

## **Ambitious College Admissions Policy for Admission September 2023**

### **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 (C and F Act) in 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 in West Thames and Conel Colleges which are located within the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Haringey. It has relationships with Local Authorities across London and the Home Counties.

Our admissions processes consider applications in light of the duties arising under the C and F Act 2014<sup>1</sup>, SEND Code of Practice 2015<sup>2</sup> the Equality Act, and other relevant laws statutes where applicable.

Admission to Ambitious College will be by way of the College being named within an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) following the processes set out below in this policy.

### **1. Admissions Criteria**

Ambitious College will admit young people aged 16 to 25 with a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition<sup>3</sup> (ASC) and who may also have a learning disability. The College may on an exceptional basis admit a young person where they demonstrate behaviours frequently associated with autism or who have a similar social communication difficulty to autism.

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.

As part of the process of finalising an EHC Plan, parents/carers have the right to request the responsible Local Authority name their preferred choice of school or college (s 38 (2) (b) (ii) 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<sup>4</sup>). 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):

<sup>1</sup> Children and Families Act 2014 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

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

<sup>3</sup> Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the designation used by the Department of Education

<sup>4</sup> Children and Families Act 2014 is abbreviated to C and F Act in the remainder of this document

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	102b	Version No.	5

- 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 their 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:

- 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.

## 2. Admissions Process

There are two routes for admission, via a parent/carer request (see Appendix A) or through a Local Authority consultation (Appendix B) below. Where a consultation process is initiated by a Local Authority, we will let the parent/carers know the outcome of the consultation unless otherwise advised. When the consultation is requested by a parent, we will let the Local Authority know, unless there are good reasons for not doing so. A parent may choose to ask their Local Authority to consult with us at the point an EHC plan is being finalised, or where they are otherwise being asked to express a preference for a college place.

We strongly encourage parents/carers 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.

The Local Authority will consult with the College in line with its statutory obligations set out above. The Admissions Team will respond within 15 days from receipt of the consultation from the Local Authority.

### 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
- Assistant Head Teacher/s
- Admissions Manager/members of the Admissions Team
- Business Manager
- Behaviour Analyst
- Any other professional staff required to support the admissions process

Responses to consultations for a college place are determined by:

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	102b	Version No.	5

- 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 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.

Any observations and assessments 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 comply with the 15-day requirement unless agreed otherwise with the Local Authority.

## ii) Outcome of Panel decision

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 outcome of the decision will be notified as soon as possible. Where the request for a placement has come from a parent/carer, they will be notified of the decision along with details of the panel’s decision. If the request for placement has come from a Local Authority, the relevant Officer of the Authority will be advised along with the young person’s parent/carer, unless otherwise notified. There is a right to appeal the decision not to offer a place. Please see Section 5 below.

If the College Admissions Panel agrees that College can meet the special educational needs and provision of the young person, a place is offered. Costings are provided to a Local Authority when it consults for placement. All other requests for costings are considered on an individual basis. A confirmed place at College is conditional upon funding being approved and confirmed by the relevant Local Authority. The College assumes, by virtue of being named on an EHC Plan, that the Local Authority has agreed to fund the place. The offer may contain other conditions which will need to be considered by the Local Authority concerned.

It is important to note that where the College Admissions Panel offers a place at College these are not reserved. Offers will **automatically lapse** after six months. To ensure a place does not lapse, either the relevant Local Authority or parent/carer will need to contact the Admissions Team to ask for the offer to remain open. Prompt 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.

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.

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	102b	Version No.	5

### 3. Reserve List

In the event of the College being full, applicants will be offered the chance to go on our reserve list. Only those applicants whose funding has been agreed by their Local Authority and who request to be added to the reserve list will be permitted onto the list.

In the event of there being more applicants who are eligible for the reserve list than there are available places, the oversubscription criteria will be applied.

### 4. Oversubscription criteria

When there are a greater number of applicants for a place than the PAN, who meet the admissions criteria, the Admissions Panel will offer places based on the following priority order:

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 as evidenced by a letter from GP or Social Services;
4. The time and date that funding was confirmed by the responsible Local Authority.

