

Moor House School & College



Admissions Policy November 2022

This policy needs to be read by:	Governors, Parents and staff involved in the admissions process
Review cycle:	Annually
Date reviewed	November 2022
Next review date:	November 2023
Current Status	Sent to ECM / Approved by ECM
The person responsible for this policy is:	The Head of Therapy Services & Admissions
The committee responsible for this policy is:	Every Child Matters Committee

Executive Summary

Moor House takes the decision for students and families to undertake a pre-admission assessment very carefully.

- The admissions policy contains detailed information relating to the admissions criteria and the respective responsibilities of the school and the family of the prospective student. This includes details of the fees charged for assessment.
- It provides information about pre-admission processes from referral through to completion of assessment and decision about suitability of Moor House to meet the prospective student's needs.
- It provides information about the report writing process following assessment and multiagency case discussion in relation to time frames, report content and report writing standards in addition to data protection of the assessment information gathered.
- It gives information about our multidisciplinary team and the services we provide pre, during and post assessments including in relation to tribunal proceedings.
- It provides information about the transition process for new starters.

Aim

To offer available placements to prospective students who are considered to meet the admission criteria and require the specialist learning environment, education and fully integrated specialist therapeutic provision provided by Moor House.

Objectives

- to state the profile of special educational needs for which Moor House has specialist expertise and the services it offers to support students
- to set out the student admission criteria
- to set out the student admission process and how this is managed by Moor House
- to clarify the responsibilities of Moor House and of prospective families and students.

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 very seriously and are committed to gathering sufficient information to make informed choices in a thorough and unbiased way.
- The school and college will take decisions regarding suitability with a multidisciplinary focus, across teaching, therapy, medical and care.
- Parents/carers are updated throughout the process of pre-admission assessment 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.
- The pre-admission team will 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.
- Staff use 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 must visit the school and college part of their referral process
- Parents/carers are required to supply all relevant information to aid the school and college in carrying out an assessment and assessing the suitability of the student for placement. Decisions regarding suitability could be postponed and /or reversed in cases where further relevant information comes to light during or after the completion of the assessment, or at any point in the full first term after admission. 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. Moor House reserves the right to withdraw any offer or issue notice of termination once the student has been admitted.
- In cases where the student has been referred by an external professional, parents/carers will accept as final the decision of the school regarding suitability of a student, rather than the opinion of the referring agent.
- Parents/carers will adhere to procedures during the pre-admission process and actively support the process of admission. Failure to provide information or providing inaccurate information could result in withdrawal of any offer or in termination of placement if the student has been admitted.

All placements at Moor House are subject to availability at the point funding is agreed, and to a six-month probationary period. Moor House Expertise and Services

- Moor House School is a highly specialist school providing individualised, targeted, and specialist education to a specific population of children who have severe language disorder and/or speech disorder with average non-verbal cognitive potential.
- Moor House offers high teacher and therapy student ratio within a caring and nurturing environment for children and young people with speech and language disorders. Staff are organised into multi-disciplinary teams with each tutor group consisting of a Teacher, a Special Teaching Assistant (STA), a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) and an Occupational Therapist (OT). Each class has their own Speech and Language Therapist who works only with this group for the duration of the academic year.

This ensures a holistic approach to the planning and delivery of the curriculum, ensuring that students receive specialist language learning teaching throughout the whole school day.

- Our staff have specialist knowledge and skills in the teaching and learning of students with severe speech and language disorders and many have additional formal qualifications in this area of special educational needs. We have a strong ethos of Continuing Professional development and research in order to meet the needs of our students.
- The specialised methodologies and systems used at Moor House in order to develop language and speech skills are integrated throughout the whole curriculum. These include a range of specialist visual systems and strategies (for example SHAPE CODING®), Cued Articulation, and signing with grammatical markers), which are implemented throughout Moor House in all lessons.
- We provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum, incorporating the requirements of the National Curriculum and this is highly modified in presentation, to address and support ongoing development and learning for students with severe speech and language disorders. We do not provide Modern Foreign Languages.
- Our staff have specialist knowledge and skills in the teaching and learning of students with severe speech and language disorders and many have additional formal qualifications in this area of special educational needs. We have a strong ethos of Continuing Professional development and research in order to meet the needs of our students.
- We recognize and accept a wide range of enquiries and applications to Moor House and we have a rigorous admissions process which identifies the students that would be appropriately placed with us. We are very careful in recommending our provision to Local Authorities and families and do so only for those students which require our provision.

