



Moor House School & College

Admissions Policy

April 2017

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Who needs to read this:	Governors, Parents and staff involved in the admissions process
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The person responsible for this policy is:	The Head of Therapy Services
The committee responsible for this policy is:	Every Child Matters Committee

Introduction and Guiding Principles

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that clear communication exists between prospective students and families who wish to attend Moor House School & College (Moor House) as well as external referrals and the school in relation to criteria for admissions. It aims to set out how the school and college manage the process of pre-admission assessment. It also outlines the profile of special educational needs that we have specialist expertise in and the services that we offer to support our students.

Moor House seeks to provide an effective and holistic education for children and young people aged 7 to 19 with severe speech and language impairments and associated difficulties. Our teaching and learning and therapies involve the use of specific methodologies and approaches which are known to be effective for this profile of need. Our staff has specialist knowledge and skills in the teaching and learning of students with severe speech and language impairments and many have additional formal qualifications in this area of special educational needs. Whilst we recognise that many children and young people may benefit from our high teacher/ student ratios and the caring, nurturing environment that we offer, we are very careful in recommending our provision to Local



Authorities and do so only for those cases which we feel require our provision in order to meet their full academic, social and emotional potential.

Moor House takes the decision for students and families to undertake a pre-admission assessment very carefully. We do not recommend an assessment in cases where we feel, based on the case paperwork, the student may not meet the clinical profile of our admissions policy. Our admissions assessment process is lengthy and detailed to ensure that we are making the right decision for the prospective student and family. We have an admissions team who are specifically dedicated to this process and all decisions are multi-disciplinary. This policy aims to set out the process of pre-admission and our decision-making.

The Responsibility of the School and College and Staff in Supporting this Policy

- The school and college take the assessment of suitability of prospective students and families very seriously and are committed to gathering sufficient detailed information to make an informed choice.
- The pre-admission decision regarding suitability is a multidisciplinary one, across teaching, therapy, medical and care.
- The pre-admission process at Moor House School & College is thorough and unbiased.
- All staff in the wider school community are invited to provide information about pre-admission cases as part of the assessment process.
- Parents/carers are kept updated throughout the process of pre-admission assessment as to how their case is being processed by a designated admissions' coordinator.
- The school and college will communicate openly and honestly with parents prior to assessment about any concerns they have in terms of suitability based on the paperwork reviewed.
- All staff will participate in the assessment as agreed prior to the assessment and will submit a verbal report on their view of suitability following assessment. This includes informal observation during unstructured times as well as across learning and social contexts.
- The pre-admission team will endeavour to write a thorough and detailed report following assessment, stating suitability for admission which includes specific recommendations in terms of the student's educational needs and levels of therapy provision required.
- The school and college staff use Team Teach positive handling and de-escalation strategies as part of our Positive Handling Policy. These strategies would also be used to safeguard students during pre-admission assessment if this was required .



The Responsibility of Prospective Families and Students in Supporting this Policy

- Parents/carers and families must visit the school and college prior to their referral being accepted for processing.
- Parents/Carers are asked to supply all relevant information to aid the school and college's decision in carrying out an assessment. Decisions regarding suitability could be postponed and /or reversed in cases where further information comes to light during or after the assessment is complete. In these cases, the information will need to be submitted as soon as possible and the pre-admission team will need to review the case in light of the additional information before a decision can be made.
- In the case where the student has been referred by an external professional, parents/carers will accept the decision of the school re suitability rather than the opinion of the referring agent.
- Parents/carers will support the process of admission and adhere to procedures during the pre-admission process.
- All placements at Moor House are subject to a six month probationary period.

Criteria for Admission

Moor House School and College may be the right place for a student if:

- the student has severe and persisting language disorder / impairment across the range of language domains and is between ages 7 and 19 . This may include a speech impairment.
- the student has a language impairment/disorder or an established diagnosis of Specific Language Impairment (SLI), Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), Language Disorder associated with ASD, Language Disorder associated with brain injury, Language Disorder associated with acquired epileptic aphasia or Language Disorder associated with sensori-neural hearing loss
- the language impairment/disorder **must be** the student's primary barrier to accessing the learning environment and the development of life and social skills
- the student's language disorder is not associated with intellectual disability
- the student needs a mainstream curriculum which is individually designed and delivered for students with persistent speech and language impairments/disorders



- the student needs an intensive and integrated speech and language therapy intervention
- the student may have additional difficulties frequently associated with a severe speech and language impairment /disorder e.g. literacy difficulties, fine and gross motor difficulties (e.g., dyspraxia, dysarthria), verbal dyspraxia, impaired life and social skills, difficulties with attention (e.g. ADHD), auditory processing difficulties

An Overview of the Process of Pre-Admission

i. Referral.