#### i) Tie Break

Where two applications are equally ranked within the oversubscription criteria, a tie-break situation will occur. The tie-break priority will be decided on a combination of the individual category 1 to 3 and distance from the home in which they are ordinarily resident to College. The least distance will have the higher priority. Where the distance between the young people's ordinary residence and the College is the same, a random allocation will be used as a tie break. This process will be independently verified.

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

Admission appeals will be considered by the AaA Independent Appeals Panel. Appeals must be made within 4 weeks of the decision letter. Further enquiries about appealing should be made to Bernice Sargent at [bsargent@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](mailto:bsargent@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk)

### 6. Funding and Contracting

Ambitious 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.

The College assumes, by the establishment being named on an EHC Plan, that the Local Authority has agreed to fund the place.

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

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	102b	Version No.	5

contracting of placements together with the Schedule 1 (Arrangements for the Provision of Education, Health and Care in Schools).

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](http://www.ambitiouscollege.org.uk)

Phone: 020 3870 8775

Admissions Team

Phone: 020 8815 5428

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

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	102b	Version No.	5

## 4. Introduction

### Introduction:

Our status

Our duties under the Children and Families Act SEND Code of Practice

We are following EQA and HRA

The SEND legal framework around placing Numbers

This policy applies to Ambitious College which is an Independent Specialist College (ISP) registered with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)<sup>5</sup> as an approved Section 41 post-16 institution.<sup>6</sup>

The college is owned and run by the national charity Ambitious about Autism (AaA). AaA is a national charity for autistic children and young people who may also have a learning disability. AaA's vision is for a future where every autistic child and young person can be themselves and realise their ambitions and our mission is that we stand with autistic children and young people, champion their rights and create opportunities.

The 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.

Ambitious College has relationships with Local Authorities across London and the Home Counties.

The college complies with the Children and Families Act 2014<sup>7</sup> and SEND Code of Practice 2015.<sup>8</sup>

Ambitious College is located in the London Boroughs of Haringey and Hounslow. The 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 (West Thames College). This model offers our learners extended opportunities to access mainstream learning, social and work experience. The Pears Campus at CONEL has a satellite campus within the Whittington Hospital which provides a supported internship programme.

The purpose of the college is to support young people 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.

### Supported Internships

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<sup>5</sup> Education Funding Agency is an executive agency, sponsored by the [Department for Education](#).

<sup>6</sup> Section 41 of the Children and Families Act, Secretary of State publishes a list of approved institutions.

<sup>7</sup> Children and Families Act 2014 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

<sup>8</sup> SEND Code of Practice 2015 Department of Education Reference: DFE-00205-2013

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5

Supported internships were introduced by the Government in 2013 to prepare young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) with the skills needed for adulthood and employment.

Ambitious College is working with the Whittington Hospital and DFN Project Search and has provided supported internships since September 2019.

Benefits of a supported internship include:

- Learning new skills that could be used in future employment;
- Building confidence and life skills;
- Increase social networks.

Ambitious College Supported Internship is located within the Whittington Hospital and is a satellite campus of the Pears Campus at CONEL.

Ambitious College works with the Whittington Hospital to support interns develop work skills within the workplace. Interns are fully immersed in the workplace, five days a week (09.30 to 15.30) for an academic year. There is also some classroom-based learning which takes place in the base room, situated on the hospital grounds. There may be some instances for the safety of the interns where the base room needs to be temporarily relocated away from the hospital, such as a health alert.

There will be a wide variety of skills to learn in place. This may include:

- Housekeeping;
- Grounds Maintenance;
- Administration;
- Computers and Information Technology (IT);
- Post room assistant;
- Kitchen assistant;
- Meeting rooms/facilities assistant;
- Laboratory work.

