

Ambitious College Admissions Policy for Admission September 2025

1. Introduction

This policy applies to Ambitious College which is registered with the Department for Education as an educational placement approved under section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014 England and Wales. This policy is published on our Ambitious College website.

The College is owned and run by Ambitious about Autism (AaA) a national charity for autistic children and young people. AaA's vision is for a future where every autistic child and young person can be themselves and realise their ambitions. Our mission is that we stand with autistic children and young people, champion their rights and create opportunities. Ambitious College is funded through Local Authority fees and voluntary income.

The College is dual located at West Thames and Conel Colleges which are located within the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Haringey. The Supported Internship is based at the Whittington Hospital within Haringey. It has relationships with Local Authorities across London and the Home Counties.

Our admissions processes consider applications in light of duties arising under the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2015, the Equality Act 2010, and other relevant statutes where applicable.

To understand the cohort of young people suitable for a college place at our main campus sites or our internship, please visit [Prospectus Ambitious College](#)

2. Admissions Criteria

Ambitious College will admit young people aged 16 to 25 with a primary diagnosis of autism spectrum condition (ASC) and who may also have a learning disability. The College may on an exceptional basis admit a young person not diagnosed with autism where they demonstrate behaviours frequently associated with autism or who have a social communication challenge similar to our autistic learners.

Places are usually taken up at the start of the academic year. By arrangement with the Head of College, places may be accessed at any time of the year where space is available and depending upon the application of the admissions criteria and needs of the young person and other learners.

As part of the process of finalising an EHC Plan, parents/carers/learner¹ have the right to request the Local Authority that maintains the plan to name their preferred choice of school or college (s 38 (2) (b) (ii) Children and Families Act (C and F Act)). Where Ambitious College is given as a preference, the Local Authority will be required to consult with the Head of College (s 39 (2) C and F Act). The Local Authority is required to name the parent/carers preference in the EHC plan unless it can show one of the following apply (s 39 (4) C and F Act):

¹ For young people aged 16 or over who have the capacity, under the Mental Capacity Act, to make the specific decision in question.

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- That the proposed placement is unsuitable to the age, ability, aptitude and SEN of the child/young person.
- Naming the proposed placement is incompatible with i) the efficient education of other young people in the setting, and/or ii) the efficient use of resources.

Each application to Ambitious College is considered on an individual basis. In every case, our admissions process evaluates the needs of the individual young person and determines whether the College can meet the special educational needs (SEN), provide the special educational provision (SEP) and meet the outcomes in the young persons EHC Plan with reference to the factors set out above in s 39 (4) of the C and F Act.

Additionally, the following factors will be considered:

- Whether the college may need to provide additional support for a young person whose safety or that of others is unusually at risk. This would not necessarily prevent admission. The additional support would be determined by assessment with the cost of the placement adjusted accordingly.
- The distance from the college and the time of travel to school will be considered during the admissions process and any concerns reported.

3. Admissions Process

Parents/carers/learners must be asked by their Local Authority to give their school/college preferences at the time a draft EHC plan is issued. Occasionally there may be other circumstances – whether parent/carer/learners or Local Authority driven – when a new school/college place is sought. We strongly encourage parents/carers/learners and potential learners to visit prior to making a request for a place at Ambitious College whether directly or through their Local Authority. The details of our visit and tour events, and how to book a space are published on our website. From time to time there may be situations where we are not able to provide onsite visits. In this situation virtual visits and/or question and answer sessions would be provided.

If following a visit, a parent/carer/learner is interested in a place at the college, there are two routes for admission, via a parent/carer/learner request (see Appendix A for main campus and Appendix C for supported internship) or through a Local Authority consultation (see Appendix B for main campus and Appendix D for supported internship). If an application is via parent/carer/learners request then the applicant should also contact their Local Authority to ask them to consult with us. Where Ambitious College is given as a preference by parent/carer/learners and that initiates a consultation process by the Local Authority, or where a consultation process is initiated by a Local Authority itself without parental knowledge, we will communicate the decision to the Local Authority and in most instances to the parent/carer/learners unless otherwise advised. As part of the admissions process the views and aspirations of the learner will be considered.

i) The College Admissions Panel

Applications to the College are processed by the Admissions Team and considered by our College Admission Panel. The panel comprises:

- The Head of College
- Head of Campus
- Assistant Principals
- Curriculum/Operations Managers
- Admissions Manager/members of the Admissions Team
- Business and Contracts Manager
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Specialist

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- Any other professional staff required to support the admissions process.

