



## ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<b>DATE APPROVED:</b>	11 March 2026	<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:</b>	March 2027
<b>POLICY OWNER(S):</b>	Deputy CEO & Finance Director		
<b>DESIGNATION:</b>	Centre-wide		
<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	Board of Trustees		

<b>Purpose of Policy</b>	This policy sets out the approach of St Elizabeth's Centre to Admissions, Transitions, Discharges and Admissions Appeals.
<b>Links to other policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consent to Care &amp; Treatment Policy</li> <li>Epilepsy Policy</li> <li>Epilepsy Assessment, monitoring and care planning guidance</li> <li>Dignity, Respect &amp; Choice Policy</li> <li>Good Governance Policy</li> <li>Mental Capacity Statement &amp; Herts Policy</li> <li>Person-Centred Planning Policy</li> <li>Statement of Purpose</li> <li>Supported Living 'Reach Standards'</li> </ul>

## 1. Purpose

1.1. This policy sets out the values, principles and criteria underpinning the approach of St Elizabeth's Centre to Admissions, Transitions, Discharges and Admissions Appeals. It provides a clear, streamlined application and assessment process, with accessible and accurate information on the timescales that apply.

## 2. Scope

2.1. This Admission Policy and Procedure ("Policy") sets out:

- a) the values, principles and criteria underpinning the approach taken by St Elizabeth's Centre ("Charity") to admissions to the Charity, transitions from one service to another within the Charity, to discharges and appeals against a decision regarding an admission, discharge or transition; and
- b) a clear and streamlined application and assessment process, providing accessible and accurate information within agreed timescales.

2.2. The Charity operates the following core services:

- a) St Elizabeth's School (*non-maintained special school – Section 41 exempt*)
- b) St Elizabeth's Sixth Form (Independent Sixth Form College)
- c) St Elizabeth's College (*Independent Specialist Further Education College*)
- d) St Elizabeth's Children's Homes (seven individually registered Children's Homes) supporting children and young people in School and Sixth Form
- e) St Elizabeth's Adult Services provision: an off-site supported living setting in Windhill, Bishops Stortford, and the Community Hub and Vocational Service on site at St Elizabeth's Centre.

2.3. The Charity is its own admissions authority – i.e. the body that deals with admissions for the School, Sixth Form, Children's Home, College, Windhill Supported Living and Community Hub and Vocational Services with age ranges as follows:

- a) The School caters for day pupils aged from 5 (day students only) to 16. Residential pupils aged 7-18 may be admitted to the Children's Homes. Pupils may enter at any stage of their school career, subject to this policy and where vacancies arise.
- b) Sixth Form serves young people 16-18 years, both transferring from St Elizabeth's School (with confirmation of current needs and funding in place), as well as external day placements following assessment and funding approval. Residential Sixth

Formers may be admitted pending available and suitable vacancies, subject to this policy.

- c) The College caters for day learners only, aged from 19-25 years. Learners may enter at any stage of their college career, subject to this policy and where vacancies arise.
- d) The Adult Service provision caters for those aged 18 years and over at the off-site setting in Windhill, Bishops Stortford and in the Community Hub and Vocational Provision Service on site at St Elizabeth's Centre. Adults may be admitted at any point, subject to this policy and where vacancies arise.

2.4. The policy is applied in accordance with legislation that is applicable to each of the core services, as well as to the Charity as a whole, including but not limited to:

- a) The Children and Families Act 2014;
- b) The Human Rights Act 1998; and
- c) The Equality Act 2010.

2.5. The Policy is written in accordance with the standards set by:

- a) Ofsted;
- b) Care Quality Commission (CQC);
- c) Department for Education (DfE);
- d) Education Skills Funding Authority (ESFA); and
- e) Council contracts monitoring.

