

High Grange

Adaptive thinking, Communication, Emotional wellbeing, Independence

Working in partnership with families

Admissions Policy

Last Update: **September 2025**

Responsible: **Principal**

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This policy promotes ACE because;



This admissions policy promotes High Grange's ACE ethos by prioritising Adaptive thinking, Communication, and Emotional wellbeing, using a personalised 12-week assessment, multi-disciplinary review, and family involvement to ensure each pupil transitions successfully, engages fully, and thrives academically, socially, and emotionally.

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1. Philosophy

High Grange School provides education for children and young people with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) associated learning, communication, sensory and behavioural difficulties.

High Grange School believes that all children and young people with special educational needs arising from an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), whose profile of needs appears consistent with the school's admissions criteria, and whose parents and local authority wish it, have a right to be considered for assessment for admission.

The school prioritises referrals from Local Authorities and then considers parental referrals on a first-come, first-served basis. High Grange School considers referrals from all cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and does not discriminate on any of these grounds.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the school's assessment for admission process is to determine and clarify the needs of the individual pupil or young person with a view to evaluating whether these can be met by High Grange School's educational approach and environment.

An assessment for admission considers each prospective pupil's or young person's:

- Education and performance levels
- Communication and sensory needs
- Behavioural and emotional responses
- Self-help and independence skills
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health needs
- Adaptability and response to the school's approach, interventions and environments
- Impact on the existing peer groups

An assessment for admission also considers:

- The effectiveness of the school's behaviour management strategies and their implementation.
- An in-situ risk assessment along with a matching exercise to the school's existing peers and staff expertise.
- A multi-disciplinary judgement on the school's ability to meet all of the pupil's or young person's identified needs.

This assessment for admission process involves baseline evaluations against which progress will be measured at regular intervals.

To begin the assessment for admission process we will request up-to-date referral papers, including the pupil's or young person's EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan), a history of the pupil/student's education and any assessment reports that have been completed to

determine individual strengths and needs. This information will be considered with reference to High Grange School's admissions criteria.

3. Admissions Criteria

The criteria for admission to High Grange School are based on a combination of factors. These include the individual pupil's or young person's needs, the level of family commitment, the suitability of the school's approach and environment, and the availability of an appropriate peer group. These criteria are set out below and are subject to regular review.

- Each pupil and young person will have a confirmed diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Pupils and young people may present with challenging behaviours resulting from their inflexible thinking patterns or from the communication, emotional and social difficulties that arise from the Autism Spectrum Disorder but not from other primary emotional, behavioural or mental disorders.
- Pupils and young people may have a variety of atypical learning styles and difficulties which range in severity. Most pupils and young people have abilities in the average and above range.
- Pupils and young people may present with co-morbid medical conditions or factors; or mental health issues but the school reserves the right to decide whether these can be managed effectively and safely within its existing resources.
- High Grange School values partnerships with families and expects a reasonable level of family commitment to supporting and maintaining its programmes and approach.
- Each pupil and young person will undergo a period of school-based assessment which lasts for 12 weeks. This may need to be extended depending on the timing and pace of a pupil's or young person's phased transition into the school.

4. Admissions Procedures

Pupils and young people are assessed against the school's admissions criteria in the following staged manner.

Step 1- Evaluation of the referral information

Determination of whether the pupil's or young person's special educational needs, as described in the referral reports, match the school's admissions criteria.

Step 2 – Meeting the pupil or young person and his or her family for an assessment of suitability

The school's multi-disciplinary team will then:

- Arrange to meet the child or young person, parents/carers and in some cases teachers. (This may be at High Grange School, at the family home or in another setting, as appropriate.)
- Request any additional paperwork and collect further information associated with the pupil's or young person's needs, health (including mental health), education and care; and
- Consider the child's or young person's suitability for placement in the light of this additional information.

If the outcome of the process at this stage strongly suggests that High Grange School is a suitable placement, then:

Step 3 – The transition and assessment placement

An offer of an assessment placement is made, during which period staff will evaluate the pupil's or young person's transition into the school and his or her initial engagement and responses to High Grange's approach and environment. This takes place over a 12-week period.

Without exception, each pupil's and young person's transition and assessment placement at High Grange School is conditional upon the prior agreement of funding throughout the 12-week transition period. This requirement is set out clearly by the Principal in every placement offer letter. Start dates for pupils and young people can only be given when written confirmation of the fees, as set out in the placement offer letter, has been received by the Principal.

In most cases, pupils or young people who are referred for placement consideration at High Grange School have experienced major difficulties in other schools and facilities. Many have spent long periods of time out of school either through exclusion, refusing to attend or because they have been admitted to specialist CAMHS centres. This means that

personalised and sensitively planned transition arrangements and individual supports have to be put in place to enable each new starter to successfully join the school.

Transition planning for new starters typically involves two distinct patterns. There are pupils and young people who are judged to be capable of managing an immediate but individually supported admission into the school; and those who require a longer, gradual transition period which must be phased in over time, again with individual support.

Over the transition and assessment period, if a pupil's or young person's responses, outcomes and level of engagement are positive, then:

Step 4 – The confirmation review

A multi-agency confirmation review meeting is held to evaluate the 12-week transition and assessment period; to discuss findings from additional evaluations and to clarify and confirm the terms under which the pupil or young person is being offered a full placement at the school.

Final decisions about the school's suitability for the pupil or young person are made by drawing on the conclusions from referral reports; from additional information collected by the school; and from impressions formed from the pupil's or young person's assessment carried out by our multi-disciplinary team. More detailed information on the 12-week transition and assessment process and the confirmation review can be found in additional school procedural documents.

5. Policy Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy can be evaluated through a number of quantifiable factors together with sampling parental, local authority and pupil or young person satisfaction with the High Grange School Assessment, Transition and Admission process.

Potential quantifiable elements may include:

- The ratio of places offered to assessments conducted.
- The number of places accepted.
- The number of places sustained.

- Pupil or young person satisfaction measures.
- Parental views.
- Local authority surveys.
- Staff critical evaluation and reflection on the assessment process.
- The number of successful transitions to adult placements.

The regular, systematic collection and evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data on the effectiveness of its assessment, transition and admissions process forms part of the school's strategy for self-evaluation