

# MORE HOUSE SCHOOL

## POLICY

### ADMISSIONS

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#### Rationale

More House School is committed to empowering boys who experience Specific Learning Difficulties, Developmental Language Disorder and associated conditions to succeed both academically and socially, and to transform their futures.

A nationally celebrated charity, More House School is recognised as an international centre of excellence, helping boys who need a supportive learning environment because they would fail to realise their academic potential within a mainstream school setting. The School provides expertise and provision for the support of boys aged from eight years old who are within or above the average range of intelligence but may struggle academically or socially because of Specific Learning Difficulties, Developmental Language Disorder, or associated weaknesses, including social communication needs.

More House School is a unique educational provision, and it cannot provide the optimum learning environment for all children and young people. As such, our Admissions Process is comprehensive and structured to realise as much information as possible, in order that we ensure that placements in the school are offered to boys who will benefit most from the provision.

Thus, More House School's Admissions process is designed to support the parents or guardians of prospective pupils, and the School's staff, to understand as fully as possible the profile of the boy's academic, social, physical and pastoral skill-strengths and weaknesses, and the appropriateness of the school's provision.

The School's economic situation will not alter its stance on admissions.

#### Purpose

More House School's Admissions arrangements seek to:

1. ensure only those children and young people whose needs can be properly met are admitted to the School;
2. ensure only those children and young people who would benefit from, and would fit into, our evolving community are admitted;
3. ensure no admission of a child or young person will have a detrimental effect on the progress or wellbeing of other pupils in the School;
4. ensure there can be no discrimination against any person because of a recognised protected characteristic, except in accordance with the legal provisions afforded to independent schools;
5. ensure as far as practically possible that a disabled pupil is not placed at a substantial disadvantage to his peers, by considering reasonable adjustments;
6. offer assistance in the form of suggestions to those who are not admitted, to help them to find a more suitable placement.

#### Broad Guidelines

The School operates a comprehensive Admissions process which is designed to ensure the realisation of as much relevant information as possible, for all parties involved, in order to make an accurate assessment of the likely success of the School's provision in meeting the needs of the prospective pupil, so that he is empowered to succeed academically and socially, and to transform his future. The outcome of the process is the decision of whether or not a placement in the School is suitable for the prospective pupil.

## **The admissions process will operate in the following manner:**

**Stage 1** An initial enquiry regarding a possible placement in the School will be handled by the Admissions Registrar team. Families are directed to review information on the website, to attend Open Days and to contact Admissions directly for information about the School's educational offering. If parents would like formally to commence the process of enrolling their son, the first step is the submission of the online Registration Form, accessed through the School's website, and remittance of a non-refundable registration fee. Upon receipt of this Registration Form, arrangement for an initial telephone or video-call interview with the pupil's parent or guardian will be made by the School's Admissions staff. The purpose of this telephone or video-call interview is to support the prospective pupil's parent or guardian to develop further their understanding of the School's model and provision, and to support the School's staff to gain an overview of the potential pupil's academic, cognitive and social profile in respect of skill strengths and areas needing support or scaffolding.

**Stage 2** If the information obtained during the above-described initial enquiries is suggestive of a possible match between the boy's needs and the School's provision, the Admissions Registrar will seek to obtain all relevant documentation which might provide greater detail. Such documentation should include previous school reports, and reports of any assessments undertaken by an Educational Psychologist or other educational or medical professional relevant to the child's academic and social profile and support needs. Where the child is the subject of an Education, Health and Care Plan, it is necessary that such a document is shared with the School at this stage.

The Admissions Registrar will collate the information received and submit it to the Admissions Assessment Team. This team will determine whether the information is suggestive of the School being an appropriate placement in terms of the provision and environment matching the boy's needs.

**Stage 3** Where there is deemed to be a match insofar as the information currently held indicates, the Admissions Registrar will then arrange an appointment for the parents or guardians and their son to visit the School. The visit will include a meeting for the family with the Headmaster, an opportunity for a tour and a meeting for the child with the Director of Assessment and Therapy. In the case of external applications to the Sixth Form, this meeting is likely to be with the Head of Sixth Form. The purpose of the visit will be to provide the parents/guardians and the child with more detailed information about the School's provision and ethos. The visit will also offer an opportunity to obtain additional information about the young person, how he presents within an educational setting, academically and socially, and about his needs.

**Stage 4** If, following their visit to the School, the decision is made to further progress the application, the Admissions Registrar will arrange an assessment of the prospective pupil in School. Such an assessment is generally a two-day visit. Where a boarding placement is being considered, an assessment must include an overnight stay and assessment by the boarding staff, comprising at least two consecutive overnight stays. The purpose of the assessment visit is to provide the boy with an opportunity to experience the School's environment, and for School's staff to assess to what extent the School's provision is able to support the needs of the boy. The assessment must include the extent to which the boy can be supported within the School's teaching environment and its methods of delivery, including appropriateness of the School's curriculum offer. Assessment will also consider the boy's speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, literacy and numeracy needs. This process of assessment will include consideration of the likely impact of the prospective pupil's placement on other pupils.

## **Reasonable Adjustment**

The School will consider what it can do to ensure that a disabled pupil is not placed at a substantial disadvantage to his peers. This will be achieved by applying a reasonableness test to any possible adjustments that the pupil may require. Consideration will include whether the adjustment would overcome the substantial disadvantage; the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards; the financial resources

available; the cost of taking a particular step; the extent to which it is practicable to do so; health and safety requirements; the impact on others in the School community and the interests of other pupils.