## Definitions

CYP	Children and Young People
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
FP10	Prescription Form
MDT	Multi-Disciplinary Team
NOK	Next of Kin

### **3. St Elizabeth's Centre Admissions Policy and Procedure**

- 3.1. The Charity's core values are 'aspirational, compassionate, collaborative and joyful'. The Charity's Executive Team works to ensure the core values are understood by all staff, learners and permeate through education, care and health delivery.
- 3.2. The admissions, transition, discharge and admissions appeals processes are non-discriminatory – all applicants are considered against the admission criteria (see Section 4).
- 3.3. St Elizabeth's Centre is a Roman Catholic charity that welcomes people of any or no denomination and works closely with individuals, their loved ones and/or their legal representatives, to ensure that the Charity meets all person-centred, religious, cultural and spiritual needs.
- 3.4. The policy reflects the principle of meeting applicants' individualised needs, wherever possible. Careful assessment, good person-centred planning and communication are essential to ensure individuals obtain the services identified as appropriate to their needs.

### **4. Criteria for admission**

- 4.1. The Charity welcomes applications from those who will benefit from the care, education, specialist health and therapy support, as well as the relevant curriculum offer in respect of applicants to the School, Sixth Form or College (Therapy support only).
- 4.2. Applicants' individualised needs, and the Charity's ability to meet those needs, are assessed against the following admissions criteria:
  - a) A diagnosis of a learning disability and/or other complex medical need, often caused or complicated by severe epilepsy and/or autism.
  - b) Application supported by statutory agencies.
  - c) Appropriate support and funding are in place (in principle or actual) from the applicant's funding/placing authority.
  - d) Where the applicant is seeking a residential placement, the availability of an appropriate house / setting (Windhill), as well as resource capacity and;
  - e) Availability of an appropriate and compatible peer group.
- 4.3. In addition, the following criteria must be met when an individual is applying for a place in the School, Sixth Form or College, only:

- a) Evidence that the Charity can meet specific identified needs, as outlined in a Child or Young Person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
  - b) Evidence of learning potential and capacity to learn.
  - c) Evidence that the individual (over 16) wishes to attend an education setting.
- 4.4. Sixth Form applicants must meet the eligibility criteria for funding [16 to 19 education: funding guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- 4.5. College applicants must meet the eligibility criteria for funding (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-rates-and-formula/funding-guidance-for-young-people-2024-to-2025-rates-and-formula>)
- 4.6. Applicants aged 18 and over seeking supported living placements must also agree to the terms set out in the license agreement required by Clarion Housing Association (Windhill), under which the applicant may reside in the accommodation they provide (with the required support as determined by a mental capacity assessment).
- 4.7. It is a criterion for entry that day (non-residential) School applicants be adequately transported to and from School. The Charity will ask that the relevant funding authority make the necessary arrangements for this. In special circumstances, notably where an agreement has been reached between the funding authority and the family, the transport costs and arrangements may be the responsibility of the parents.
- 4.8. When considering applications for admission, applicants for residential placements may be prioritised over applicants for day placements and applicants for 52-week placements may be prioritised over those seeking 38-week placements. The Charity may prioritise placements expected to be for a longer duration above those for a shorter duration.

## 5. Application process

- 5.1. The first step is for the prospective applicant and their family, where appropriate, to contact and visit St Elizabeth's Centre. The Centre has a specific e-mail contact address: [admissions@stelizabeths.org.uk](mailto:admissions@stelizabeths.org.uk).
- 5.2. Open Days may be held by the College, but arrangements can be made for visits to the Sixth Form and College to take place outside of these events by appointment only.
- 5.3. Visits to the School are by appointment only. The Admissions Team will arrange and co-ordinate these visits in collaboration with the appropriate specialist teams.
- 5.4. Referrals can be made with or without a visit.