Most of the time interns will be in the workplace learning the necessary work skills. At the start and end of each day there will be some classroom time. Interns will be given training and support in the internship rotations and the opportunity to work in three different departments as the learners build skills towards real job descriptions. Interns are supported by a college teacher and a job coach who are based on site, full time.

Interns will learn employability skills such as:

- Customer service;
- Confidentiality;
- Time keeping;
- Planning and Preparation;
- Teamwork;
- IT skills;
- Way finding/orientation skills;
- Communication;
- Job search skills;
- Interview skills;
- Health and safety in the workplace;
- Maintaining a healthy working lifestyle.

Supported internships also benefit employers to learn what young people with additional needs can contribute and achieve.

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5

## 5. Admissions Criteria

### Admissions criteria Autism diagnosis etc

Ambitious College will admit to the main campus sites autistic young people aged 16 to 25 with a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition<sup>9</sup> (ASC) and who may also have a learning disability, where Ambitious College is named on the young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who require special education. The college may on an exceptional basis admit a young person where they demonstrate behaviours frequently associated with autism or who have a similar social communication difficulty to autism.

Ambitious College will admit to the supported internship programme autistic young people aged 16 to 24 with a primary diagnosis of ASC and with a Learning disability, where the college is named on the young person's EHCP and who want to move into work and need extra support to do so. The college may on an exceptional basis admit a young person where they demonstrate behaviours frequently associated with autism or who have a similar social communication difficulty to autism.. Interns are expected to be able to travel independently. There may be the chance of some travel training prior to the start of the programme.

Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014 allows the Secretary of State to publish a list of approved 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.

Places are commissioned by the Local Authority in which the young person resides. 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 Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

Places are 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 based on the suitability for a young person.

Each application 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 their EHCP, with particular reference to the following factors set out in Section 39 (4) of the Children and Families Act:

- The college is unsuitable for the young person's age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs;
- The admission of the young person at the college would be incompatible with the efficient education of others.

Additionally, the following factors will be considered:

- The parents/carers or the young person 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 young person 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 on a regular day-to-day basis;
- 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;

<sup>9</sup> Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the designation used by the Department of Education

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5

- The distance from the college and the time of travel to college will be considered during the admissions process.

For young people in a transition year (defined in Regulation 2 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014) (the SEN Regs) the school expects the Local Authority to finalise an EHC plan by the statutory deadline in line with its duties under Regulation 18 of the SEN Regs. Where this deadline is missed, the school reserves the right to delay commencement of the place until after the start of the academic year

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

The college will provide the Local Authority with the prospectus and the link to the college to be provided on the Local Authority's Local Offer.

Each learner has a personalised timetable with a focus on outcomes. Learners attend for 5 days per week during the academic year. The college term dates are available on the college's website.

## 6. Admissions Process

### Admissions process

What is our process of consults

- Admissions meetings – participants
- Consult on papers
- When we assess
- Offers for 6 months

We encourage parents/carers and potential learners to visit our college, prior to making an application. The details of our parent/carer and potential learners 'visit and tours' events and how to book a space 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' events to be conducted in groups, to minimise the impact on learners attending the college. 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.

Following a visit, we ask the parent/carer to inform their Local Authority that they wish to request a place at Ambitious College.

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

#### Applications by Parent/Carer or potential learner for the main college campus sites

- The parent/carer/potential learner completes a 'Pre Entry Self-Referral form' and returns it with relevant documentation such as a finalised EHCP;
- The parent/carer/potential learner requests completion of a 'Professionals Pre Entry Assessment' form from a professional associated with the young person, such as within their current educational placement and consents to share information with the college;
- If required, and with consent to information sharing from the parent/carer/potential learner, the college will send to the aforementioned professional a 'Professionals Pre Entry Assessment' form to be completed by the professional and returned;
- Following receipt of the completed forms, and if a conditional offer is made, the college will inform the parent/carer/potential learner of the conditional offer, and also the Local Authority in which the family lives to advise them that the parents/carers/potential learner are seeking funding.

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5

### Applications by Local Authority for the main college campus sites

- 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 from receipt.