Responses to consultations for a college place are determined by:

- Consideration of the documentation received (i.e., draft or final EHC Plan, Annual Review reports, professional reports);
- Observing the young person where a decision cannot be made on the documentation alone.
- Offering an assessment for applications/consultations for our main campus sites which may be at current school, at home or on campus as described below for a young person, where a decision cannot be made on documentation and observations.
- Offering an invitation to attend a selection event at our supported internship with the programme tutor and job coach for applications/consultations for our supported internship.

Our observations and assessments for our main campus sites should ideally be conducted in the young person's current school or education placement first and then, if necessary, at Ambitious College. Where this is not possible, individual arrangements can be made including assessment via a home visit or where appropriate a virtual assessment.

In most cases there is no charge raised for the assessment. If the current educational 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 Authority for costs incurred for the assessment using a 'best value' model for travel and subsistence, in line with our Staff Expenses Policy.

The College's Admissions Panel will thoroughly consider each application for a place prior to making a response, and in all cases will respond within the 15-day requirement unless agreed otherwise with the Local Authority.

ii) Outcome of Panel decision

If the College Admissions Panel agrees that College can meet the special educational needs and provision of the young person, a college place is offered and the costings provided to a Local Authority. The offer may contain other conditions which will need to be considered by the Local Authority concerned. We will communicate the decision to the Local Authority and in most instances to the parent/carer/learners unless otherwise advised. All other requests for costings are considered on an individual basis.

The offer of a place is conditional upon funding being approved and confirmed by the relevant Local Authority. Where Ambitious College is named on an EHC Plan, Ambitious College will assume that the Local Authority has agreed to fund the place.

If after carefully considering an application, the College Admissions Panel feels it cannot meet the special educational needs and provision of the young person, or if admitting the young person would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, the parent/carer/learner and the local authority will be advised of the outcome of the decision. We provide a right to appeal this decision with our Appeals Panel (please see below). This right to appeal is independent of the right to mediation or to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) set out within the C and F Act and the Special Educational needs and Disability Regulations 2014.

Where offers of a college place are made these are **not reserved** until such time that a Local Authority notifies the college in writing that they agree to fund the place and the college confirms a space is available. Offers will **automatically lapse** after six months. To request that a place does not lapse, either the relevant Local Authority or parent/carer/learners will need to contact the Admissions Team to ask for the offer to remain open and must provide the reasons why. Prompt

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consideration will be given to this request. Once an offer is over six months old, the College Admissions Panel reserve the right to carry out a new assessment to confirm the offer of a place. If the College becomes over capacity, it reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place. Should it need to so, this will be communicated to the Local Authority and parent/carers/learners as soon as possible.

The college reserves the right to delay the enrolment of a new learner where funding decisions are made by Local Authority after the statutory deadline set out in Regulation 18 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2015.

4. Reserve List

Where we are unable to offer a college place because we are at capacity (having taken into account our duties under the Children and Families Act and SEND Code of Practice) we may decide to open a reserve list. For a young person to be added to our reserve list, the Local Authority must first have agreed to fund a place at the College. A reserve list will operate for campus, course and class groups. Learners on the reserve list for their appropriate campus and course and class group will be ranked in accordance with the criteria below:

1. Looked after children or previously looked after children;
2. Young people with siblings already attending College (for this purpose, sibling includes natural sibling, step sibling, foster sibling and adopted sibling permanently living at the same address);
3. Young people with a medical or social need who require a place specifically at Ambitious College, as supported with appropriate evidence;
4. The time and date that funding was confirmed by the responsible Local Authority.

If a place becomes available in a campus and course and class group operating a reserve list, the relevant Local Authority and parent/carer/learners will be notified.

5. Appealing the Admissions Panel Decision not to Offer a Place

If a parent/carer/learner is unhappy about a decision made by the Admissions Panel, they can appeal to the AaA Appeals Panel. Appeals must be made within 4 weeks of the decision letter. This is separate to any remedy available under the SEND legal framework.

6. Funding and Contracting

i) Funding

Our College receives funding from The Department for Education (DfE) through the allocation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

ESFA funding is allocated based on the date that funding was agreed by the Local Authority and the admission date for the young person.

