



Heathermount School

Admissions Policy

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Considered by SOAS:
Ratified by Governors

Introduction:

Heathermount is a non-maintained specialist school owned by the Disabilities Trust. It is registered with the Department for Education to accept 60 day students between the ages of 4-19. Heathermount works in partnership with local authorities and families to assess whether Heathermount can meet the needs of the students.

The school provides an education for young people who require autism specific provision which is tailored to meet their social, sensory and communication needs, as well as providing support to enable them to manage their levels of anxiety.

Heathermount prides itself on its flexibility and is becoming increasingly popular with both families and local authorities who like our thorough approach to student-centred assessment prior to offering a permanent placement on an individualised basis.

Aims:

To ensure there are robust and transparent systems in place to support a fair and consistent but flexible multi-disciplinary approach to admissions.

Scope:

This policy is relevant to the Trustees, Governors, staff, families, students and local authority representatives who are involved in the admission of a student to Heathermount.

Equal opportunities:

Heathermount will promote equally the rights of students regardless of race, disability, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

The Admissions Procedure (see also appendix 1 the Admissions Flowchart)

To help us make an offer of a permanent placement on a controlled basis, we have a two-tier admissions process designed to deliver a personalised provision which is sustainable

1. Students can be referred to Heathermount by their local authority (LA) who provides copies of the Statement/EHCP and any other relevant documentation.
2. Families may approach the school directly either following attendance at an open morning or from recommendation. When this happens the Family Partnership Officer (FPO) redirects them back to the LA who would be responsible for funding a placement.
3. The documentation is then reviewed by Heathermount's admissions panel which comprises the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher,

Educational Psychologist and Family Partnership Officer in consultation with our team of specialist therapists. Consideration is given to the age of the child, his or her level of functioning, his or her learning needs, the capacity in the appropriate class group and the skills set of the staff.

4. Contact is made by a member of the admissions panel, with the child's family and current school (if in school) or previous school (if out of school). Home visits are made if the young person has been out of school for a significant length of time. School visits take place to observe the young person in their present setting. If all parties are in agreement, the family is invited in for a visit to meet with the Head Teacher and Family Partnership Officer.
5. If all parties are in agreement, 3 taster days are offered to ascertain whether or not the young person would like to be at Heathermount. There is a cost to the LA. Families are not encouraged to fund the assessment days themselves as it is in the best interests of the child for all parties to be in agreement at the outset. **We are unable to offer places to students whose families wish to fund the placement privately.** Depending on the needs of the child, this may take the form of 6 half days or a mixture of half and full days. Prior to these taking place, the FPO meets with the family to construct a risk assessment taking into account any medical needs. The FPO also creates a profile of the child which is circulated to all staff together with the risk assessment.
6. If the taster days go well, the child is then invited in for a full 12 week pre-placement assessment for which there is a cost to the LA. This assessment period is very flexible to meet the individual needs of the child and may take the form of full days and half days. During this time, the child is placed in a class and will have a full speech and language and occupational therapy assessment, which also includes assessment for sensory integration. Other assessments also take place such as a reading age assessment and input from the Educational Psychologist. Formal and informal observations of the child are also carried out. At the end of the 12 weeks, a review is held with the family and local authority during which, if all parties are in agreement, a permanent placement is offered.
7. At any time during the assessment period, the school, family or local authority may terminate the assessment if they feel it is not in the best interests of the child.

Admissions Criteria:

- Students are likely to have a primary diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Condition.
- Students may have associated disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia), moderate learning difficulties, Dyspraxia.
- Students may also have mental health needs, which will be supported by their local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

- Heathermount has a multi-faith ethos as its foundation and recognises the value and importance of other people's faiths and beliefs.
- Dietary requirements will be met supported by medical evidence.
- Heathermount will meet the needs of the statutory Statement or Education and Health Care Plan requirements.
- Heathermount will not be responsible for providing transport to and from school on a regular basis.
- All placements are for 38 weeks and may be full time or initially part time depending on the needs of the child.
- Placements dependent on tribunal decisions can only be held for students with the approval of the Head Teacher.
- Some students may be placed on a waiting list pending a place in the appropriate class becoming available.

Entitlement (Tolerance Levels)

- We always endeavour to engineer our student groupings to provide the best possible educational experience for all students. We recognise and plan for the 'known' disruption which frequent admissions have upon the school population and any particular class group
- The tolerance level is no more than 1 student on 3 taster days at any one time in the same class with a maximum of 2 students per week across the school. This will be 1 in the primary department and 1 in the secondary department.
- Ideally there will be no more than 2 students on 12 week assessments per key stage with a maximum of 6 spread across the key stages on a rolling programme. This also depends of the capacity of the class and individual students' needs.
- We may reserve the right to form an assessment class if there are at least 3 students with similar profiles in the same age group.
- When we are full, the tolerance level will match the number of students who are leaving, i.e. if there are 3 potential leavers for July, then a maximum of 3 new students will be admitted in the following September, depending on which key stage has vacancies.
- We are unable to support more than 2 students who find it difficult to be taught in a class or a small group. This is called a 'Bespoke Package'.
- We also offer very flexible packages of supported education in which the student is expected to be taught for most of the time in a small class of up to 6 students in the primary phase and 8 students in the secondary phase.
- We need to ensure that there is compatibility between students. The school will carefully consider (through the referral and assessment process) the vulnerability that is likely to be felt by any student within the school. If a student admission is deemed to have a potentially negative impact, for reasons of safety and wellbeing, a placement may not be suitable

Heathermount staff will work together with families, local authorities and other agencies to ensure that our safeguarding policies and procedures are followed.