

## Ambitious College Admissions Policy

### 1. Purpose and scope

Ambitious College is registered with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)<sup>1</sup> as an approved post-16 institution. Ambitious College is funded through a combination of fees paid by Local Authorities, the ESFA and also voluntary income to fund the College's development, research, evaluation, providing support and additional resources. The College is owned and run by the national charity Ambitious about Autism which provides services, raises awareness and understanding and campaigns for change. The Ambitious about Autism vision is to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism and our mission is to help them to learn, thrive and achieve.

The purpose of Ambitious College is to support young learners to live ordinary lives as part of their home community. We know that with the right opportunity and support they can achieve great things. We measure outcomes toward this goal in the following areas:

- Independent living
- Employment
- Good health and wellbeing
- Friends, relationships, and community inclusion.

Ambitious College provides its learners with a specialist curriculum that meets their needs and interests. The curriculum prioritises the development of the communication, vocational and independent living skills learners need to make a successful transition to adult life.

Ambitious College has relationships with Local Authorities across London and the Home Counties. Ambitious College complies with the SEND Code of Practice 2015<sup>2</sup> and where applicable the School Admissions Code (December 2014)<sup>3</sup>.

Ambitious College is co-located with two general Further Education colleges, the Pears Campus at CONEL (College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London) and the Pears Campus at West Thames. This model allows our learners extended opportunities to access mainstream learning, social and work experience.

<sup>1</sup> Education and Skills Funding Agency is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department for Education.

<sup>2</sup> SEND Code of Practice 2015 Department of Education Reference: DFE-00205-2013

<sup>3</sup> School Admissions Code (December 2014 – DFE-00728-2014) applies to all maintained schools, Academies and Free Schools in England. Colleges are not specifically designated in the code.

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## 2. Admission Criteria

Ambitious College will admit learners aged 16 to 25 with a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and who also have a Learning Difficulty, where the College is named on the young person’s Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who require special education.

Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014 allows the Secretary of State to publish a list of approved post-16 institutions, for the purposes of enabling the institution to be the subject of a request, for it to be named in an Education, Health and Care plan.

Each learner has a highly personalised study programme with a focus on outcomes. Learners attend for 5 days (32.5 hours) per week for a 40 week academic year.

Prior to naming the College on the young person’s EHCP, the Local Authority will have consulted with the College in line with their statutory obligations as set out in the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

Places are usually taken up at the start of the College year. By arrangement with the Principal places may be accessed at any time of the year based on the suitability for a young person.

Places are generally commissioned by the Local Authority in which the young person resides and in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

Each application is considered on an individual basis. In each case, our application process evaluates the needs of the individual young person and determines whether the College can meet their needs with particular reference to the following factors set out in the SEND Code 2015:

- The College is suitable for the young person’s age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs.
- The attendance of the young person at the College would be compatible with the efficient education of others and the efficient use of resources.

Additionally the following factors will be considered:

- The parents/carers or the potential learner have expressed a preference for the College (or in the case of dispute the Local Authority intends to name the College).
- The needs of the learner will be assessed to take into account the cohort and environment to enable the efficient education of others with whom they would directly come into contact with on a regular day-to-day basis.
- The College may need to provide additional support for a learner to facilitate the safety of staff and learners. The additional support would be determined by assessment with the cost of the placement adjusted accordingly.

In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2015, for places for young people moving from secondary school to a post-16 institution, or for young people moving

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between post-16 institutions, the Local Authority must review and make any amendments to the EHCP by 31 March in the calendar year of the transfer or at least 5 months before the transfer takes place.

Ambitious College reserves the right to delay commencement of the place until after the start of the academic year, should the Local Authority name Ambitious College on an EHCP or confirm funding of the place after the 31 March in any given year.

At the start of a new academic year, Ambitious College may for new learners arrange a phased transition at the start of the academic year to facilitate the transition of a learner into Ambitious College. A transition plan would be provided for the learner.

### **3. Admission process**

Applications can be made either by the parent/carer, the potential learner or by the Local Authority.

We encourage parents/carers/potential learners to visit the College prior to stating a preference. The details of our parent/carer 'visit and tours' dates and how to book are published on our website. A visit and tour for a potential learner can be accommodated on request, the preference is for 'visit and tours' to be conducted in groups, to minimise the impact on learners attending the College.

