

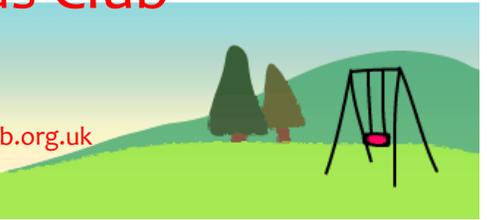
Special Friends Club

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Registered Charity 1142501

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Special Friends Club - Membership Policy

Eligibility

To be eligible to join Special Friends Club, a family must:-

- Reside at an address with a postal code in the counties of either Bristol or South Gloucestershire,
- Have parental or other legal responsibility for a child, over the age of 3 and under the age of 18 (as at the date of application) who has a 'disability' or additional need which makes it difficult for them to access mainstream activities, and
- Provide documentary evidence of the 'disability' or additional need, as outlined in the application form.

Membership

Special Friends Club welcomes the whole family.

Siblings (under the age of 18) are encouraged to become members of the Club and attend activities. Step-siblings can also be included in a family's membership if they will be attending activities with the family.

Parents / carers are expected to attend each activity with their child(ren) and assume responsibility for them for the duration of each activity.

We want all of our members to enjoy being part of our inclusive Club and therefore we will not accept any form of discriminatory behaviour.

Subscriptions

Families are expected to pay a quarterly subscription for each child member, including siblings who attend activities.

Subscriptions are collected by Standing Order on 1st Jan, 1st April, 1st July and 1st October each year.

A reduced level of subscription is available to those families who are in receipt of Income Support. Evidence of this benefit will be required.

Subscription levels are reviewed each year by the Trustees at the meeting prior to the Club's AGM.

The first subscription is due on joining the Club. If the next school holiday is due *before* the next collection date, then an immediate payment will be due and will be collected by Standing Order. If the next school holiday is *after* the next collection date then the payment will be collected on the next collection date. Eg

A family joining on 11th May will pay an immediate payment to cover the May half term activities, and their regular subscriptions will then start on 1st July.

A family joining on 29th June will start their regular standing order on 1st July and will attend their first activities in the Summer Holidays.

Membership numbers

The Trustees set a ceiling for membership numbers after taking the following into consideration:-

- Venue capacities and average uptake for 'number restricted' activities
 - the Trustees will look to minimise the risk of activities being oversubscribed, and families being turned away.
- Funding levels and potential
 - the Trustees will consider the current Fundraising climate to reduce the risk that insufficient funding is available to fund increased membership numbers
- Administrative capacity
 - the Trustees will ensure that the growth in membership numbers does not jeopardise the smooth running of the club

The Trustees will review increasing the membership capacity, based on number of families, at least twice a year.

In the event that more families apply to join than places are available, a waiting list system will be in operation.

Operation of the waiting list

A waiting list will be operated in the event that more families apply to join, than places are available.

A family will only be added to the waiting list once an application form is received. Email, telephone and verbal enquiries will not constitute adding a family to the waiting list.

The date the application form is signed and dated is the date that will be used to determine that family's place on the waiting list. When an application form is received, the date it is signed will be checked for reasonableness by the Trustee receiving it.

Receipt of an application form will be acknowledged by email (or letter where no email address is supplied). If the applicant is being placed on the waiting list this will be explained in the acknowledgement.

A place will become available in the following instances:-

- A existing family leaves the Club
- A family does not keep their subscriptions up to date and notice is served
- A family are invited to join and do not take up the offer of a place
- The Trustees decide membership capacity can be increased and additional places are created
- A family or group is considered to be 'high priority' by the Trustees, and a quorum of Trustees agrees that family should join immediately, even where no formal place is available.

When a place becomes available, it will be offered to the next family on the waiting list – the family who has been waiting the longest according to the date their application is signed.

The exception to the 'longest wait' rule is where a family or group is considered to be 'high priority' by the Trustees. Providing a quorum of Trustees agree that the family should offered an immediate place then they will take precedence over any families above them on the waiting list.

Accepting a place

When a place becomes available for a family to join, they will be contacted by email (or 'phone if no email address is supplied) to invite them to join. They will be sent full details of membership, a standing order and details of forthcoming activities.

If they have not previously done so, the family will be asked to provide evidence of their child's additional need / disability. If the evidence is not provided or is inconclusive the Trustees reserve the right to withdraw the offer of a place – this decision will need to be agreed by a quorum of Trustees.

The family will be asked to confirm acceptance of the place, usually within 10 days.

If no confirmation is received within this timeframe, another attempt to contact the family will be made by an alternative method eg phone or letter

If this is unsuccessful and acceptance of the place cannot be confirmed then the place will be reallocated to the next family on the list.

Once a place has been offered and not accepted, the family's details will be held on the database and should they contact us again within 3 months they will automatically go back to the top of the waiting list for the next available place.

As soon as a family confirms their place, they will be added to the database as members and included in the Club's email circulation list and invited to future activities.

Cessation of membership

In certain situations a family may decide to leave the club.

Additionally, there are certain situations where the Trustees may invoke notice and membership of the club will cease:-

- The child with 'additional need' reaches their 19th Birthday
- The child with 'additional need' makes significant progress to the extent that they no longer fulfil the Club's requirement for 'Evidence of difficulty in accessing mainstream activities'
- Subscriptions are not paid
- Repeated non-attendance at pre-booked activities
- Failure to comply with Club rules

The Trustees 2013