

# Admissions Procedure

**This procedure implements the Admissions Policy and outlines the criteria and procedures to secure day and residential placements at St Piers School and College.**

## 1. BACKGROUND

The Admissions Procedure is designed to ensure that the organisation has a clear and transparent approach to the assessment of children and young people for School and College day and residential placements.

The approach taken by St Piers ensures that any assessment of whether the needs of a child or young person can be met and takes into consideration whether a placement would be in their best interests. Key to this judgement will be the consideration of whether their needs can be met in a mainstream setting or through a maintained special school or college closer to their home, while having regard to the preference of the child/young adult and their parents/carers, for where they want to be educated. These considerations reflect the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years (2015) and the commissioning priorities of local authorities.

This means that St Piers College and School will only accept placements, where:

- It is agreed they will benefit from an educational placement
- It is in the best interests of children or young adults
- They, or their family, have chosen St. Piers School or College as their preferred education setting or are happy to accept the decision of a tribunal to place the young person at St Piers
- It can be demonstrated that we can meet or exceed the requirements of an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP), in terms of progression and achievement in relation to age and capacity appropriate outcomes associated with:
  - Communication and interaction
  - Cognition and learning
  - Social, emotional and mental health
  - Sensory and physical well being
  - Independent living
  - Employability
  - Community inclusion



## 2. Guidelines

### 2.1 Marketing and Communications

A key element of the admissions procedure is an approach to marketing and communication, which ensures that commissioners, parent/carers and young people are clear about what St Piers can offer and its track record in delivering outcomes for students.

The approach to marketing and communications will have regard to the existing capacity and capability of the School and College to meet the needs of children and young adults with special education needs. In addition, the approach will market the School and College's potential to develop capacity and capability.

The objective of the approach is to ensure that the number of referrals, that are declined are minimised through the clarity of our offer, in advance of any engagement through open mornings and assessments.

#### 2.1.1 Virtual Open Days and Informal Visits

To minimise the number of declined or withdrawn applications resulting from a lack of clarity on our offer, Virtual Open Days are held regularly throughout the year and parents/carers and young people are encouraged to attend a virtual event as the first stage of their application or expression of interest in St Piers School and/or College. If, having attended a Virtual Open Day, they believe that St Piers could be the right provision for the young person they are invited to come for an Informal Visit during which they will be met by a member of the Admissions and Placements team who will take them on a tour of St Piers School or College, guide them through the applications process and answer any questions they may have. The Admissions and Placements Team will promote the St Piers offer to maximise the number of successful applications where they believe they can meet the needs of the prospective student.

### 2.2 Assessment Timescales

To minimise uncertainty and manage the expectations for children, young adults and their parents/carer, our aim is to ensure there are no delays in the process of assessment on our part. The following guidelines are designed to ensure that all parties including commissioners are clear about our approach.

**2.2.1 Assessment Deadlines:** Where possible, all assessments should be completed by the end of the May, prior the start of the subsequent academic year. This is to ensure that fee and equipment cost submissions can be made to Local Authorities in sufficient time for them make their funding decisions before the end of the summer term.

**2.2.2 Assessment Timings:** Where possible, assessments will be timetabled for completion between September and May in the preceding academic year. The key driver for this is to ensure that EHCPs from schools or other sources are up to date, that the multi-disciplinary team are available and that the time between assessments and starting at St Piers is minimised to ensure that plans to meet needs are as current as possible.



### 2.2.3 Target Timescales

- i. **Initial triage and Admissions Panel meeting:** Applications received throughout the course of the preceding academic year, and for whom all the relevant paperwork has already been received, will be acknowledged, and triaged by the Admissions Team within 10 working days of the start of the September term. Those whose needs St Piers believe it can meet, will be discussed at an Admissions Panel meeting. Applications received during the current assessment year will be triaged within 10 working days. Where the initial triage finds St Piers would not be the appropriate placement, parents and commissioners will be informed.
- ii. **If the Admissions Panel advise that, subject to assessment, needs can be met:** Within ten days of the Admissions Panel meeting a Virtual Meeting will be arranged with the child/young adult's current provider. Where appropriate this will include respite provider and/or an outreach visit to said provider.
- iii. **Referral to assessment:** Within ten days of the Admissions Panel meeting, and subject to the parent/carer and young person's availability, an Assessment Visit will be arranged at St Piers Campus. This timescale may be extended should additional information be required or an outreach visit deemed necessary.
- iv. **Assessment to placement decision:** Following the assessment visit, the Admissions Panel will meet again to decide if we are able to offer a place. We will let parents, carers and young people know of our decision within 5 working days of the Admission Panel's decision.
- v. **Assessment to funding submission:** While it is important to give managers sufficient time to compile an Assessment Report and EHCP delivery plan and to calculate the level of input for each student, it is imperative that this process is completed in a timely way to increase the chances of securing the placement. The target for this element of the process is within 10 working days of the placement decision.