## **Outcome**

Parents or guardians may choose to withdraw their application for a placement at More House School at any point in the Admissions process. The School may conclude the Admissions process at any of the four stages described above, should sufficient information have been realised indicating that a placement would not be suitable, or where there is no space available within the School in the relevant age-group. Where, at any stage, such information is not present indicating a disparity between the pupil's needs and the School's provision, the Admissions process should continue. The offer of a place should not occur until all four stages of the process have been completed satisfactorily.

Following the Stage 4 assessment visit, the Admissions Registrar, in consultation with the Director of Assessment and Therapy, and with other relevant teaching, therapeutic, residential and pastoral staff-members, will determine whether the School is likely to be successful in providing the optimum learning environment for the applicant. They will also determine whether the admission of the prospective pupil into the School would be likely to affect adversely the progress and wellbeing of other pupils in the School. Based on these two decisions, the School will then either offer a placement, or explain why an offer of a place has not been made. This Admissions process outcome will be confirmed in writing to the parents or guardians.

### **Unsuccessful**

If the Admissions process outcome is a conclusion that the School would not be successful in meeting the specific needs of the child, or that the child's admission into the School would be detrimental to other pupils in the School, a place will not be offered. However, the School's staff will endeavour to advise the parents or guardians regarding other settings which may be more capable of supporting the pupil.

In some circumstances, the Admissions process outcome might be a recommendation that the School's provision is not currently suited to the prospective pupil's needs, and that the boy is not yet ready to manage successfully the School environment. In such circumstances, the parents or guardians will be informed that the offer of a placement cannot be made at the current time, but that the parents or guardians are invited to make a new Admissions application in the future.

### **This is only appropriate where:**

- there is substantial change in the child's presentation,
- where new information is available which presents a changed understanding of the boy's profile of skill-strengths and skill-weaknesses, such that a reconsideration of the appropriateness of the School's provision is justified, e.g., newly-issued professionals' reports describing a markedly different profile than was previously represented, or
- a space within the requisite age-group in the School becomes available, where previously there was no available space.

### **Successful**

If the Admissions Process outcome results in an offer of a place within the School, the parents or guardians will be required to confirm their acceptance of the place by completing and submitting the Acceptance Form and by paying the Acceptance Fee within the specified timescale. No pupil may be entered onto the School roll, or begin, until the Acceptance Form is submitted and the fee paid. This is a contract signed by all parties who hold parental responsibility for the child, and is signed confirmation that all relevant information about the child has been shared with the school.

Where a placement is offered by the School, and accepted by the parents or guardians, the first academic term will be considered a probationary term. During this first term, either party, parents/guardians, or the School, may terminate the placement without financial penalty should it be considered that the child's placement in the School is not appropriate.

### **Appeals**

The Admissions process is designed to ensure that the best interests of the prospective pupil, and of all pupils in the School, are at the heart of decision-making. Nevertheless, it is recognised that parents or guardians may be disappointed by the outcome of the Admissions process and may wish to appeal the decision.

Appeals will be recognised from parents or guardians of the child or young person only. Such an appeal should be raised within one calendar month of the communication of the Admissions process outcome; the School is unlikely to respond to appeals raised outside of this timeframe or from other parties.

### **Stage 1 appeal**

In the first instance, appeals should be communicated, in writing, for the attention of the Admissions Registrar, and should detail all relevant information the appellant wishes to be considered within the appeal, including any information not previously submitted as part of the Admissions process.

The Admissions Registrar will acknowledge receipt of the appeal and conduct a review of the information considered as part of the Admissions Process, and any additional information communicated as part of the appeal. The Admissions Registrar may deem it beneficial to seek further information from the parents or guardians of the child, or from specific School staff. The Admissions Registrar will communicate to the appellant the outcome of the review, normally within three weeks of the appeal being received. Where some or all of this time falls outside of School term-time, it is expected that the communication of outcome will take longer.

### **Stage 2 appeal**

Where a parent or guardian believes the outcome of their appeal at Stage 1 to be flawed, there is provision for appeal at Stage 2. Stage 2 appeals will only be recognised where a Stage 1 appeal has been completed in full. A Stage 2 appeal should be communicated in writing, for the attention of the Headmaster, and should detail all relevant information the appellant wishes to be considered within the appeal, including any information not previously submitted as part of the Admissions or Stage 1 appeal processes.

On receipt of any such Stage 2 appeal, the Headmaster will acknowledge receipt of the appeal and provide an indication of the anticipated timeframe for conducting a review and communicating a final decision; it is normally anticipated that the review process will be completed within four term-time weeks.

The Headmaster will conduct a review of the Admissions process in respect of the appellant, considering:

- whether the School's Admissions process was completed in line with its published Admissions Policy and normal processes;
- any new information submitted by the appellant, or realised since the communication of the Admissions process outcome;
- the strength of the Admissions process decision-making in accordance with the stated objectives of the Admissions Policy;
- the manner of communicating the Admissions process outcome, considering explanation of the factors influencing the outcome decision.

The Headmaster will then assess the process outcome decision and determine whether it is accurate or warrants change. He may determine that the original outcome decision should be upheld, or that the decision is not sufficiently secure and warrants change. The Headmaster will communicate his findings to the appellant in writing. The Headmaster's decision, at this stage, will be final.

## **Conclusion**

Through the detailed scrutiny of documentation, informal assessment, and open discussion between parents or guardians and the School's staff, the School will make a fair and balanced decision about its suitability in meeting the needs of each prospective pupil. This will allow successful applicants to make the best possible academic and social progress, whilst ensuring that those boys whose needs cannot be met by the School are supported to discern appropriate placements in more suitable settings. At all times, the School's Admissions process will be applied fairly, and so that the best interests of the individual boy, and of all other pupils in the School, are promoted.

## **References**

[Schools Standards & Framework Act 1998](#)

[Education Act 2002](#)

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

[The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

[Schools Admission Code September 2021 \(\*although not mandatory for independent schools\*\)](#)