- 5.5. Consultation/external enquiries are accepted on behalf of the prospective applicants from an appropriate professional, such as the Local Authority, a family member or a representative.
- 5.6. Applicants' details are entered onto a restricted database, as part of an internal monitoring system.
- 5.7. The Admissions Team will triage the information received and ensure that the Charity can meet the individual's needs, wishes and aspirations, before progressing any further, in accordance with the admissions criteria set out at section 2.
- 5.8. If the Admissions Team, consider that the referral is relevant and appropriate the multi-disciplinary teams will be informed and will review the information provided within 72 hours of receipt. On some occasions further documentation will be requested, which will extend the review period.
- 5.9. If the Admissions Team concludes that the Charity cannot meet the individual's needs, the enquirer is contacted to inform them of the decision. If reasons for the decision are requested these will be given.
- 5.10. It is a requirement for all School, Sixth Form and College applicants to fully complete St Elizabeth's application form. All individuals should have an up-to-date EHCP (ideally completed within the last 12 months). If the EHCP was not completed within the last 12 months, it should be accompanied by the most recent Annual Review (carried out within the preceding 12 months). Applicants will also be asked to provide additional information, which may include behaviour support plans and risk assessments, therapy reports, care plans and guidelines, medical reports and medication details.
- 5.11. After reviewing the application form and supporting documentation submitted, if the Admissions Team consider that the Charity may be able to meet the applicant's needs, an assessment will be carried out by the MDT. They will provide details regarding hours of input required (where necessary) including a rationale for the recommended input.

## **6. Assessment by Multi- Disciplinary Team (MDT)**

- 6.1. An initial assessment will be arranged as well as an observational assessment at St Elizabeth's Centre and/or at the individual's home or current school or college, or other professional provider setting.
- 6.2. MDT staff attending the assessment on behalf of the Charity will vary, depending on the needs of the individual and service required.
- 6.3. The assessment is a further opportunity to establish a fuller picture of the individual's needs, wishes and aspirations. This can take some time to complete. However, it is an

essential part of the admissions process and is the basis for service delivery planning and risk assessment.

- 6.4. Following assessment, the individual's case will be discussed by the MDT who will decide whether to make a provisional offer. If the MDT decides against making an offer of a placement, they will provide a clear and concise rationale for their decision.
- 6.5. The outcome of the assessment will be shared with all relevant parties and a formal provisional offer will be sent by letter and email to the next of kin or person representing the individual or professional body/local authority representative, as applicable, and the funding authority via email/ secure portal.

## **7. Formal documentation and funding of placement**

- 7.1. Funding authorities will require information about the proposed fees for the placement. This will be compiled by the Charity's finance department, based on the MDT's assessment and the number of hours that they have calculated as being essential to provide the individual with the service(s) that they require. All fee proposals must be approved by the Deputy CEO and Finance Director (or in the absence of one of them, a member of the Executive Team in their place) before they are submitted to the funding authority.
- 7.2. Support and expenses to enable an applicant's attendance for non-emergency medical appointments (e.g. with consultants) not local to the Charity may incur charges for transport and additional staff. Incontinence supplies/support shall remain the responsibility of the placing authority.
- 7.3. Highly specialised dietary needs can be supported but may require additional funding.
- 7.4. Acceptance of a place at the Charity is an agreement to an annual fee increase yearly on 1 September.
- 7.5. If a funding authority wishes to amend the terms of the placement, any requested changes shall be reviewed by the Charity and charged against its applicable charging structure at that time.
- 7.6. If at any time following agreement of terms for a placement the Charity is unable to meet an individual's needs or the circumstances surrounding a placement change, the Charity will inform the funding authority of any increase in charges required to continue the placement.
- 7.7. The proposed fee details will be sent at the same time as the provisional offer letter to the relevant funding authority.