The level of funding required is detailed in the offer letter sent to the Local Authority. The College will negotiate the additional (top-up) funding from the Local Authority commissioning a place and these fees are paid by the Local Authority.

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ii) Contracting

Our college uses the 'National Schools and College Contract' with the Schedule 2 (short form version) and the Schedule 6 for a variation due to General Data Protection Regulation for the contracting of placements together with the Schedule 4 (Arrangements for the Provision of Education, Health and Care in Colleges).

In accordance with the ESFA requirements, a contract signed by all parties must be in place prior to the commencement of the placement.

7. Further Information

Website: www.ambitiouscollege.org.uk

Phone: 020 3870 8775 for the Pears Campus at Conel and
020 3873 2201 for the Pears Campus at West Thames Campus.

Admissions Team

Phone: 020 8815 5428

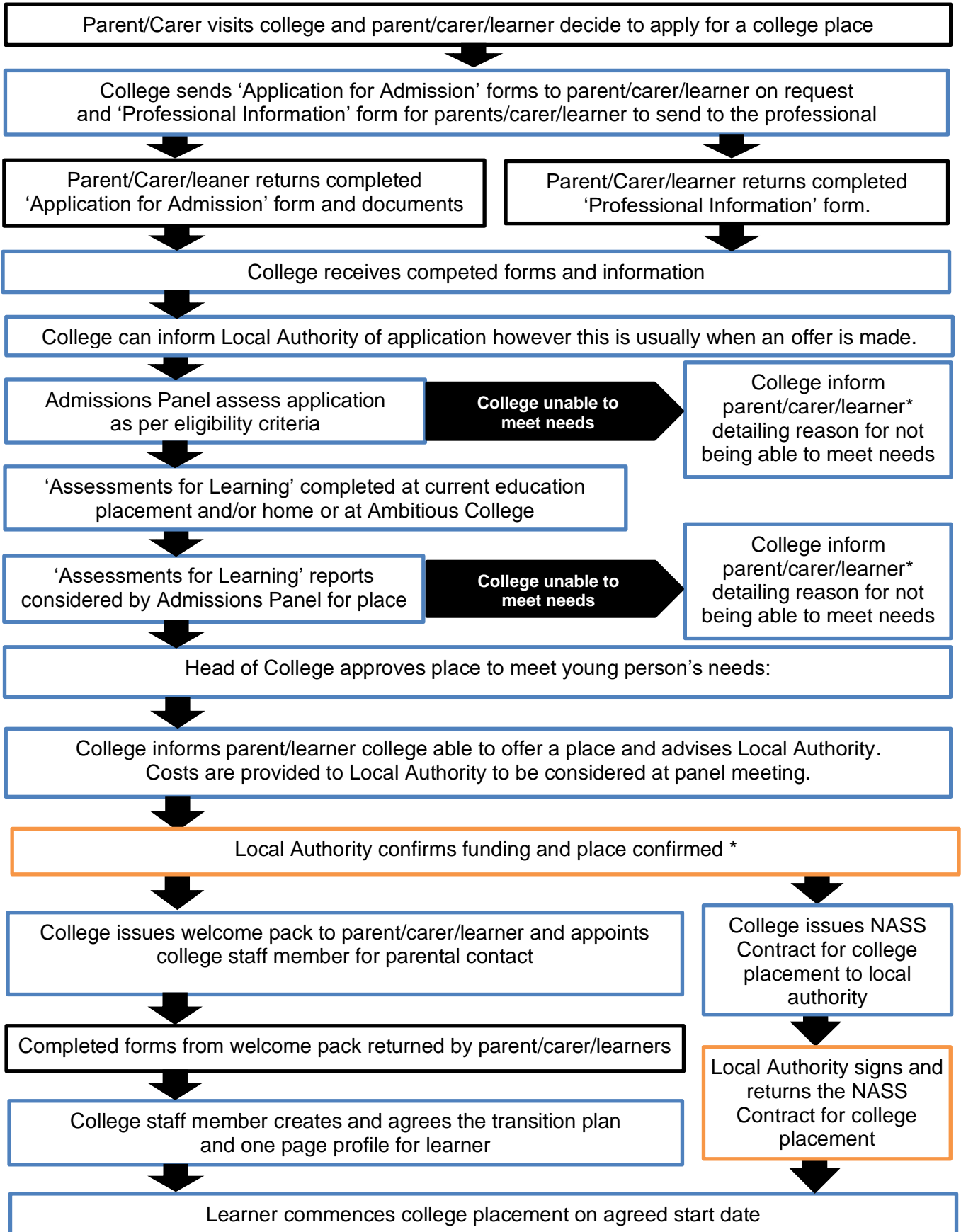
Email: admissions@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