### 2.3 Assessment Principles

The overriding principles for offering a placement are that it must be clear we can meet the needs of the child or young person. The key considerations for this are:

- That the child or young adult has special educational needs as detailed in a current EHCP and will benefit from the specialist approaches that have been developed at St Piers.
- That the provision at St Piers College or School is suitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young adult<sup>1</sup>.
- That the School and College can demonstrate that they are able to optimise the potential for the child or young adult, in terms of positive outcomes.
- That children or young adults with special educational needs can positively contribute to developing a diverse cohort, as well as contributing to the continued viability St Piers School and College.

---

<sup>1</sup> This consideration is a requirement in the SEND code of practice 2015



- That the placement is financially viable; the clear principle is that all costs associated with the placement, should be identified, and reflected in the fee submitted to the local authority.
- That the placement is operationally feasible; key areas for consideration are:
  - That at the point of assessment, the capacity and capability to provide a productive and safe learning environment for the child or young adult, from the beginning of the academic year, is considered. In practice, where the existing capacity and capabilities are not sufficient, the focus will be on demonstrating what would be required to develop sufficient capacity and/or capability and whether it could be achieved within a reasonable timescale.
  - How to best meet a child or young person's need in relation to their joining an existing 'classroom' and/or 'residential' cohort or becoming part of a new cohort. The key focus should be on the positive benefits of children and young people interacting with their peers. However, consideration should also be given to the change in demand for placements, which means that the potential for accommodating placements with different needs profiles, without compromising service delivery, will be explored.

## **2.4 Needs Profiles**

The organisation has developed specialisms for children and young adults in the areas listed below. Wherever possible, our approach is to form class, tutor, or house peer groups, where abilities and capacity are complementary. While consideration should be given to these areas of specialism, the focus should be on how we can develop resources and experience to provide the right environment for individuals and their peer group. Needs are personal and individual to each student however most students have one or more of the following:

- Epilepsy, autism, and/or other neurological disorder that significantly impacts on the learner's ability to engage with or access mainstream education and also on their daily living skills and emotional well-being.
- Difficult to control epilepsy or other neurological disorders, which have an effect on education ranging from complex and multiple learning difficulties to more moderate learning difficulties.
- A learning disability and a degree of social interaction difficulty, including those students who are within the range of Autistic Spectrum Conditions.
- Moderate, severe, and profound and multiple learning difficulties, including those students who are within the range of Autistic Spectrum Conditions.
- An acquired brain injury sustained through illness, surgery, or accident.

## **3. Key stages of Assessment**

This section provides details of the key stages of assessment from the receipt of a referral. A flowchart showing each of the stage and their relationships, is included as Appendix A.



### 3.1 Referrals received

Referrals for placements can come from a range of sources including:

- Students/Parents
- Local Authority
- Current place of education
- Clinical Commissioning Group

When the referral has come directly from a parent/ carer or young person, contact will be made with the relevant Local Authority as soon as possible to ensure they are aware that St Piers is being considered. It is important at this stage to consider the initial view of the Local Authority in the assessment process, whether positive or negative.

At this stage the Admissions and Placements team will log all details of the referral on the 'Admissions Spreadsheet.

### 3.2 Triage by the Admissions Team

The pro-active approach of generating referral through DPSs and a tailored approach to marketing communication should ensure that we only consider placements where we have the existing or potential capacity and capability to meet the needs of a child or young person, However, an initial review is required of:

- The current capacity of Education, Residential, Health and Therapies, based on operational projections, for the subsequent academic year and beyond. This is kept up to date by operational management teams.
- The Admissions and Placements Team will also complete a 'light-touch' review of the child or young adult's Education Health and Care Plan, with a focus on those requirements that we may not be able to meet with the current capacity and capability. Any applications or Local Authority consultations that are clearly outside of the scope of our offer will be declined at this point.

