

Admissions Policy

1. Introduction

St. John's College provides residential and day education services for young people with/without a learning disability aged 18-25 (residential) and 16-25 (day placement) whose needs are related primarily to an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC). Applications for placements are open to young people with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition, as well as those with additional needs relating to autism and/or a mild/moderate/severe learning disability. Young people may have co-morbid conditions such as a visual or hearing impairment, or mental health issues, or may have complex behaviours that may challenge others.

The College is Section 41 independent specialist college for young people who require significant levels of support beyond that which can normally be provided within a mainstream setting.

Decisions regarding the placement of children and young people involve a number of stakeholders and take account of the views of the parent/carers and young person's preference and views of professionals within St. John's.

St. John's seeks to help to make a real and practical difference to the young people who access the college services and embrace the unique diversity that they present.

2. Statutory Guidance

This policy shall follow and adhere to the statutory guidance listed below:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2003
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 2015

3. Policy statement

3.1 St. John's will ensure that fair and transparent admissions procedures are undertaken for all young people who are referred or apply to the college, in line with St. John's mission statement and values.

3.2 Each application to St. John's College is considered on an individual basis. All young people applying to the college will have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). In every case, our admissions process evaluates the needs of the individual young person and determines whether the College can meet the special education needs (SEN), provide the special education provision (SEP), and meet the outcomes in the young person's EHC Plan with reference to the factors set out in Section 39 (4) of the Children and Families Act with states:

- 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.

3.3 St. John's Admissions Panel comprises the Learner Journey Manager, senior education lead, residential, therapy and medical staff who will as a team undertake the admissions assessments and make recommendations to the decision makers. The final decision is made by the Principal, Head of Learner Services, Autism Lead and Head of Therapy.

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- 3.4 Individual learner placement assessments will be organised and undertaken by a multidisciplinary staff team who will consider the medical, therapeutic, residential care and educational needs of each individual applicant.
- 3.5 When a referral/application is received, St. John's will consider the request and respond within 15 days. Thereafter a decision is made about whether to proceed with an assessment. Where a young person is not considered for assessment at this stage, clear reasons as to why we cannot meet their special educational needs will be provided.
- 3.6 All placements are conditional on funding being agreed by the Local Authority (social care and/or education) or integrated Care Board. An offer of a placement cannot be held while funding is being agreed.
- 3.7 Parents/carers or young person's representatives may also be fee paying.
- 3.8 Applications/referrals will be considered throughout the year. 'In year' admissions may be offered where a vacancy exists but not that in the case of residential placements these will be subject to availability of suitable bed space.
- 3.9 Where a preference of placement provision is subject to a SEND tribunal, we cannot guarantee a place will be held. We will keep parents/carers and other stakeholders informed of our position regarding college places. It will be important that parents/carers who are engaged in a tribunal process or who are intending to appeal a Local Authority decision, let St. John's Admissions staff know as soon as possible. Where our resources permit, we will support the tribunal process by providing assessments reports and where necessary, offering and expert witness/es.
- 3.10 When a commissioner confirms in writing a placement less than eight weeks before the requested start date, St. John's will make every endeavour to meet this deadline but cannot guarantee the date will be met as we may need to recruit new and/or specialist staff. In these circumstances a phased or otherwise adjusted start for the young person will be arranged.

4. Procedures/processes

- 4.1 An initial enquiry may be made and a visit for parents/carers and their young person will be organised by St. John's Admissions Team.
- 4.2 All applications/referrals will be received through the Admissions Team at St. John's. The Admissions Team will collate all the relevant documentation received and distribute it to the Admissions Panel members who will give full consideration to it. Further information, including evidence, may be requested from the local authority, previous placements or referring agents by the Admissions Team, where necessary.
- 4.3 Wherever possible, prospective learners will attend an assessment visit, ideally comprising one or two days at the college. This will give the young person an opportunity to experience a range of learning activities with associated resources, as well as enabling direct initial observation and assessments. Where required, members of the assessment team may undertake direct assessments at the young person's school or home, the duration of which may vary.

Purpose of the assessment is to ensure that:

- We can meet the special education needs of the young person.

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- We can deliver the level and type of support, and provision identified in Section F of the EHC plan, and the outcomes are aligned to our provision and program offer.
- Identify the views, wishes and feelings of the young person and their family.