Other college policies and further information can be found via the following [link](#):

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Compliments and Complaints Policy

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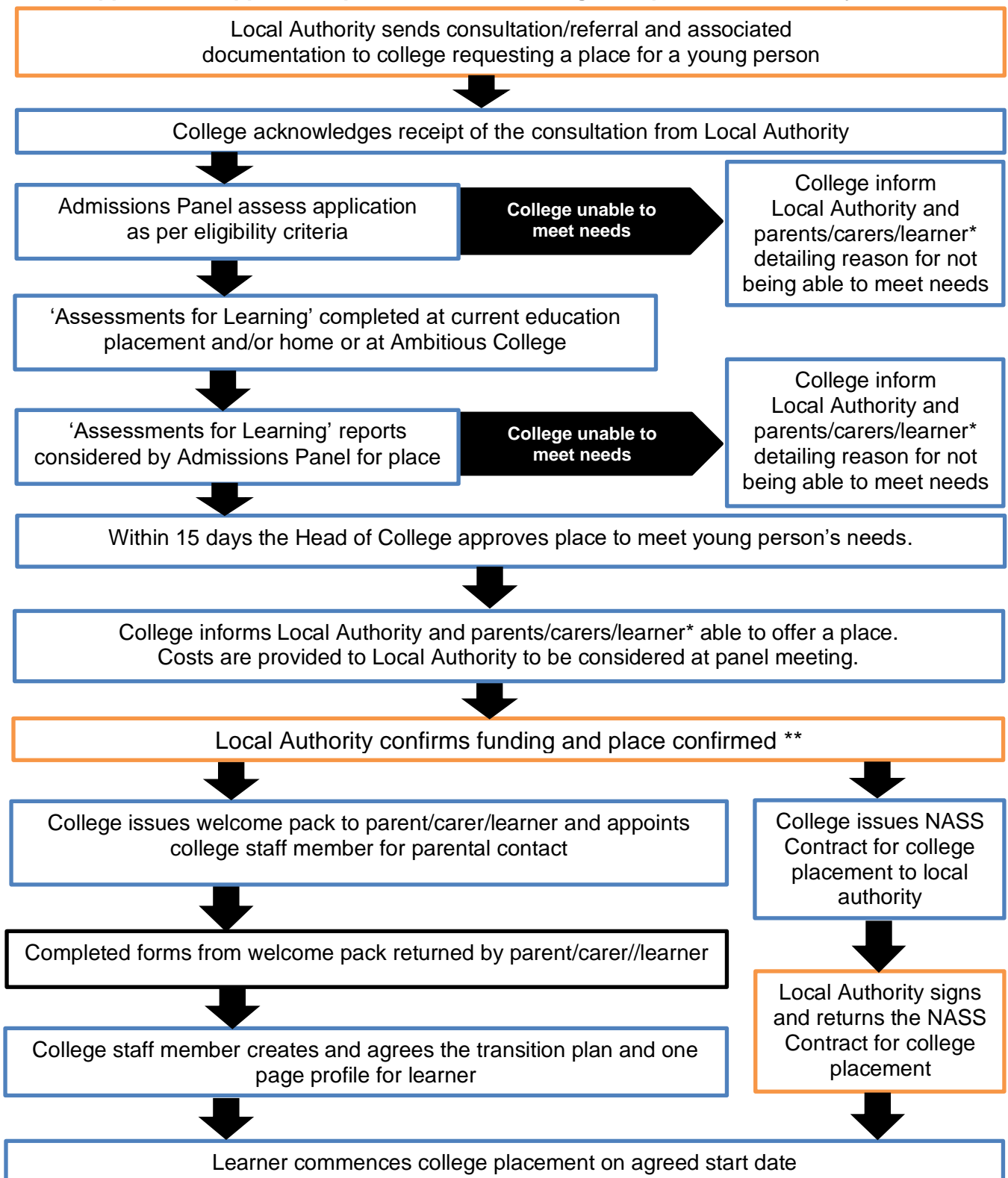
Appendix A: Application process for main college campus - parent/carer/learner initiated