We have an open referral system i.e. we will accept a referral from parent/carers, external professionals and Local Authorities.

ii. The School Visit.

All prospective students' parents/carers must attend for a tour of our school, to find out more about us, prior to a referral being processed.

iii. Pre-admission Paperwork.

Specific written information is required to be submitted prior to a decision being made about the suitability of a pre-admission assessment. These include a current Education, Health Care Plan or equivalent, a recent speech and language therapy report, educational psychology reports, any clinical psychology/psychotherapy reports, current school reports including current National Curriculum levels, occupational therapy reports if appropriate and any relevant medical information.

iv. Pre-Admission Paperwork Review.

Once all of the necessary documentation is received, the paperwork is reviewed by the members of the Senior Management Team (SMT). As well as looking at the information against the criteria above, there are other factors in terms of suitability which need to be considered e.g. gender ratios of previously accepted students, planned class structures and staffing for the next academic year, residential versus day placement availability. A consensus will be reached across the SMT following this review as to whether an assessment is recommended. If further information is felt to be required, the decision may be postponed until this information has been received. In more complex cases or where a child is out of school, a visit to meet the prospective student at home or in their current educational provision may be recommended prior to deciding whether a full pre-admission assessment is appropriate. This may be to carry out a preliminary observation of the



student's functioning and/or to discuss the case with those professionals currently involved. Parents/carers are kept updated at each stage of the preadmission process as to the recommended next steps.



The Pre-Admission Assessment

Once a pre-admission assessment is recommended, a timetable for the assessment is individually tailored to each case. Factors such as the complexity of the profile of the prospective student as well as whether the student is applying for a day or residential place, whether they are school-aged or are applying for a place in KS5 will impact on the length and type of assessments required. If there is a significant medical diagnosis for example, then the assessment process will include an interview with the on-site Health Care Worker/ visiting GP. The minimum standard requirement length of an assessment is 2 days and includes a full speech and language therapy assessment, an occupational therapy assessment, a maths and literacy assessment, classroom observation, play observations, if age appropriate, observation of the student's interaction with peers across different contexts and an informal "life skills" assessment. All students applying for residential placements are assessed in residential care time. If a student undertakes a day placement assessment and at a later stage wishes to be considered for a residential placement, he or she would have to undertake further assessment in residential care time.

The Admissions Team

A highly specialist team of multi-disciplinary professionals conduct the pre-admission assessments. This team includes an experienced Speech and Language Therapist, an Occupational Therapist, a Specialist Teacher with additional qualifications in literacy intervention, an Occupational Therapy Assistant as well as the class or subject Teacher who observes the student in specific lessons. The school also has 2 dedicated admissions co-coordinators who manage the pre-admission process at an operational level and are a key link for parents/carers during the assessment process. The admissions coordinators seek all necessary consent forms and complete a risk assessment prior to the first assessment day. All of the information held on prospective students is stored and dealt with confidentially by this dedicated team and no information is shared with any external agencies without explicit prior consent from parents/carers. This team are experienced in dealing with legal cases and are skilled in managing complex communication situations between different agencies as required.

Decisions about Suitability.

Following the assessment, a detailed case discussion is held with members of the multi-disciplinary team involved in the process. A decision is made regarding the suitability of the prospective student provided that the team are sure that all of the necessary information has been gathered in order to make that decision. Regardless of the referral path, the parents/carers of the prospective student are invited to attend a feedback meeting usually chaired by the Principal and the Head of Therapy.



Depending on the decision and/or the results of the assessment, other staff may attend this feedback meeting if it is deemed useful to the parent/carer.

Pre-Admission Assessment Reports

Following all assessments and regardless of the decision regarding suitability, a report is prepared by the pre-admission assessment team. This is a very detailed report which sets out all of the aspects of the assessment, the results and the implications for the students learning. It also includes specific recommendations across all areas assessed in terms of the educational provision that the student requires including additional types of therapy. If further assessments are recommended, these will also be noted.