The college's response is determined by the documentation received (i.e. draft or final EHC Plan, 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 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 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 Authority for costs incurred for the assessment using a 'best value' model for travel and subsistence, in line with our Staff Expenses Policy.

Ambitious College will then consider an applicant's profile such as but not limited to:

- Learning levels;
- Barriers to learning;
- Method of communication used.

Diagrams showing the admissions process can be found in Appendix A: parent/carer/potential learner initiated or Appendix B: local authority initiated.

The college's Admissions Panel will consider each application/consultation prior to making a response, and will comply with the 15-day requirement as applicable unless agreed otherwise with the Local Authority.

If agreed that the college can meet the needs of the young person, a place is offered conditional to funding being approved and the costs for the place are provided to the Local Authority, to be considered and approved by the Local Authority.

When funding has been approved by the Local Authority and after enrolment, new learners are provided with a 6-week assessment period on entry to the college to determine baseline learning levels, curriculum and to confirm the level of resource required to meet the young person's needs.

### Applications by Parent/Carer or potential intern for the supported internship

- The potential intern completes an application form;
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a Skills Assessment / Interview Day at the host employer premises or where appropriate via a virtual assessment;
- A selection panel comprising of the partners will make the final decision;
- An offer letter will be sent to the successful candidates and copied to their Local Authority to consider funding the internship.

### Applications by Local Authority for the supported internship

- The Local Authority will consult with the college for a supported internship place 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 from receipt.

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5

The college's Admissions Panel will consider each application/consultation prior to making a response, and will comply with the 15-day requirement as applicable unless agreed otherwise with the Local Authority.

cCollege can meet the needs of the young person, a place is offered conditional to funding being approved and the costs for the place are provided to the Local Authority, to be considered and approved by the Local Authority.

Diagrams showing the admissions process for supported internship programme can be found in Appendix C: potential intern/parent/carer initiated or Appendix D: local authority initiated.

When funding has been approved by the Local Authority and after enrolment new interns are provided with a 6-week assessment period on entry to the internship to determine baseline learning levels and to confirm the level of resource required to meet the young person's needs.

In the event that further information becomes available, either before or after admission of the young person, then Ambitious College reserves the right to review whether or not it can be/remains a suitable and appropriate educational placement for them.

## 7. Naming AC

### Naming AC

What if we have not been consulted, will take legal advice

What if we are at capacity

SEND Tribunals

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## 8. Reserve List

### Reserve list

- criteria

A reserve list may be established should all places be allocated at an Ambitious College campus. Ambitious College may limit the number of places on a reserve list or dissolve a reserve list.

Appeal Arrangements

Appeal arrangements are not applicable to Ambitious College.

## 9. Appeals

### Appeals

## 10. Funding and Contracting

### 7.1 Funding

Ambitious College receives funding from Department for Education (DfE) through the allocation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). As an approved post-16 institution, Ambitious College is included on the Secretary of State's list of eligible colleges, in accordance with Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5

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>10</sup>.
- Element 2 is provided to all qualifying placements. The funding is not reserved for a specific learner or Local Authority. The college receives Element 2 funding for a limited number of learners at the start of the academic year. The college should receive additional Element 2 funding for the additional learners during the academic year.

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 college prefers for confirmations of funding to be sent by email to [admissions@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](mailto:admissions@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk).

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.

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.

## 7.2 Contracting

Our college use the 'National Schools and College Contract' with the Schedule 2 (shortform 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.

## 11. 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 as early as possible but 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.