#### Applications by Parent/Carer or potential learner

- The parent/carer/potential learner completes an 'Application for Admissions' form and returns it with relevant documentation such as a finalised EHCP. The College will send to the parent/carer/ potential learner a 'Professionals Information' form to be completed by a professional associated with the young person, such as within their current educational placement.
- On receipt of the completed forms, the College may inform the Local Authority in which the family lives that an application has been submitted and that they are seeking funding.

#### Applications by Local Authority

- The Local Authority will consult with the College prior to naming it, in line with their statutory obligations.
- If a referral is made by the Local Authority then the College will respond within the statutory 15-day period.

The College's response is determined by the documentation received (i.e. draft EHCP, EHCP, Annual Review reports, professional assessments) and by the assessment visit or visits.

The assessment will ideally be conducted in the young person's current school or education placement. Where this is not possible, individual arrangements can be made. In most cases there is no charge raised for the assessment but if the current education placement is a significant distance outside the Greater London area, requiring extended travel and a potential overnight stay, the College reserves the right to charge the

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Authority for costs incurred for the assessment using a 'best value' model for travel and subsistence, in line with the Ambitious about Autism Staff Expenses Policy.

The distance from the College and the time of travel to College will be considered during the admissions process. We would not normally expect a learner to have more than an hour travel time between home and College.

The College's Admissions Panel will consider each referral prior to making a recommendation to the Principal. The Principal, or in their absence the Vice Principal, will make the decision to offer a place at Ambitious College and in all cases this will comply with the 15 day requirement, if applicable.

Once agreed that the College can meet the needs of the learner, a place is offered and an exemplar study programme and the costs for the Ambitious College place for the potential learner are provided to the Local Authority, to be considered and approved at their panel meeting.

When funding has been approved by the Local Authority an individualised study programme is produced and shared with parents/carer/ potential learner.

After admission, learners are provided with a 6 week assessment period on entry to College to determine the level of resource required to meet the learner's need.

Diagrams showing the admissions process can be found in Appendix 1 (parent initiated) or Appendix 2 (local authority initiated).

#### **4. Funding and Contracts**

Ambitious College receives funding from the ESFA and, as an approved post-16 institution, is included on the Secretary of State's list of eligible Colleges, in accordance with Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

ESFA funding is provided, in line with the ESFA 16 to 25 high needs funding principals, in two Elements:

- Element 1 funding is provided to all qualifying placements<sup>4</sup>.
- Element 2 is provided for a limited number of qualifying placements. The funding is not reserved for a specific learner or Local Authority. Ambitious College allocates the Element 2 funding on the basis of the date the Local Authority confirms, in writing, funding of the place for an academic year. Where two places are confirmed by Local Authorities on the same date the time of receipt will also be taken into account. For this reason the College prefers for confirmations of funding to be sent by email to [admissions@ambitiouscollege.org.uk](mailto:admissions@ambitiouscollege.org.uk).

<sup>4</sup> A qualifying placement is funded by the Education Department of the Local Authority, above the minimum annualised timetabled hours, commences before the date of the February statutory return and the learner has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

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Ambitious College assumes, by being named on an EHCP, that the Local Authority has agreed to fund the College place for the academic year. The Local Authority will need to name Ambitious College on an EHCP by 31 March for a guaranteed commencement of the academic year in September of the same year. A contract for services will follow approval.

Ambitious College will negotiate the additional (top-up) funding from the Local Authority commissioning a College place.

Ambitious College uses the 'National Schools and College Contract' with the Schedule 2 (shortform version) and the Schedule 4 (Arrangements for the Provision of Education, Health and Care in Colleges). The learners study programme and Individualised Learning Plan (ILP) for the academic year, details the targets for the academic year towards the EHCP outcomes. The study programme and ILP will be created following the confirmation of funding for a learner.

## **5. New learner induction**

When a place has been confirmed and the funding agreed by the Local Authority, we will:

- Send out a welcome pack which includes information and forms for the parent/carer/ learner to complete and return. The fully completed forms should be returned at least three weeks in advance of the start date.
- Allocate a College staff member to be the point of contact for parents/carers/learner.
- Agree a transition plan with all parties concerned.
- Provide an introduction to the Family Support Team.