Where there is consensus that the provision at Moor House School & College will meet the needs of the prospective student, a letter stating this will be issued on the day of the feedback meeting. Parents/carers are also given a summary of the notes of the discussion meeting with the test results outlined for their information whilst awaiting the full assessment report. The timescale in which the report will be issued is also discussed at the feedback meeting.

**Please note: There is a fee for pre-admission assessment (see appendix 1)*

Regrettably, there are a few occasions when despite our best efforts, it is decided that our provision will not meet the needs of the student. We appreciate the frustration and upset that parents/carers feel on these rare occasions and we aim to work together closely with the family to advise on other types of provision that may be more suited. Where the provision is not deemed to meet the student's needs, the report aims to support and guide the parents/carers in their next steps of finding an alternative provision for their child.

Any appeal against Moor House School & College refusal to admit the student because Moor House could not meet the needs of the student would be brought in the First Tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

Collaborative working with all agencies and tribunals

The school and college support parents/carers who are enduring the process of appeal to seek different provision for their child. We are skilled in working collaboratively with all agencies to ensure the best provision is secured for the student.

**Please note: There is a fee for us to attend tribunals to cover staffing replacement costs. (See appendix 2)*

Summer Term New Intake Day



Once funding has been agreed and a contract has been signed between the school and the Local Authority, all new students and their parents/carers are invited to attend our “New Intake Day” during the summer term prior to their first academic year at Moor House School & College. On this day, families get to meet with the team that will work with their child and the students themselves are orientated to the school environment. The students also have the opportunity to meet their peer group for the next year. The focus of the day is to build relationships with the families so that they and staff at Moor House School & College can work together to meet the needs of their child. In the case where funding is not yet agreed, parents/carers are invite to attend this day. We do not recommend that the student themselves attend in case the placement is not secured.

Admissions Day

Where possible, we aim for all new students to start at Moor House School & College in a phased manner, during the first three to four weeks of the autumn term. Students are scheduled to start in small groups to ensure that they are supported fully in this transition. For residential students, they are shown their bedroom area with their parents in order to settle in and are then taken to their class. Parents/carers of residential students are encouraged to telephone their children regularly and frequently and are encouraged to always speak to staff if they have any concerns resulting from telephone calls with their children.

All parents/carers meet with the Principal and key staff members on Admissions day, when they are given the opportunity to provide additional information about their child and find out more about the school curriculum and policies.

Availability of places

If the demand for PAA assessments and places at the school and college exceeds the number of places available, the families will be informed of this. If they wish to continue to wait for a place their name will be put on the waiting list in the order of their application.

Review

This policy will be formally reviewed six months after its implementation, and annually thereafter, by a multidisciplinary team of staff from across the school’s departments, to check that it continues to represent our aims and practices.



APPENDIX 1

This policy links with the following documentation, which should also be read:

- Equality Act (2010)
- Children and families Act (2014)
- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001).
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice; 0 to 25 years (2014)



Appendix 2

Summary of the Pre Admission Assessment Process and Fees

The pre admission assessment fee is £1,150 and includes:

Two day pre-admission assessment with:

- full clinical assessment by a Specialist Speech and Language Therapist
- full clinical assessment by an Occupational Therapist
- educational assessment through class placement and feedback from Specialist Teacher
- Math and Literacy Assessment
- unstructured observation in dining room, playground and after school time

Following the assessment parents/carers/LAs receive:

- clinical feedback including an explanation of formal assessments and the predicted content of the assessment report
- an offer letter with the school or college's fees
- comprehensive multidisciplinary detailed report including recommendations for educational provision

If a place is not offered, a letter will be written to that effect.

Parents/carers having difficulty meeting the cost of the assessment can request a form for Financial Assistance.

Appendix 3

Summary of the Terms and Conditions that apply for attendance at Tribunals and fees

1. Time at the tribunal is charged at a rate of £300 per person for the day. The initial £300 to be paid four weeks prior to the Tribunal date.
2. Visits to nominated schools that may be required before the Tribunal will be charged at £75 per hour
3. Travel expenses will be charged.
4. If overnight accommodation is required expenses will be charged.
5. In the event of a scheduled tribunal hearing being cancelled, the following fees apply: -
 - £150 if it is cancelled before the day of the Tribunal.
 - The full amount will be refunded if the Tribunal is cancelled with more than two weeks' notice.

