day of the current school year;
      - c. Child must have basic age appropriate self-help skills;
      - d. Child must not be a danger to themselves and others;
      - e. Child must not have a history of engaging in illegal/dangerous activities;
      - f. Child does not require one-on-one assistance or supervision and is able to follow the residential program's age-appropriate schedule.
7. The local school district in conjunction with the Parents/Guardians of the prospective student sends all requested materials to the ASD Director of Admissions and/or Special Education Supervisor.
8. At any point in the admissions process, Parents/Guardians and local school district representatives are welcome to tour the campus and meet staff members.
9. After receiving the student application and other documentation requested, the ASD admissions team will review all information to determine 1) if the student is eligible for services at ASD; and if so, 2) whether it appears that the student is receiving a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) from the local district and what modifications to the current IEP need to be implemented to ensure that the student will receive the most appropriate programming possible at ASD. The Committee determines whether the student is admitted, not admitted or whether additional information is needed. An on-site visit to the local school district may be requested to obtain further information.
10. The Director of Admissions, in collaboration with the Special Education Supervisor, will notify the local school district and the student's Parents/Guardians of the decision of the ASD Admissions Team.
11. If the local school district is not satisfied with the recommendation of the ASD Admissions Team, it may appeal the decision to the ASD Director of Admissions.

12. If the student is admitted, the Director of Admissions, Special Education Supervisor, Principal, and program supervisors determine the program placement and tentative enrollment date for the student.
13. The ASD Director of Admissions arranges the student's enrollment date with the local school district and Parents/Guardians.
14. Enrollment materials will be sent to the Parents/Guardians and must be received before the student can enroll at ASD.
15. On the day of enrollment, the student and family participate in registration activities. This includes meeting staff who will work with the student at ASD, checking in with the school nurses, and moving the student into the dormitory if the student will be a residential student.
16. ASD, the local school district, and the Parents/Guardians or adult student will review the student's educational placement every year at the annual AR/IEP Committee Meeting.
17. Prior to a child's admission to an Arkansas public school, the Parents/Guardians, or responsible person shall provide the school district with one of the following documents indicating the child's age:
  - a. A birth certificate;
  - b. A statement by the local registrar or a county recorder certifying the child's date of birth;
  - c. An attested baptismal certificate;
  - d. A passport;
  - e. An affidavit of the date and place of birth by the child's Parents/Guardians;
  - f. Previous school records; or
  - g. United States military identification ACA 6-18-208 (b)