## 12. Further information

Visit our website: [www.ambitiouscollege.org.uk/](http://www.ambitiouscollege.org.uk/)

For Admissions information <http://www.ambitiouscollege.org.uk/about-us/admissions>

To contact the Admissions Team

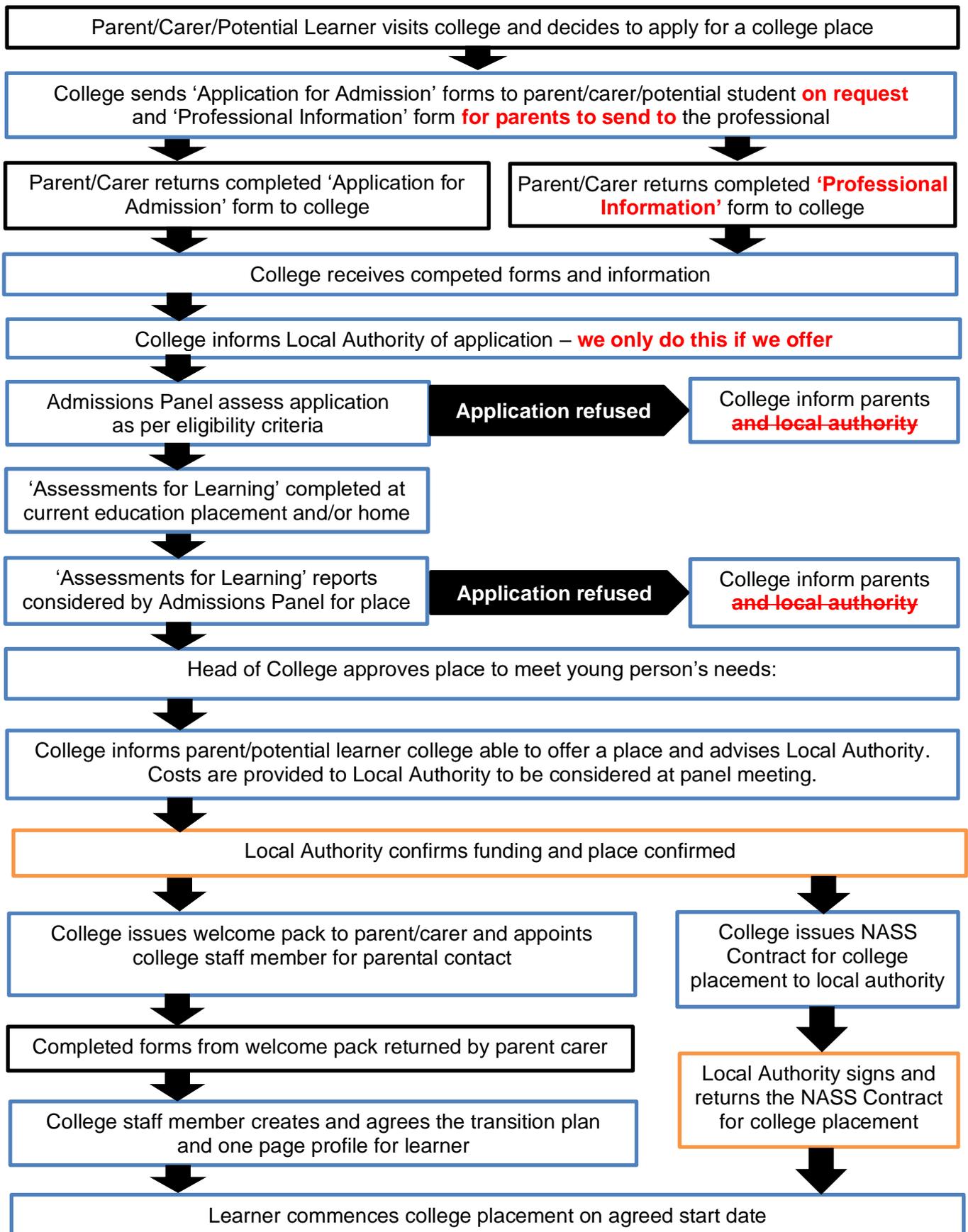
- Phone: 020 8815 5428
- Email: [admissions@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](mailto:admissions@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk)

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<sup>10</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).