Criteria for Admission

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

- the student is between the ages of 7 and 19 and has a severe and persisting language disorder across the range of language domains. This may include a speech impairment/disorder.
- the language disorder must be the student's primary barrier to accessing the learning environment
- 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 language disorders and/or speech disorder.
- the student needs intensive and integrated speech and language therapy intervention.
- the student is socially motivated and is able to demonstrate pro-social skills such as initiation, joint attention and is able to respond to peers in structured and unstructured learning and therapeutic activities and during break times
- the student may have additional difficulties frequently associated with a severe speech and language disorders. Examples may include literacy difficulties difficulties with sustaining focus of attention (such as ADHD), and auditory processing difficulties.

The prerequisite criteria that potential students should meet is outlined above. The decision about suitability and offer of placement is also determined by consideration of all aspects of the student's functioning within the Moor House School & College environment.

Applications for Year 15

The school's Post 16 provision provides educational provision for students in years 12, 13 and 14. Moor House plans a three year programme of study which is reviewed annually with the Stakeholders. Moor House students wishing to remain at the school for year 15 are required to apply to the school to obtain a formal agreement that Moor House is still an appropriate educational placement for the student and that the place is available for student to remain at Moor House.. This view will need to be supported by the student's placing authority. If this agreement has been reached, the placement in year 15 will be subject to the school obtaining exceptional approval from the Department for Education (DfE). Moor House cannot apply for this approval unless all parties are in agreement. If DfE approval is not obtained, the student will not be able to attend Moor House in year 15. If parents are challenging the placing authority of a year 15 placement, Moor House may apply to the DfE for exceptional approval but this will only be valid while the appeal is in process. Such an application will only be made if a place can be made available and, in the case of a residential placement, that accommodation is also available.

Moor House does not provide educational placements for students in years 16 and 17.

An Overview of the Process of Pre-Admission

i. Referral

We have an open referral system, and will accept referrals from parents/carers, external professionals and Local Authorities.

ii. The School Visit

Parents/carers must visit the school and college as part of their referral process.

iii. Pre-admission Paperwork

Specific written information must 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 academic attainment 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. We do not recommend an assessment in cases where we judge, based on the case paperwork, that the student does not or may not meet the clinical profile of our admissions policy. We have an admissions team who are specifically dedicated to this process and all decisions are taken from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

If further information is felt to be required, the decision may be postponed until this information has been received. In more complex cases, a preliminary screening or visit to meet the prospective student either at Moor House, remotely 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/assessment of the student and/or to discuss the case with parents/carers and/or those professionals currently involved with the family. Parents/carers are kept updated at each stage of the pre-admission 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. Families and current school are sent questionnaires to measure aspects of learning and provide developmental context to the child's needs. Parents and the school are requested to return those before the onsite assessment takes place.

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. The minimum standard required length of an assessment is one full day for a day placement 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. Exceptionally the assessment may also include staff from the school observing the student in their current educational setting if it is considered that such a visit is required. 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 conducts the pre-admission assessments. This team includes experienced Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, 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 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 is experienced and 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 student's 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 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. The letter, final assessment report or verbal assurances do not amount to a formal offer. This will be made once funding has been agreed and contracts signed.

**Please note: There is a fee for pre-admission assessment (see appendix 2)*

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.

Formal offer

If Moor House is deemed to be a suitable placement for the prospective student, a formal offer letter will be issued by the school, normally within five working days of the feedback meeting. The offer letter outlines the provision student will receive and includes the schedule of fees specifying the cost of Moor House provision per annum. The offer of placement, specified in the offer letter, is valid for six months from the date of the assessment. The date of expiry of the offer is clearly indicated in the offer letter.

The school recognises that some families are unable to secure their child's placement at Moor House in this period due to circumstances beyond their control. The school will consider any parental request to extend the time of the offer, and extensions will be allowed at the school's discretion on consideration of all of the circumstances of the particular case.

For students seeking a transition placement into year 7 (for secondary transition) and into year 12 (post 16 transition), when the offer stipulates placement for a date in the future, the offer will be valid for two months from the intended start date for the student.

Misuse of the Statutory 'Duty to Admit'

It is expected that Moor House will only be named in Section I of a child's EHCP once a place has been offered. In the event that Moor House is named in Section I when a place has not been offered, the school reserves its right to take appropriate action, whether legal or otherwise, to protect its position and ensure that children are only admitted to the school when it is deemed that they have met the criteria within this policy and a formal offer has been made.

Collaborative Working with all Agencies and Tribunals

Moor House supports 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.

