

Admissions Policy

Admissions Policy and Procedure

Pengwern College is an Independent Specialist College providing education and care for students aged 16 to 25 with learning disabilities and associated difficulties including: autistic spectrum disorders, communications difficulties, physical difficulties, social difficulties or PMLD.

We recognise that it is in the best interest of all involved that placements at the College are successful and meet the needs and interests of the young people as well as providing key opportunities for young people to gain the skills and confidence they need to move onto the next stage of their lives; whether that is gaining employment, moving towards independent living or progressing onto further education.

Because of this, Pengwern College has developed a thorough admissions process that provides sufficient information to maximise the potential for a successful placement.

Policy

The following guidelines are used in our Admissions process:

1. We consider any application of any individual regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, social status, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment as long as they are willing and able to engage in the curriculum and they and others can be kept safe.
2. The College will offer a thorough assessment in consultation with the young person being assessed, including visits to the site, to ensure that the young person is aware of the offer being made to them. The assessment will be shared with them and they have the opportunity to contribute to the assessment documentation.
3. The College will provide information about the colleges, courses available, qualifications offered etc. in formats that are accessible to parents and young people so that they can make informed decisions.
4. The College will make every effort to obtain appropriate and relevant information about a young person before making a decision to offer a placement.
5. The College will ensure that the young person, their parents/ carers and other stakeholders are kept informed throughout the admissions process.
6. The College will individually cost each placement based on the young person's needs to ensure that sufficient support is in place for each individual. The College will provide local authorities and other funding bodies with sufficient information to justify the level of funding requested.
7. The College will work with the young person, local authorities and other external stakeholders to ensure appropriate and relevant information sharing, is agreed and shared in a timely manner.
8. In the event of new, or unexpected, risks becoming apparent then Pengwern College will:

- Review placement details and work with the young person, parents/carers and the local authority to manage the placement if safe to do so until new processes can be put in place for the young person
- Take whatever necessary measures to ensure the safety of the young people in their care until the placement can be reviewed or additional support provided

Procedure

The following outlines the basic procedure for admissions to Pengwern College.

Initial Enquiry – Young people, parents/carers, local authorities, careers advisors etc. can make an initial enquiry about placements at the College. Young people and their parents/carers should make their enquiries in consultation with their local careers service and local authority.

On the initial enquiry a first contact form is to be completed by the Placements Team, once this has been completed the Placements Team will invite them on a visit to the college and arrange a suitable date for them to attend either on an individual visit or an Open Day which is held once a month.

Confirmation letters sent out with the College Prospectus and other relevant information.

During the initial enquiry, the Placements Team will:

- Ensure the individual making the enquiry and the young person has an understanding of the offer (curriculum, residential provision etc.)
- Gather initial information about the needs and interests of the young person
- Make an initial decision about whether or not the enquiry should proceed

Initial Visit – If the initial enquiry indicates a placement might be possible, the young person and their family/circle of support are invited for an initial visit to the site. This is to ensure the young person has an understanding of the college, and has an opportunity to speak with some of their peers and the staff if they wish. Whilst visiting the college, if the young person and their family/circle of support would like to apply for a placement, an Application Form will be given for them to complete and return within two weeks.

Referral Meeting - If, all parties are in agreement that the local college is unable to meet the young person's needs and once the completed application form is received the Management Team will meet to discuss the young person's needs and decide whether they are able to invite the young person for an assessment. At this meeting all of the young person's needs are discussed and what procedures need to be in place for the assessment i.e. accommodation, healthcare, therapy, transition and timetable.

Feedback to parents about the decision made – If the Management Team decide to invite the young person for an initial assessment the Placements Team will call the parent/carer to arrange a suitable date for the assessment. A confirmation email or letter will then be sent to the young person and parent/carer with dates, times and information for when they are to attend for their assessment. If the Management Team feel that the College will not be able to meet the young person's needs then the Commissioning Team will call the parent/carer, circle of support to feedback the information and why the college will not be able to meet the needs of the young person.

Initial Assessment – During the assessment, staff will meet with the young person to identify the aspirations of the young person and potential sessions on the timetable which will help

them achieve these aspirations. In order to help manage expectations, assessments will **only** be offered where there is a strong indication that the placement would be successful and that it **would** be funded and supported by the local authority. Staff may also visit the young person and family at home, or in school. Following the assessment visit all reports, including the young person's views, are gathered and reviewed at the Management meeting. A decision is made at this meeting about making an offer of a suitable placement.

Offer of placement and Application for Funding – Following a successful assessment, a placement would be offered. In addition, the levels of support and staffing requirements would be identified and a funding cost would be developed. The start date would also be agreed. Typically, students start in September, but as admissions happen throughout the year, start dates may be at any time. For mid-year starters, every effort will be made to start the student as soon as possible, but there is usually a minimum of 4 weeks required to prepare the staffing, especially if it is a residential placement. Day placements may be able to start sooner. Once the information is gathered the placements team will write their Initial Assessment Report and application of funding and send to the young person's careers advisor, who will put together with their supporting information, to send to either Welsh Assembly Government or the Education Funding Agency, depending on where the young person is from.

Funding Agreed - Once the young person's funding has been agreed in writing, the College will work with the young person to support them in transitioning into college. Throughout the year the young person and family/carer will be invited to any events the college for example open days or the Christmas fair. The young person and family/carer will be invited to a Link Day which is held in July for all prospective students and families to attend to complete any outstanding paperwork and find out all of the information needed for the young person to start in September. The young person will take part in taster sessions.

The Management Meetings

The Management team meets every other week and includes the Placement Manager, Head of Education, Head of Care, Transition Manager, Healthcare Officers and the Therapy Team. The panel discuss each case from initial enquiry and collectively agree whether or not to proceed at the end of each stage of the admissions process. Before offering placements, the management team collectively assesses risks and support needs to ensure that appropriate provision is in place before the young person's start. In addition, they identify any gaps in training or specialism. Where there is a disagreement about the offer of placement, the principal of the college will have the final say; however, decisions will be made in consultation with the Head of Care and Transitions and Placement Manager to ensure that the principal is fully informed of risks and concerns before making any decisions. The residential and day staff will work closely together to prepare for the start of any new placement, and placements will not be started until appropriate staff and support are in place.

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