- 7.8. Placement cannot proceed without written confirmation from the relevant funding authority that the fee has been agreed. It is a requirement that a contract between St Elizabeth's Centre and the relevant funding authority (education, social care and or health authority, or parent/care in the case of Community Hub and Vocational Provision) be entered into before a place may be formally offered. A start date will be proposed to enable the signing of the contract. Once the signed contract has been received from the relevant funding authority, the admission will be able to proceed.
- 7.9. Once all contractual formalities are complete, the Admissions Team will notify the relevant Heads of Service and Community Hub and Vocational Provision of the proposed start date.
- 7.10. In the event of non-payment at any stage of the contract, we will follow our standard debt recovery processes.
- 7.11. At this stage, all documentation is transferred to the relevant service area to commence the transition process. For admissions into all services transition planning meetings with all relevant parties will take place.

## **8. New transitions into a Service**

- 8.1. The transition period can be an exciting time for individuals where they will be developing their skills, gaining independence and moving on to a new milestone in their lives.
- 8.2. The transition period can also be a very anxious time for the individual and their family. It is important to recognise that the transition may be as difficult for the family as it may be for the individual. A bespoke transition plan for each individual will be agreed with the new admission and/or their representatives and funding authority.
- 8.3. Transition considerations must also be given to those already using the service. Preparation and planning with the existing individuals who are resident at and receiving their education from the Charity is essential.
- 8.4. If the individual will live at St Elizabeth's Centre, then the named Children's Home Registered Manager will ensure that all the elements of the care plan are compiled prior to the individual moving in. For day admissions the School, Sixth Form and College will develop and implement the care plan within 7 days of the student or learner's start date. This will be achieved through a collaborative approach from the MDT, with the individual and their representatives kept at the centre of the process. For those transitioning into Adult Services, Windhill and Community Hub and Vocational Provision, staff will ensure all care planning, risk assessments and provision are fully prepared in accordance with the Charity's robust quality systems and regulatory standards.

- 8.5. When transitions occur internally (School to Sixth Form, Sixth Form to College, Children's Home to Supported Living etc.), the Heads of Service working closely with the Admissions Team will manage the arrangements for a supportive transition including planned visits. This will take place irrespective of approved funding/contract, but as a supportive approach.
  - 8.6. If the individual is moving into Windhill Supported Living, then license arrangements will be produced by the Housing Association and 'sign up' day organised by the Registered Manager.
  - 8.7. A designated lead for each service will take responsibility for the planning of day attendees' transition, alongside the Admissions Team.
  - 8.8. Parents/carers/guardians are required to complete and return specific documentation before the agreed start date. This will include consents, details for uniforms, contacts, and other relevant information.
  - 8.9. The Charity is unable to transition children into the Children's Homes, Windhill or Community Hub and Vocational Provision without receipt of all medical information. Parents/carers/guardians, and where appropriate local authorities, must provide a supply of 28 days' medication and a current FP10 (repeat prescription). Instructions on the medication labels must match the FP10 to ensure GP and pharmaceutical requirements are up to date. Individuals should also be provided with any other personal care resources (if appropriate) on admission.
  - 8.10. An initial review meeting is arranged within the first 6 weeks. In the event of any concerns, the MDT may schedule an earlier review. This ensures that assessments and observed presentation of need are aligned, and that all stakeholders have the opportunity to express whether the placement is successful and should continue. St Elizabeth's Centre reserves the right to serve notice at this point. It is therefore imperative that open and clear communication about all needs is shared to prevent a breakdown of placement.
- 9. Internal Transitions (This section applies to Children's and adults moving between St Elizabeth's services only)**
- 9.1. Any transition process must be agreed with all parties involved and with the best interests of the individual as the core focus.
  - 9.2. If the transition involves an individual over the age of 16, then a mental capacity assessment must be carried out to determine the individual's capacity to understand and ability to make an informed decision about their future. If required, an independent advocate may need to be involved.