Transition to and Starting at Moor House

Once funding has been agreed, availability of a place confirmed and a contract has been signed between Moor House and the Local Authority, a new student can start at Moor House at any point during the academic school year if this is deemed best for the child and the appropriate curriculum can be provided. For new children starting at Moor House during the academic year, a transition timetable is individually tailored to each case and the family are given contact details of the new teams at Moor House who will assist with transition.

All new students starting at the beginning of the academic year are invited to attend our "Admissions' Day" together with their parents/carers during the summer term prior to their first academic year. On this day, families meet with the members of the Senior Management Team and where possible, 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 can work together to meet the needs of their child. Parents/carers are given the opportunity to provide additional information about their child and find out more about the school curriculum and policies.

In the case where funding is not yet agreed, parents/carers are still invited to attend the Admissions Day. We do not recommend that the student themselves attend in case the placement is not secured. Where possible, we aim for all new students to start at Moor House 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. Parents/carers of residential students are encouraged to telephone their children regularly and frequently and are always encouraged to speak to staff if they have any concerns resulting from telephone conversations with their children.

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 that their applications were received.

When offering residential places to prospective and/or current day students, the school makes offers based on the following criteria which are determined by our residential strategy:

- availability of residential rooms
- order of applications received
- child's age
- gender mix
- availability of the residential placement throughout the child's education at Moor House

If a residential place is not available, the families will be informed of this prior to the pre-admission assessment. If they wish to continue to wait for a place their name will be put on the waiting list.

In rare cases where a residential place is not available but a day place is available, and the prospective student meets the criteria for PAA, the prospective families will be offered the pre-admission assessment if they can make arrangements for their child to attend Moor House as a day student.

Appeals

Appeals against decisions made during the admissions process, whether in relation to the decision to undertake a pre-admission assessment or to offer a place, should be directed in the first instance to the Principal.

Respiratory infection including COVID-19

At the time of the most recent review of this policy there were government guidelines in place for people with symptoms of respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19. As we learn to live safely with COVID-19, there are actions we can all take to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others. If your child or members of your family have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and they have a high temperature or do not feel well, please stay at home and contact the Admissions team who will reschedule your child's assessment.

Review

This policy will be formally reviewed annually by the Head of Therapy Services and Admissions and the Admissions Team, to check that it continues to represent our aims and practices.

This policy links with the following documentation:

- 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)
- Moor House School & College Data Protection Policy (2022)
- Moor House School & College Retention and Archiving Policy (2022)
- Moor House School & College Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures (2022)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education; statutory guidance for schools & colleges (2022)
Department of Education

Summary of the Pre-Admission Assessment Process and Fees

The pre-admission assessment fee is £1,300 (deposit of £250 two weeks prior to assessment and the remainder of the fee on the day of assessment) and includes:

Prior to the assessment day:

Information and data gathering documentation, completed by parents/carers and the current school, is analysed by the multidisciplinary team to prepare individually tailored assessment for your child.

Documentation includes:

- *Medical and dietary information*
- *Risk assessment in relation to child's behaviour (parent questionnaire)*
- *Risk assessment in relation to child's behaviour (school questionnaire)*
- *Full case history*
- *Children's Communication Checklist (parent to complete)*
- *Case History Form – for you to complete about your child.*
- *Sensory Profile Measure– (parent and Teacher to complete)*
- *Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System – (parent and Teacher to complete questionnaire)*
- *Strengths and Weaknesses Questionnaire– (parent and Teacher to complete questionnaire)*
- *'Pragmatics Profile' (a subtest from the Clinical Evaluation of Language- Fundamentals 5th Edition language assessment) to be completed by parent*
- *Behaviour and learning style schedules to be completed by child's current teacher/school*
- *Child's hobbies and interests completed by the family*
- *Specialist teacher has a telephone conversation/Zoom meeting to discuss child's learning and support provided in the current school.*

One day pre-admission assessment with:

- *full clinical assessment by a Specialist Speech and Language Therapist*
- *full clinical assessment by a Specialist 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*

Residential applications

- *Overnight stay with observational assessment of social and life skills, supported by occupational therapy team*

Following the assessment

Following completion of the assessment and collation of all documentation and assessment questionnaires; a multidisciplinary feedback session will be held with all professionals involved in the pre-admission process, the Principal and the Head of Therapy Services. During the meeting the child's needs will be considered and the provision to meet those needs will be mapped out.

Parents/carers/LAs receive:

- *clinical feedback including an explanation of formal assessments and the predicted content of the assessment report within two working days*
- *an offer letter with the school or college's fees if applicable within 5 working days*
- *comprehensive multidisciplinary detailed report within eight weeks of assessment*

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 from the Admission's Team.