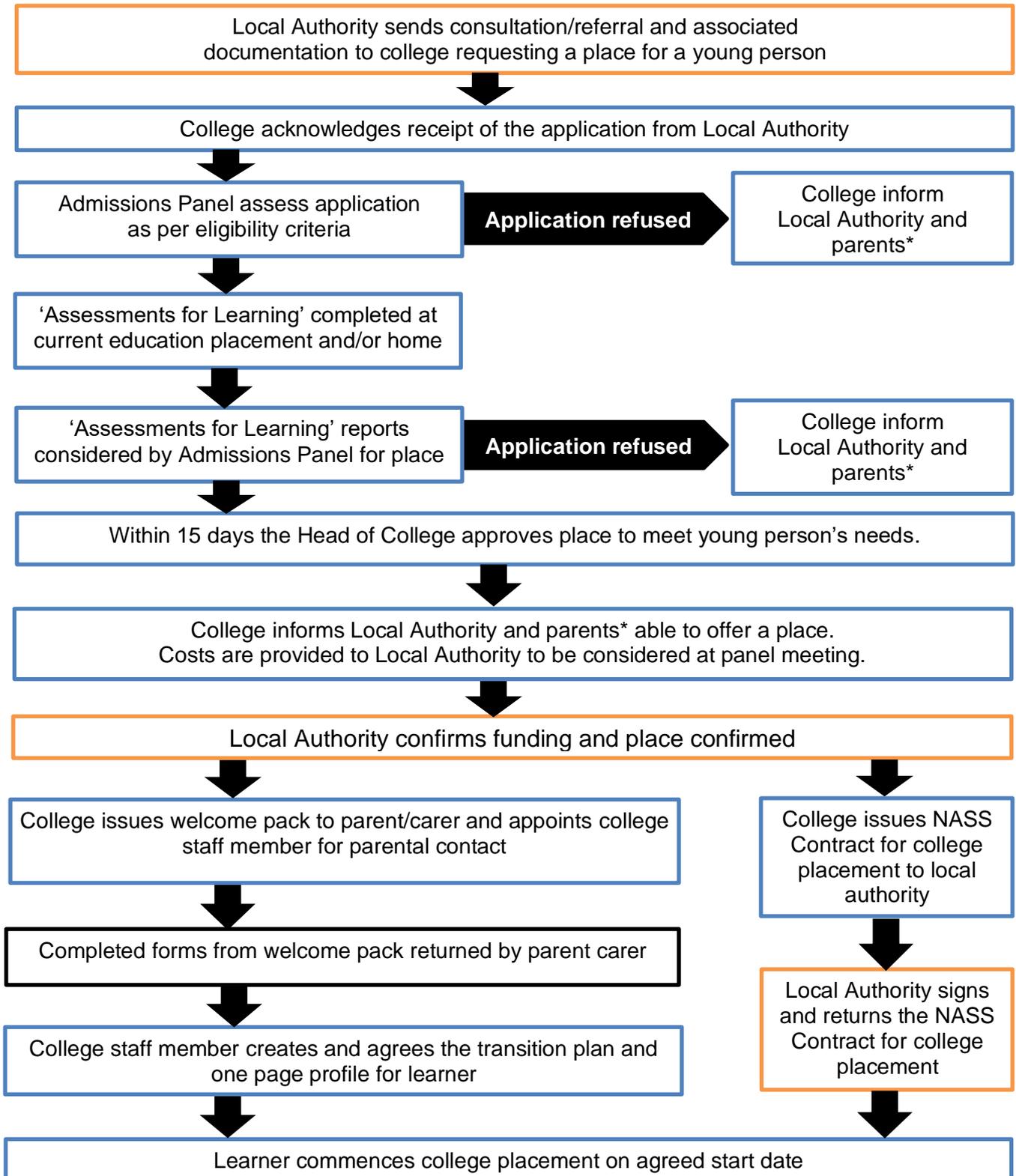
Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5