## **6. Further information**

Visit our website: <http://www.ambitiouscollege.org.uk/>

Admissions

Visit our website: <http://www.ambitiouscollege.org.uk/about-us/admissions>

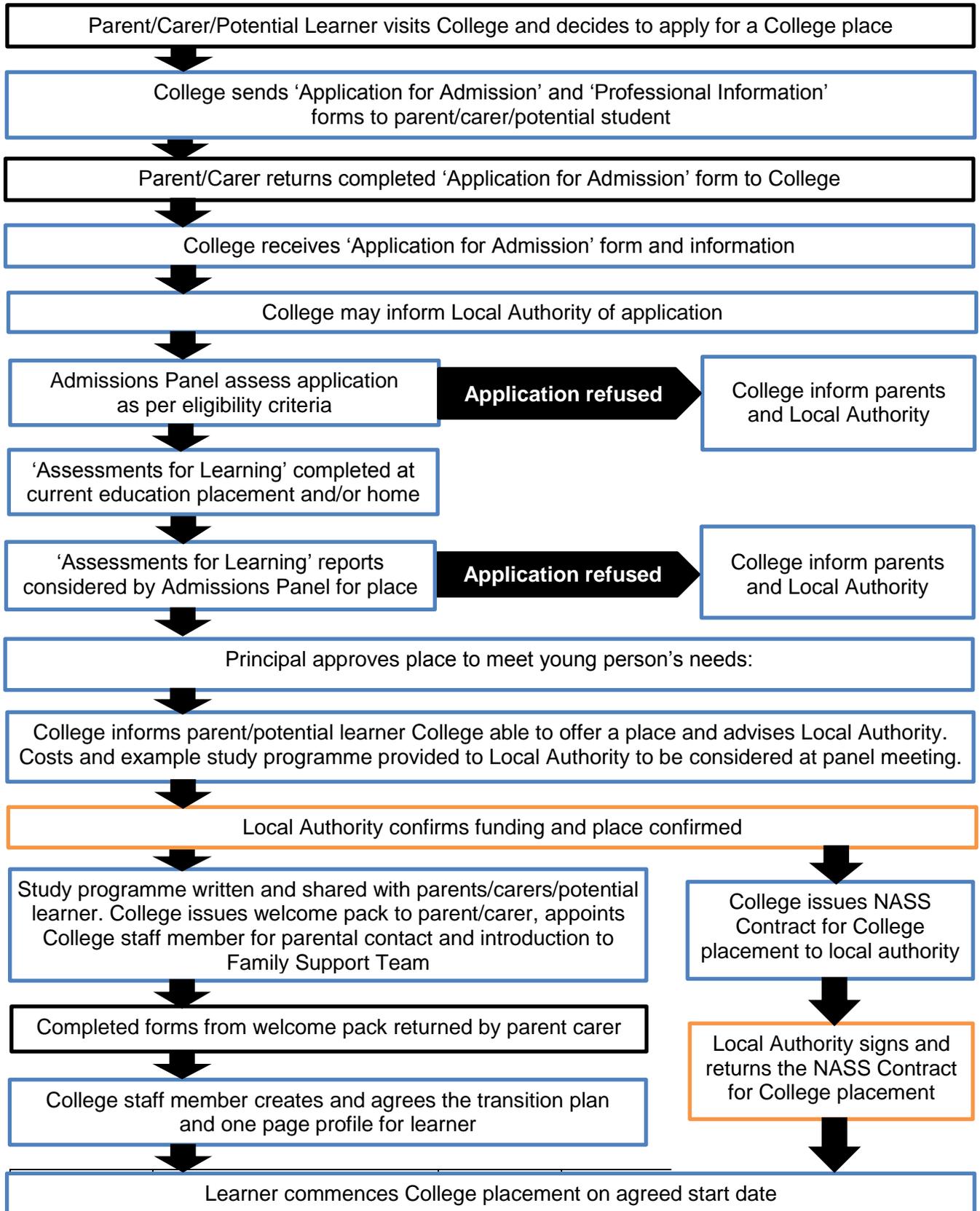
Or contact the Admissions Team

Phone: 020 8815 5428

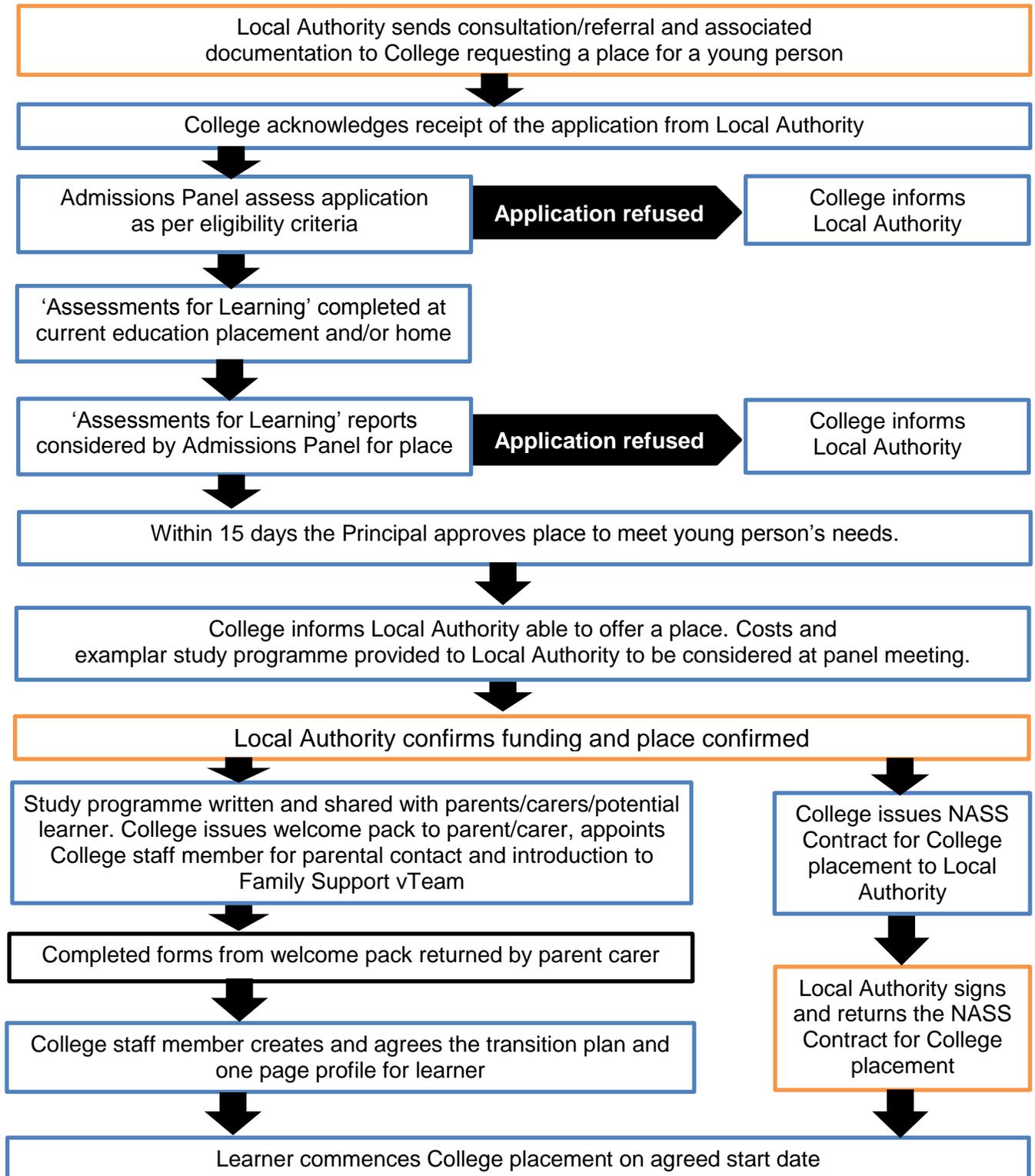
Email: [admissions@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](mailto:admissions@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk)

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**Appendix 1 Application Process (Parent initiated)**



### Appendix 2 Application Process (Local Authority initiated)



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