Following the initial review, in consultation with operational management team, the child or young adult are invited to attend come for an '**Assessment Visit**'. The aim being that both the assessment of St Piers by the child or young adult and their parent/carer and St Piers assessment of how the organisation can meet their needs, can be done in one day, thus streamlining the assessment process and increasing the likelihood of a placement.

### 3.3 Assessment Visits

Assessment Visits give children, young adults and their parents/carers the opportunity to become familiar with St Piers and for operational managers to meet the child or young person.

As part of the planning process for the Assessment Visit, additional information required by operational managers will be provided in order to give greater context of the Education, Health & Care Plan. As EHCPs don't always provide sufficient insight into important requirements, impairments or behaviours, additional information must include:



- Latest annual review
- Behaviour support plan, if there is one
- Relevant medical information
- A meeting with the child or young person's current provider. This could be their current school, nursery, and respite provider.
- Any safeguarding concerns we need to be aware of.

Additional information *may* include:

An '**Outreach Visit**': This will involve a visit to the child or young adult's home and/or current placement, with the objective of observing details about how the current placement operates and what should or could be taken forward to a placement at St Piers. Consideration, subject to availability, should be given to asking House Managers, Lecturers and/or Teachers to complete these visits, to draw on their direct operational experience and to give them some ownership in the decision-making process.

The assessment will consider but is not limited to:

- The age, ability, and needs of the child or young person
- The availability of a suitable peer group
- The behaviour of the child and young person and their impact on their peers
- The suitability of our environment in terms of meeting the needs of the child or young person
- Journey times and other external environmental factors that may affect the suitability of any placement

The assessment will include but is not limited to:

- A meeting with the child or young person's current provision
- An outreach visit if required
- A meeting with parents or carers
- An assessment visit in school or college
- An assessment visit to the residential house if appropriate

The Assessment Visit may involve operational managers from Education, Residential, Therapies and Health. Operational managers will focus on further exploring and testing the requirements in the EHCP and any other information that has been gathered in order to develop an '**Assessment Report**', which will form the basis for calculating the fee and the submission to the Local Authority.

Where there are differing views within our admissions panel on whether St Piers is suitable for the placement, the decision will be taken by the Executive Principal. This decision will be final and there is no formal route of appeal.

### 3.4 Assessment Reports

The output of the Assessment Visit will be an Assessment Report. The objective of this report is to demonstrate to all parties, with a focus on the needs of the child, that St Piers can meet the requirements and outcomes of the EHCP. The Assessment Report will identify and calculate the input required from each function (therapy, education, residential), to meet the requirements of the EHCP, this will be represented in terms of the function and hours, to allow



for the translation into a fee. Where it is perceived that St Piers does not currently have the capacity or competence to meet the requirements, the Assessment Report should provide details of any additional development St Piers would need to undertake to meet the requirements and/or why this is not reasonably practical.

### **3.5 Submissions to Commissioners**

Operational Managers will work closely with Admissions and Placements Team to ensure that all information from the Assessment Report is entered into the fee setting model for the calculation of the fee. In parallel, the Admissions and Placements Team will work with the Therapies Team to price the equipment required for the placement. It is important to note that a composite fee, which includes equipment costs, will be submitted to the Local Authority for consideration

**3.5.1 The Local Authority agree to fund the placement** which triggers the ***Onboarding*** process at **3.7**.

**3.5.2 If the Local Authority declines to fund the placement**, the student and parents/carers will be given the opportunity, by the Local Authority, to appeal against the decision. Information on Appeals and Tribunals can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/appeal-ehc-plan-decision>. St Piers is not able to appeal on behalf of students nor influence the decision of the Local Authority.

**3.6 Duration of placements** at school and college:

**3.6.1 School placements** are typically funded until a young person leaves school at 19 however the placement is reviewed annually via the Annual Review process and the Local Authority may re-consult for placements at key stage transfer windows (infant to primary, primary to secondary and secondary to sixth form).