* If a place is not available then learner could be placed on the reserve list

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Appendix B: Application process for main college campus Local Authority initiated

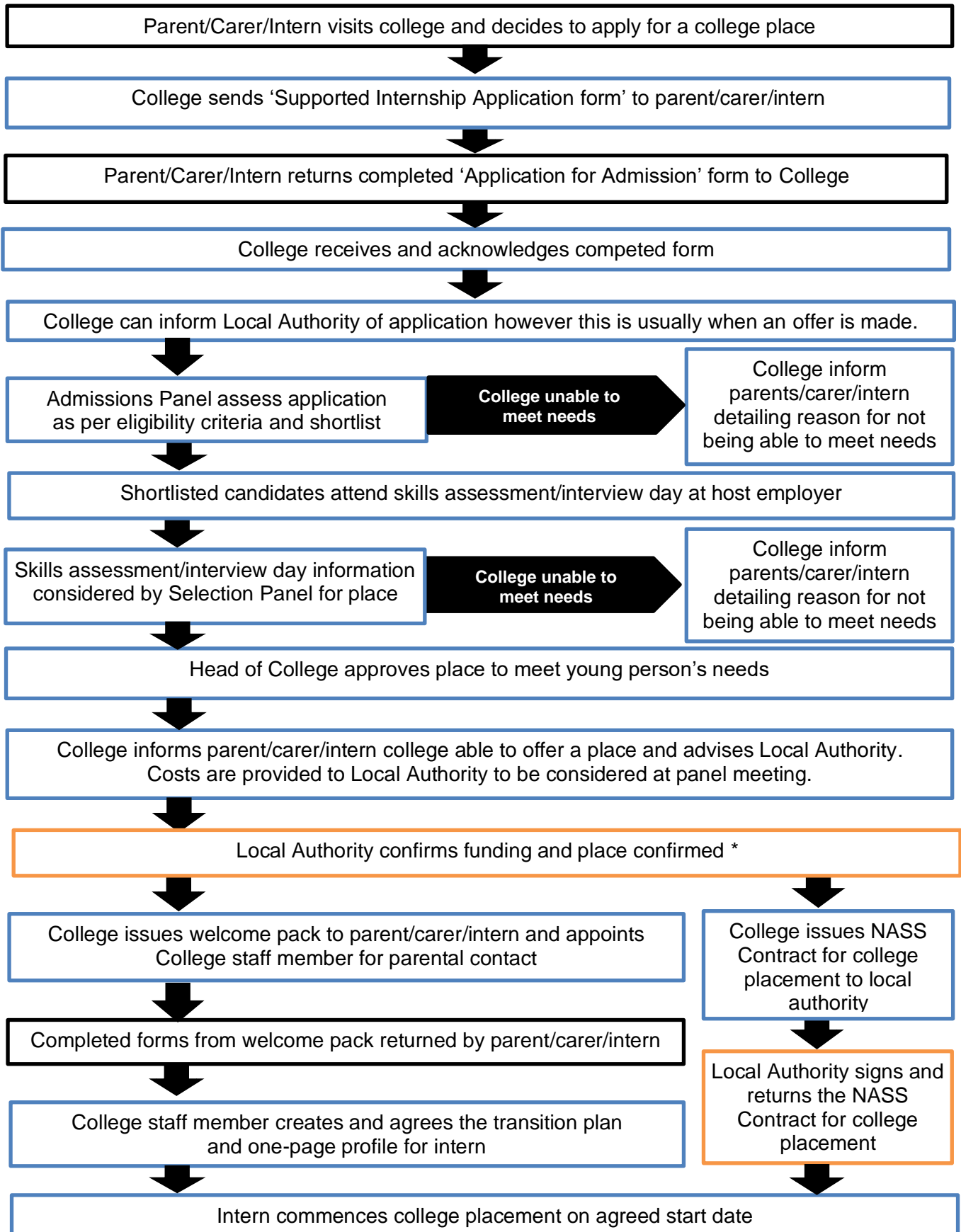


* Where directed by the Local Authority parents would not be informed

** If a place is not available then learner could be placed on the reserve list

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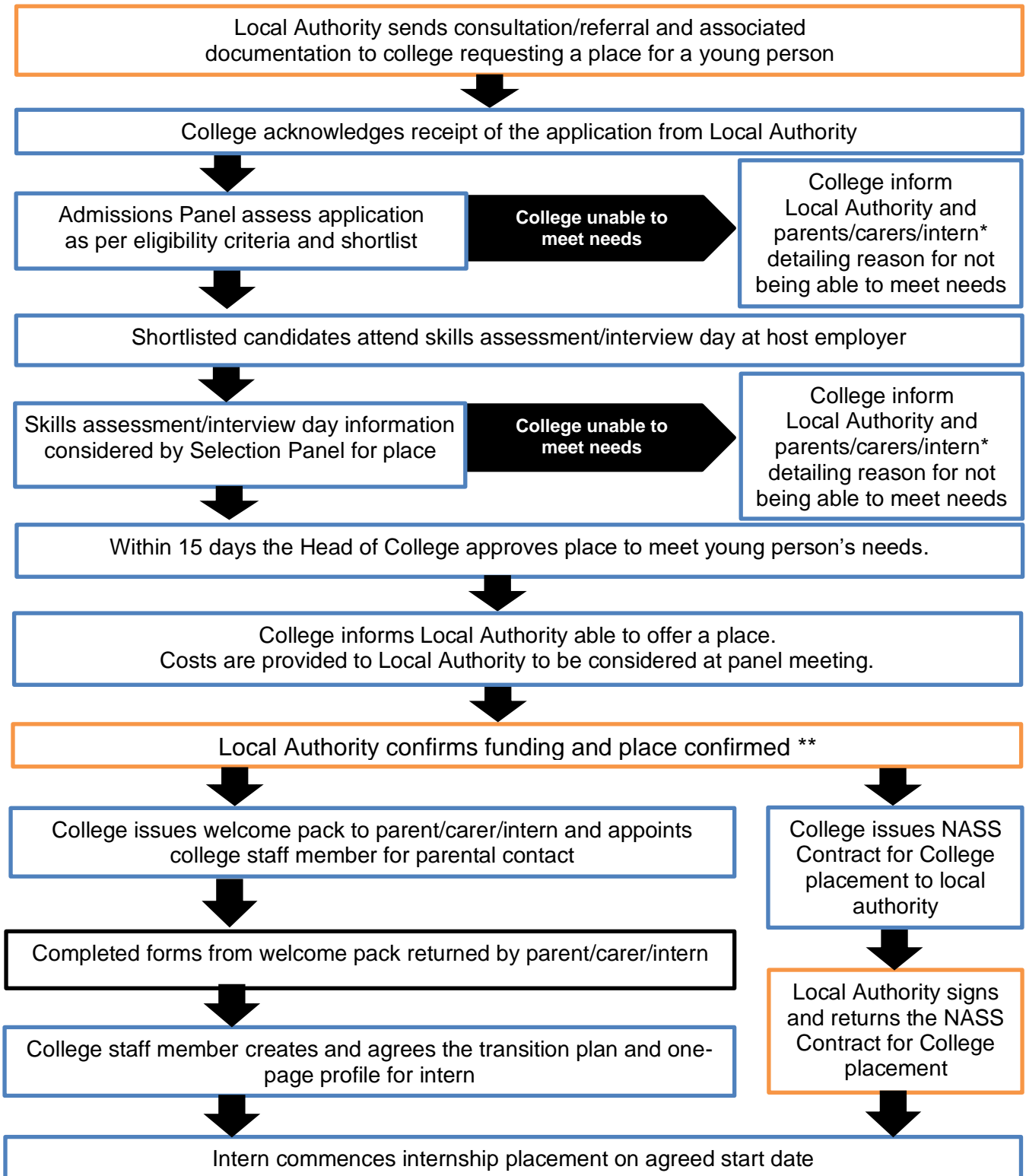
Appendix C: Application process for supported internship parent/carer/intern initiated



* If a place is not available then intern could be placed on the reserve list

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Appendix D: Application process for supported internship Local Authority initiated



* Where directed by the Local Authority parents would not be informed

** If a place is not available then intern could be placed on the reserve list

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