- 9.3. The service area will hold an initial multi-disciplinary meeting involving all concerned parties and an agreement will be reached regarding the internal transition. Appropriate documents will be completed or updated to ensure robust transition planning and sharing of information, i.e. an adult service support plan will need to be written to replace a child's placement plan. This may include a complete assessment of need or a top up assessment.
- 9.4. In the event of a safeguarding issue, the Charity retains the right to move an individual, to ensure that all people we support are protected within the safeguarding framework.
- 9.5. Following a move, the individual and where appropriate their loved ones or representative will meet with the relevant manager to ensure that they have settled well.

## **10. Discharge Process**

- 10.1. All placements should be reviewed at least annually, led by a funding authority representative. This is to ensure that the services provided by the Charity still meet the needs, wishes and aspirations of the individual, as outlined in any Education, Health Care Plans (EHCP). If the outcome of the review is that the individual's needs have changed or that a change in the services provided is recommended, the Head of Service will inform the finance department who will recalculate the pricing of the placement if necessary and seek approval of any changed pricing from the placing authority. The funding authority will lead on updating the EHCP accordingly.
- 10.2. Any individual who wishes to explore a move to an alternative lifestyle will be supported to do so in a planned way.
- 10.3. The Charity may also identify that an individual's needs, wishes and aspirations can be supported in another setting, for example, Supported Living.
- 10.4. If this is the case, this will be explored with the individual, their funding authority and where appropriate their loved ones or representative.
- 10.5. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to bring the placement to an end. This is known as a 'breakdown of placement' or 'managed move'. A breakdown of placement may be due to, but not limited to, any of the following non-exhaustive examples:
  - a) a change in needs of the individual rendering the Charity unable to meet those needs.
  - b) a serious escalation in behaviours, which depletes the Charity's ability to safely and effectively support the individual and/or other individuals using the service.
  - c) an individual, or their representative's, choice to move.

- d) the outcome of a safeguarding issue; or
- e) non-payment of fees.

In respect of School, Sixth Form and College, further information can be found in the Suspension and Exclusions policy.

- 10.6. The Charity reserves the right to serve notice, in accordance with the contract that is signed on admission. The Charity will make every effort with all relevant parties to seek solutions to prevent a breakdown in placement. Notice will only be given in the event that all available options have been exhausted.
- 10.7. If the Charity has no alternative but to give notice, this will be issued to the individual, their loved ones and the relevant funding authority. In respect of Windhill Supported Living, Clarion Housing Association has the right to serve notice in accordance with their license agreement.
- 10.8. The approach to discharge planning will be to ensure that the individual's voice is heard and their needs, wishes and aspirations are known to the new provider, if applicable.
- 10.9. If necessary, an independent advocate may be required.
- 10.10. The relevant funding authority will be responsible for leading on the discharge but will be fully supported by those staff at St Elizabeth's Centre who know the individual well. Endings can be a time of sadness so it is important that closures are carefully planned.

## **11. Tribunals**

- 11.1. Tribunals can be a lengthy and challenging process for those involved. St Elizabeth's will work with tribunal officers, families and funding authority representatives to ensure swift actions are taken internally to ensure the smoothest and quickest outcomes.
- 11.2. Pricing may change between the date of the offer and the end of the tribunal process; therefore, pricing expires at 6 months. Pending a review this may be reissued considering changes in need and inflationary price increases. Updated documents will be shared with the tribunal officer and other stakeholders as appropriate.
- 11.3. Due to the regularly changing factors within classrooms and living arrangements, as well as a child's needs changing over time, the Charity reserves the right to retract a placement offer for those in the tribunal process. Offers pending tribunals will be reviewed on a 3 monthly basis for up to 9 months by the admissions MDT as to whether it is appropriate for a place to continue to be held for a child or young person.

## 12. Admissions Appeals Process

12.1. The Charity reserves the right to refuse a placement if:

- a) the School, Children's Homes, Sixth Form, College, Community Hub/Vocational Services or Windhill Supported Living is unsuitable for the applicant's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs; or
- b) the applicant's attendance would be:
  - in respect of the School, Sixth Form or College, incompatible with the efficient education of others; or
  - incompatible with the efficient use of resources.
- c) No vacancy / appropriate space is available. If a placement is suitable applications will be managed through a 'waiting list'.
- d) No fee acceptable to the Charity is agreed by the funder or funding authority.