**3.6.2 College placements** are typically for three years although this is dependent on progression and continuing funding by the Local Authority. In exceptional circumstances, a student may be offered a further year in education. The decision to offer a further year is made at the discretion of the Head of College who will take into consideration the student's progress, attendance, and the availability of a suitable programme to extend their learning. The decision of the Head of College is final and there is no formal route of appeal should an additional year not be offered.

### **3.7 Onboarding**

Once funding has been agreed, the St Piers onboarding process begins. This is to ensure that operational managers and their teams have all the information required to enable the child and young person to start safely at St Piers. The onboarding process includes:

**3.7.1 Pre-Admissions Meeting** will be held to enable managers to review the needs of the child or young person and discuss any special arrangements that need to be made prior to them starting. Attendees at pre-admissions meetings should include a manager from the following teams:

- Admissions



- Education
- Residential (if relevant)
- Therapy
- Health
- Safeguarding

The Pre-Admission meetings are designed to identify the individual needs of each child or young person and in particular those needs that could have an impact on their safety or wellbeing if they are not fully met at the point of them starting at St Piers. The output from the Pre-Admissions Meeting ensures that teams that will be working with the child or young person are in possession of information such as:

- Allergies, health and dietary needs including any prescribed medications and existing medical conditions
- Communication
- Mobility
- Staff training required
- Likes, dislikes, fears, worries
- Presentation when anxious
- Equipment needs

**3.7.2 Therapy Transition Forms** are sent to all new students once funding has been agreed and prior to them starting. Therapy transition forms capture occupational health, speech and language and physiotherapy information relevant to each child and young person. Once the completed therapy transition forms have been received, they are reviewed by the Therapy team who will decide which therapist(s) need to see the young person at the **Therapy Transition Visit**.

**3.7.3 Therapy Transition Visits** are part of the child or young person's transition into St Piers. The child or young person may be met by the following members of the therapies team *as appropriate* to ensure that therapy strategies and equipment are in place when they start with us:

- Psychology
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy

**3.7.4 Medical Clerking-in** appointments will be held prior to the child or young person's start date. Clerking-in appointments will be led by a registrar or suitably qualified member of the nursing team. The clerking-in appointment aims to capture the child or young person's medical history, current medication, and any emergency medical protocols. Children and young people must not start at St Piers until their clerking-in appointment has taken place.

**3.7.5 Additional Transition Visits** with teaching and residential staff will be organised as appropriate by individual teachers, tutors and house managers.



**3.7.6 Digital Consent Forms** will be sent electronically to parents/carers requesting consent for activities and actions relating to:

- Data Protection
- Education
- Medical
- Wellbeing
- Residential (residential students only)
- Visitors (residential students only)

**3.8 Before Students start** at St Piers they and/or their parents/carers will:

- Be told what their start date is and the times of the school or college day
- Be provided with a school or college parent guide with useful information including but not limited to:
  - Contact names and numbers
  - Safeguarding information
  - Policies and procedures
  - School uniform
  - Compliments and complaints procedure
  - Governors and Trustees
- Be told which class (school) or tutor group (college) they are in
- If the placement is residential, be told who their house manager is and which house they will be in
- Be able to ask any questions they may have

<b>This procedure is agreed by the Executive Principal and will be implemented by all Departments.</b>	
<b>Signed:</b> 	<b>Date: 1 December 2025</b>
<b>Name: Jeremy Law</b> <b>Title: Executive Principal</b>	
	<b>Date of next review: 1 December 2027</b>

<b>Version table</b>			
Date of creation: 01/11/2023			
Approved by:			
Version no.	Date of changes	Reasons for change	Changes made by

