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## Admissions Policy & Procedure

**Responsibility:** Governing Body

**Reviewed:** October 2019

**Next Review due:** October 2020

**Reviewed by:** Louisa Allison-Bergin

**This policy is available:**

- On the website - <http://www.lvs-oxford.org.uk/policies/10632.html>
- On request from [enquiries@lvs-oxford.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lvs-oxford.org.uk)

**Introduction:**

LVS Oxford is an independent special school for young people aged 11-19 with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, usually high functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome. We offer day placements over 38 weeks in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Sixth Form day placement includes work experience and college link.

Many of the young people who are referred to LVS Oxford have encountered negative school experiences as a result of their diagnosis. These can include:

- Poor attendance, disengagement from learning and social isolation at school- which may have included bullying
- School breakdown as a result of their autism spectrum disorder
- Elevated levels of anxiety
- A range of mental health issues such as feelings of low mood and low self-esteem
- Problems with independence skills such as eating, sleeping and personal hygiene

In many cases, over time, these factors combine to reach crisis point and lead to school refusal or multiple school exclusions which result in a poor quality of life for the young person and their family. It is often at this point that referrals are made to LVS Oxford. For these reasons, the school strongly believes that referrals and admissions to the school should be a partnership building process with parents, the placing authority and the school, designed to ensure that the school can meet the needs of the prospective learner.

All applicants are carefully considered to ensure that the school is suitable for the young person's age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs and that the placement is compatible with the provision of efficient education for other learners already attending the school.

No applicants will be treated less favourably during the admissions process on the grounds of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The Admissions process appreciates how challenging the transition into a new placement can be for young people and their family. It recognises that the process needs to be planned sensitively and thoroughly, and it is for this reason that LVS Oxford does not believe it is in the best interest of a potential student to be assessed whilst an inpatient of mental health services.

The time frame for the admissions process depends on a number of factors including:

- The quantity and nature of the referral information
- The number of young people already waiting for assessment
- The time of year and availability of placements
- Sourcing specialist training to support health needs

All referrals and admissions to the school are coordinated and arranged through the Admissions Team who include the Head of School, Deputy Head and the therapy team which includes the Speech and Language Therapist, the Occupational Therapist and the School Nurse.

**Admissions Criteria:**

All young people admitted to LVS Oxford:

- Have a primary diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder – usually high functioning autism or Asperger syndrome.
- May have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- Are aged between 11-19
- May have additional needs associated with ASD

Additional information:

- Learners will have abilities in the average or above average range but may display atypical learning styles and uneven (spiky) profiles of cognitive strengths and difficulties
- Learners may have a range of needs that are directly linked to their autism spectrum condition resulting in inflexible thinking patterns, social communication and interaction difficulties, emotional dysregulations and sensory difficulties.
- Learners will have needs and ability profiles that are compatible with an appropriate key stage peer group
- Learners may present with additional medical conditions including mental health issues and stereotypical behaviours, but the school reserves the right to decide whether these can reasonably be managed safely and effectively within its existing resources.
- All placements are for 38 weeks
- Students will be limited to approximately a 60 minutes journey time each way
- International learners will require a guardian resident in the UK
- LVS Oxford has an open gated site and is not suitable for young people who have a known history of absconding or who may attempt to run away
- The schools will accept learners that are privately funded by parents, trusts and other funding bodies

**Referrals:**

Referrals are accepted at any time and new admissions can take place throughout the year.

Most referrals are made by local authorities, but in many cases begin as parental enquiries. We encourage parents to visit the school as part of their search for an appropriate placement for their

child. To this end, the school hosts regular Open Days, the dates for which can be found on the school website.

#### **Admissions Process:**

*Stage 1 – initial referral either by parent(s)/carer(s), local authority or advocate acting on the parent(s)' behalf*

- We request as much information as possible including educational, medical and any safeguarding reports to assist with the decision on whether to proceed with the referral.
- We work with parents/carers and external agencies to ensure that decisions on whether to offer an assessment visit are based on complete, accurate, reliable and up to date information.
- We may visit the young person in their current placement or at home if they are not currently placed at a school

*Stage 2 – school based assessment visit*

- When a decision has been made that the reports indicate that the young person meets the admission criteria and there are places available in the relevant key stage, an assessment visit to the school will be arranged
- During the visit the young person will experience a range of assessments and, where appropriate, activities to ensure the young person's needs can be met
- The assessment period will include participation in timetabled activities
- The school may request an additional assessment visit

*Stage 3 – transition into school (Please see attached document)*

- Following successful assessment visits a placement will be offered
- Any placement offered will be subject to the full cost of the placement unless there has been prior agreement between the placing authority and the school
- Following acceptance of the place and confirmation of funding, a transition plan will be agreed
- Sometimes, a graduated transition and reduced timetable is required in order to re-engage the young person in learning
- Each young person is supported by relevant staff as determined in the transition plan
- A Post Entry Review is booked with parents and other stakeholders which will be approx a 6 week time frame, this is where a decision is made about whether the placement will continue and any additional resources are needed

**Commented [JK1]:** Please see attached document on transition

Please note: LVS Oxford will admit a maximum of 60% of its total learner numbers from any one local authority unless there are exceptional circumstances which will be considered on a case by case basis by the relevant Governing Body.

### **Admissions Procedure**

Referral is logged and recorded. Referrals are processed in order of receipt. Referrals can come from Head Office, local authorities, parents/carers and advocacy groups

All referrals are reviewed by the Admissions Panel which meets weekly during term time. Information may be sought from previous educational establishments and relevant external professionals including medical information.

The Admissions Panel decides on how to proceed as soon as possible. If the decision is to take the referral to the next stage, assessment dates will be mutually agreed with the authority and the family.

A summary profile of the young person is compiled and distributed to all staff prior to the school based assessment visit. We request that families contribute to this to ensure that information is up to date.

An assessment plan, minimum three days, is agreed with the family and relevant staff.

The assessment may include some time working individually with specialist staff but will mainly involve being in a class or activity based group.

For year 6 students being assessed for the new cohort of year 7s, a group assessment day will be arranged for potential year 6 students. This will involve time working individually with staff but mainly group based activities to show the interactions between peers.

The young person is encouraged to give their views on the school during the visit.

A decision on the prospective admission will be made at the next Admissions Panel meeting immediately following the assessment.

The placing authority and other interested parties will be informed of this decision as soon as possible following the Admissions Panel meeting.

A summary report is compiled containing feedback from staff on the young person's requirements on admission; the young person's views on the school and recommendations for next steps in the admissions process.

An offer letter is sent to the Local Authority and parents/carers to offer a placement with expected date of entry.

All new learners receive a personalised timetable and induction handbook.

The family receive the parent handbook.

After approximately six weeks, the family and young person are invited to a Post Entry Review meeting to discuss how the transition has worked .

### **6 Week Review**

- The purpose of this is to review the initial 6-week assessment period to confirm the details and level of support required for the placement at LVS Oxford.
- The school holds the right to extend the initial period for a further 6 weeks (or more) if this is required, due to concerns in relation to the student in the initial 6-week period. Once a second 6-week transition period is completed, a further transition meeting will be required.
- The school holds the right to request further provision for the student e.g. 1-2-1 / SALT / OT if this is felt it is required to ensure the placement is a success for the student and further support their needs.
- The school hold the right to terminate the placement under the terms detailed in the National Contract.
- The local authority is requested to be present at this 6-week review meeting.
- The meeting is also an opportunity to reflect on the successes of the transition or organise a further plan if the student needs more time to settle into the school routine and demands. If this is required, the management of this plan will pass to the Assistant Head teacher for attendance and behaviour.