**Appendix A: Application process for main college campus (Parent/carer/potential learner initiated)**



Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5

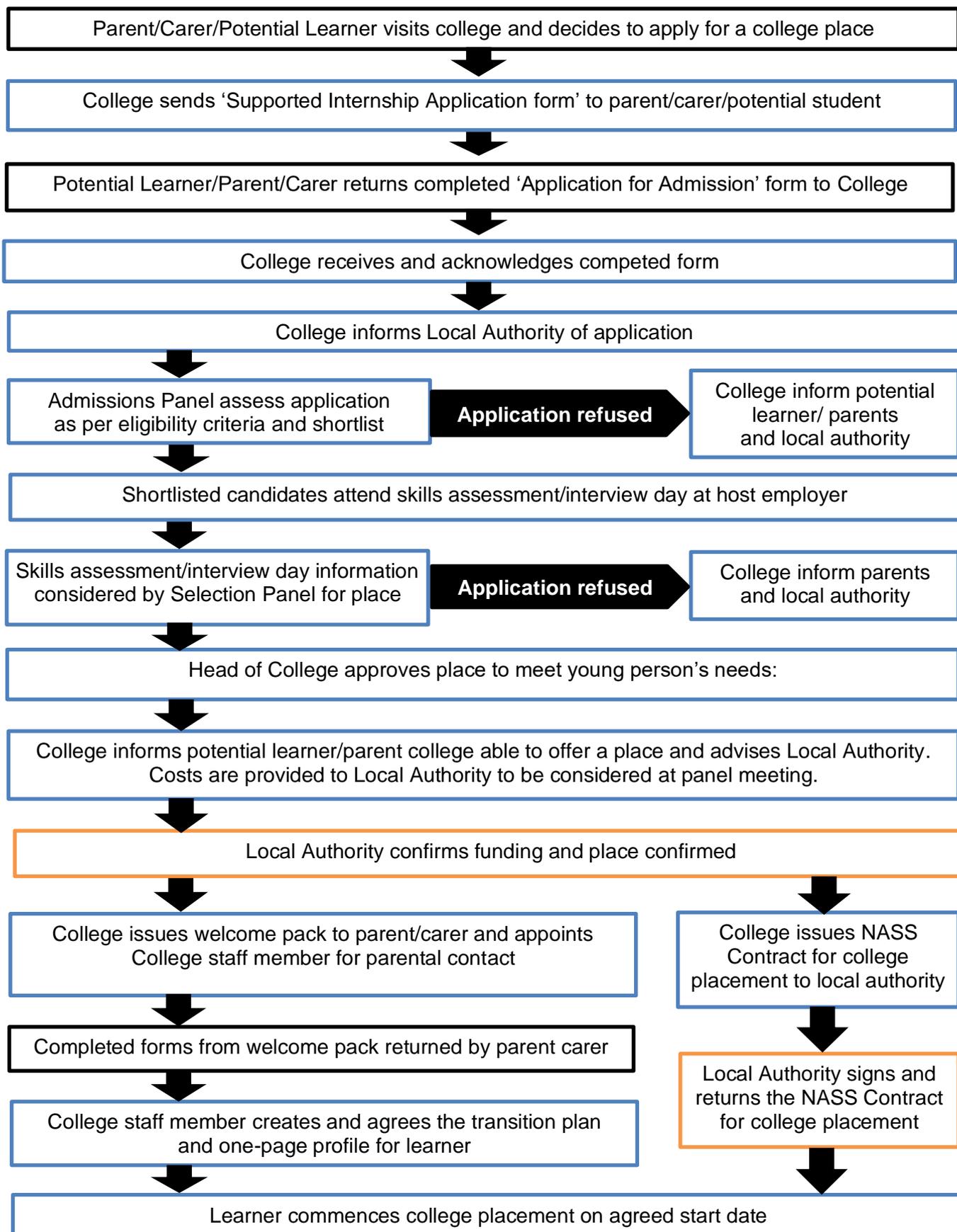
## Appendix B: Application process for main college campus (Local Authority initiated)



