



## Admissions Policy

April 2019

<b>This policy needs to be read by:</b>	Governors, Parents and staff involved in the admissions process
<b>Review cycle:</b>	Annually
<b>Next review date:</b>	April 2020
<b>Current status:</b>	Approved by Governors
<b>The person responsible for this policy is:</b>	The Head of Therapy Services & Admissions
<b>The committee responsible for this policy is:</b>	Every Child Matters Committee

### Summary

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

- The admission policy contains detailed information relating to the admissions criteria and the respective responsibilities of the school and the family of the prospective student going through the process. 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 tribunals.
- It provides information about transition process for new starters

## **Aim**

To offer available placements at Moor House to prospective students who, following assessment, meet the admission criteria and need Moor House specialist education with the fully integrated therapeutic provision.

## **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 detailed information to make an informed choice, in a thorough and unbiased way.
- Taking the decision regarding suitability in a multidisciplinary way, across teaching, therapy, medical and care.
- 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 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 based on the paperwork reviewed.
- All staff will participate in the assessment and will submit a verbal report on their view of suitability following assessment. This includes informal observation by staff during unstructured times as well as across learning and social contexts.
- 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 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 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 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.
- All placements at Moor House are subject to a six month probationary period.

### Moor House Expertise and Services

- Moor House provides an effective and holistic education for children and young people aged 7 to 19 with severe speech and language disorders and associated difficulties.
- Our teaching, learning and therapies involve the use of specific methodologies and approaches which are known to be effective for this profile of need.
- 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.
- 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.

### Criteria for Admission

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

- the student has severe and persisting language disorder across the range of language domains and is between ages 7 and 19 . This may include a speech impairment/disorder.
- the student has a language disorder or an established diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), Language Disorder (LD), Specific Language Impairment (SLI), 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 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 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 disorders 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 parents/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.

### **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 academic attainment levels, occupational therapy reports if appropriate and any relevant medical information. 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. We have an admissions team who are specifically dedicated to this process and all decisions are multi-disciplinary.

### **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, a preliminary screening or visit to meet the prospective student either at Moor House 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 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 3 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 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**

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.

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

### **Transition to and Starting at Moor House**

Once funding has been agreed 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.

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 invited to attend this 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 of their application was received.

### **Review**

This policy will be formally reviewed annually, by a multidisciplinary team of staff from across the school's departments, 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 (2018)
- Moor House School & College Retention and Archiving Policy (2018)
- Moor House School & College Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (2019)



**Summary of the Pre Admission Assessment Process and Fees**

The pre admission assessment fee is £1,250 (deposit of £250 two weeks prior to assessment and the remainder of the fee on the day of assessment) 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 if applicable
- comprehensive multidisciplinary detailed report

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.

**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.