12.2. If the outcome is that a placement cannot be offered, then the Charity offers applicants the opportunity to appeal the decision. Appeals will only be successful if it can be demonstrated that the Charity's admissions process was not applied in accordance with the legislation set out above.

12.3. Appeals should be made in writing to the Admissions Team. The Admissions team will acknowledge receipt of the letter in writing and provide a copy of this policy. The appeal will then be passed on to the relevant director of the service area.

12.4. The information that formed the basis of the decision will be reviewed by the relevant member of the Executive Team. The director will make a formal request to reconvene the MDT who made the decision, so that it can reconsider the application.

12.5. Additional information may be requested from other agencies if appropriate.

12.6. The outcome of the decision will be conveyed by the service area director, by letter, to the person making the appeal within 28 days.

12.7. If the outcome is to accept the appeal, then the reasons why the decision has been changed will be outlined in the letter.

12.8. If the outcome is to decline the appeal, then the reasons why the decision has not been changed will be outlined in the letter.

12.9. In respect of School, Sixth Form and College family applicants, the Admissions Team will notify both the applicant and the relevant local authority of the decision, in order to inform the local authority's decision as to whether the Charity should be named on an applicant's EHCP. Where the local authority is the applicant, the Admissions Team will inform them directly.

### **13. Quality**

#### **Internal**

13.1. To monitor the effectiveness of the systems and processes, the Charity's Executive Team undertakes a quality improvement evaluation on an annual basis.

13.2. The impact of the policy will be monitored by considering:

- a) the application process, including unsuccessful applicants.
- b) retention and success of adults, children and young people.
- c) appeals; and
- d) compliments/complaints.

#### **External**

13.3. External quality monitoring of this Policy may be carried out during inspection visits, in accordance with the relevant frameworks and cycles, by:

- a) Ofsted.
- b) Care Quality Commission; and
- c) Hertfordshire Contract Monitoring service.

#### 14. Policy Approval & Review Process

Review: This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date created: October 2023

Version history:

Date	Approved by	Added to policy log
November 2023	Board of Trustees	
November 2024	Board of Trustees	
March 2026	Board of Trustees	

## Appendix 1: Admissions Pathway

Assessments are managed through a blended model to ensure we and the potential applicant needs can be met

*MAXIMUM of 4 assessments per week unless agreed otherwise by Admissions MDT*

- A** Joint MDT Initial Assessment (via Zoom) including manager from identified prospective Children's Home(s), if applicable
- B** Assessment at current provider, i.e. education, residential setting. The assessment staff attendees will be agreed in advance according to the identified needs (person specific)
- C** On-site assessments - to be co-ordinated as in option B
- D** There may be occasion, for the purpose of efficiency and geographical challenges, be a call for a combined tour and assessment on-site - to be co-ordinated as in option B

- 1 All MDT assessments to be handed/emailed to the Admissions Lead
- 2 Decision to progress to offer placement
- 3 Admissions to send Pricing Request Template to Revenue Manager
- 4 Revenue Manager to send pricing to Finance Director and Director of Business Development (Deputy CEO) for sign off
- 5 Approved pricing to be sent to Admissions team
- 6 Admissions to send pricing and offer letter to Local Authority; Admissions to send offer letter to NOK via email as well as hard copy via post
- 7 Admissions to liaise with Recruitment regarding potential admissions and assessed staff requirement via weekly meeting and for admissions updates



15

Transition plan is jointly agreed and created by the MDT, Local Authority, young person and family

16

Home Manager, (where relevant), ensures that transition plan is updated and completed **by the agreed date of admission**, alongside admissions documents

17

Child/Young Person/Adult transitions into the service