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

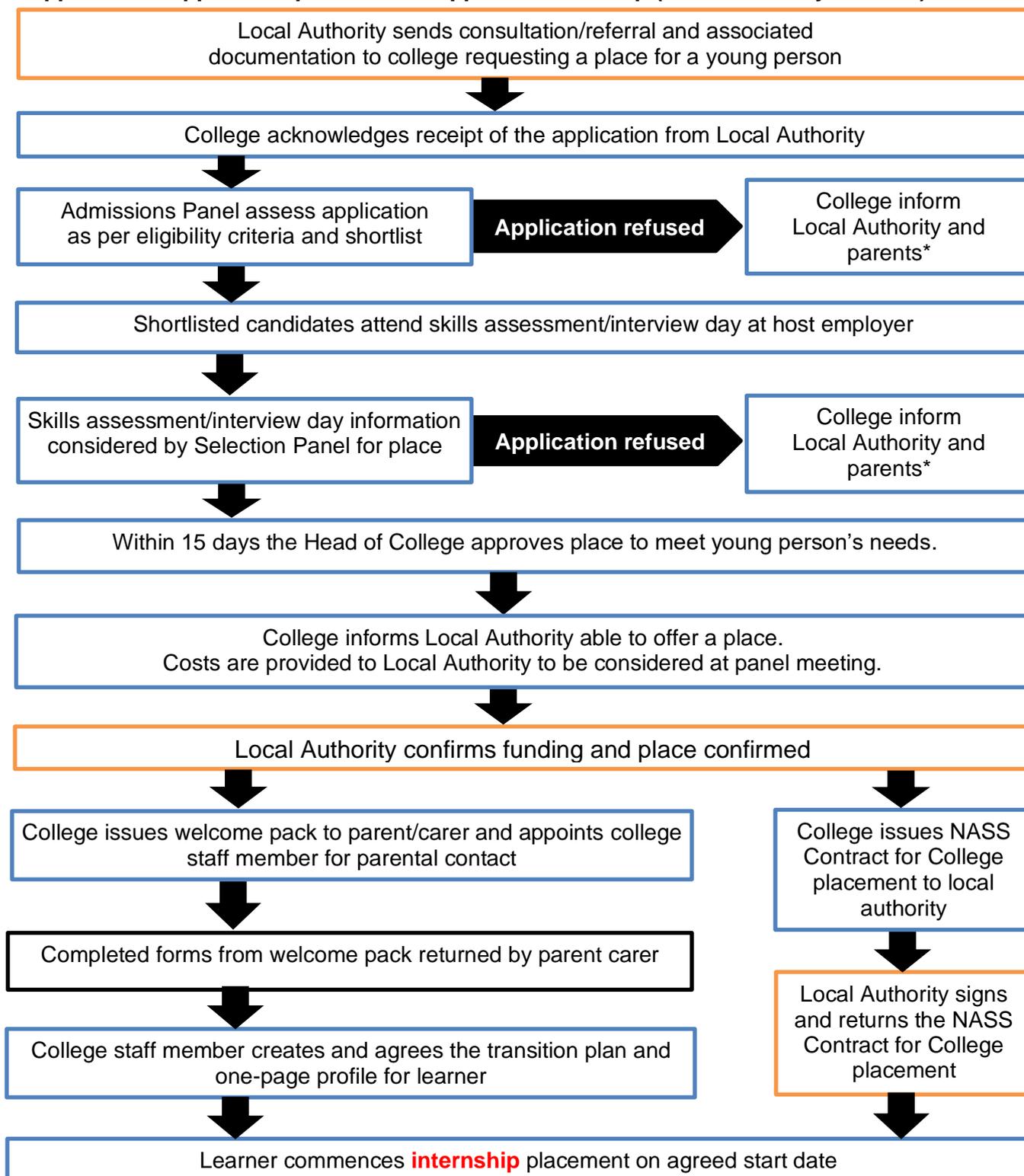
Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5

**Appendix C: Application process for supported internship (parent/carer/potential intern initiated)**



Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5

## Appendix D: Application process for supported internship (Local Authority initiated)



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

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2023
Policy No.	AaA 102a	Version No.	5