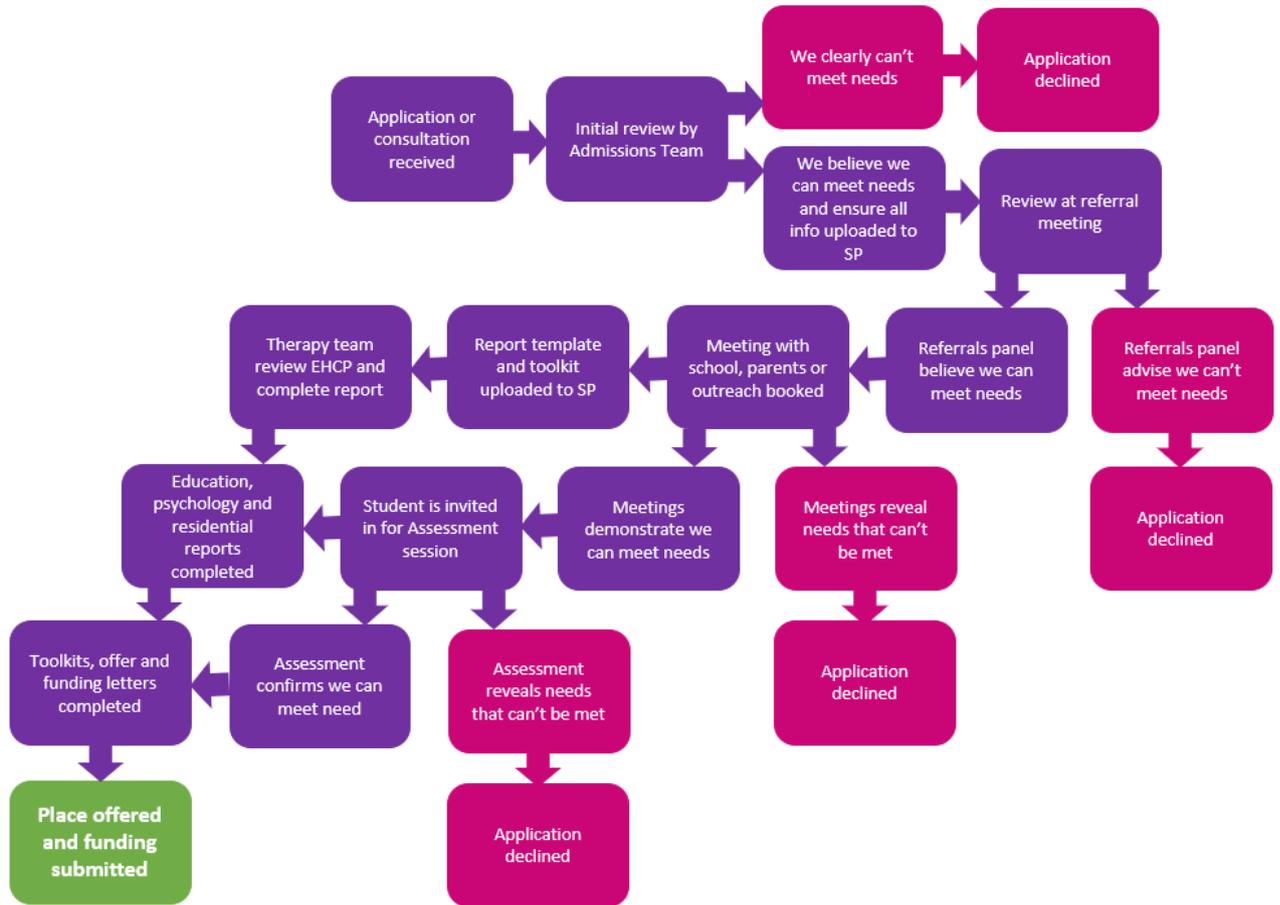


2	01/11/2023	Change of terminology from Familiarisation Day to Assessment Visit	Sue Etheridge
2	01/11/2023	Addition of Virtual Open Days (2.1.1)	Sue Etheridge
2	01/11/2023	Update to target timescales (2.2.3)	Sue Etheridge
2	01/11/2023	Addition of funding decision information (3.5.1/3.5.2)	Sue Etheridge
2	01/11/2023	Duration of Placement (3.6)	Sue Etheridge
2	01/11/2023	Onboarding (3.7)	Sue Etheridge
2	01/11/2023	Starting Information Provided (3.8)	Sue Etheridge
3	01/12/2025	Removal of DPS information as no longer relevant (3.1)	Sue Etheridge
3	01/12/2025	Inclusion of assessment considerations (3.3)	Sue Etheridge
3	01/12/2025	Removal of behavioural difficulties (2.4)	Sue Etheridge



# Appendix A

## Application Process



## Onboarding Process