Assessment outcomes:

Assessment outcomes inform the decision of the Admissions Panel and form the basis of future baseline assessments.

- 4.4** Once a decision has been made by the Admissions Panel, the young person and their parents/carers will be informed, and the assessment report sent to the LA. This report provides detailed information obtained from the admissions and assessment process, including the fee structure and associated aspects of support and provision that St. John's will provide.

Transition support:

- 4.5** St. John's Admissions Team will determine via the assessment process if a learner will benefit from support with entry transition and how that transition support should be organised.
- 4.6** From the admission date the learner will appear on St. John's learner roll.

5. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy shall be reviewed by the Director of Education and approved by the Education Committee on an annual basis.

6. Contact Information

St. John's College Admissions

T: 01273 244000

E: stjohnsadmissions@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

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Appendix 1

Exceptional Extension to Educational Placements at the College

When St. John's College has offered a learner a 3-year learning programme, the expectation is that, on completion of the programme, the learner will be prepared to engage with their next placement or provider. By prepared we mean that the young person has:

- Undertaken all necessary elements, including completion of relevant coursework, unit/credit accumulation, and exams in order to achieve the qualifications they have been working towards, as identified on admission.
- Been supported in identifying areas of interest in vocational, leisure, living and social options – with the aim that a successful transition plan can be followed.
- Been made aware of various future options and supported to make choices about where they would want to live and what they want to do.
- Been able to communicate those choices, and have those choices understood and respected.

Although 3-year learning programmes are offered, it is understood that placements are agreed for one year at a time, and following years are agreed based on progress made, and potential for future progress on the programme as identified through the placement review process.

St. John's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will only consider extensions to placements (i.e. beyond three years) in exceptional circumstances. Those circumstances may include (but are not limited to):

- A learner being absent from college for a considerable period of time, either due to illness or accident, that significantly impacts on their programme of learning.
- A learner not being offered placement with any other provider or service where other providers have been sought or have fallen through and facing serious disruption such as being made homeless.
- An identified educational need that can be best met at St. John's college and in the best interests of the learner.
- A request from the Local Authority to extend the placement.

To be considered for an extension, learners or their families or representatives should write to St. John's Principal and copy in the Learner Journey Manager (admissions@st-johns.co.uk) to make known their intention of requesting an extension. The letter/email should include clear reasons why the placement should continue, risks associated with not continuing the placement, and describe what benefit continuing the placement would have for the learner. St. John's will acknowledge receipt of a written request within 10 working days (within term time, however this may take longer in holiday time).

St. John's Admissions Panel will provide multidisciplinary advice to the Senior Leadership Team who will make the decision on suitability to extend their placement. SLT's decision will be based on the application made, the learner's personal situation in relation to the above mentioned circumstances, and other available information (such as discussing with keyworkers, families, and other involved professionals). SLT must also take into account:

- Available vacancies - including places that have already been offered to other learners.
- Best interests of the learner – including the learners views and aspirations, any protection or safeguarding considerations, personal /family circumstances.

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- Programme content - including suitability, availability, and level of accreditation.
- Suitable peer group, both residentially and educationally.
- Availability, capacity and suitability of continuing therapeutic intervention.
- Support levels – understanding the expectation from Local Authorities that support levels should reduce over a programme, and that during an extension period support levels may be reduced further.

St. John's will communicate whether the request is agreed in principle or whether it is rejected. This will be done as soon as all relevant information has been collected.

N.B. The decision to agree to extend a placement beyond the expected end date lies with the Local Authority. St. John's College runs a planned three-year programme with progression built in at the end of each year.

Some young people and/or their families request a fourth year.

St. John's remains neutral on this matter and if the young person and/or their families come to an agreement with their Local Authority that a fourth year meets one or more of the criteria below, then St. John's will provide this fourth year. However, if we did not feel this would be in the learners best interests or we did not have any available space, this would be subject to further conversation with the young person/parents carers and Local Authority

Criteria:

That a fourth year:

- can show further progression.
- is qualitatively different.
- compensates for a gap in earlier provision.
- supports the welfare of the young person.
- or another exceptional reason.

Residential placements will only be held for a limited time (date set by St. John's) for learners who are applying for an extension, even if they are undergoing tribunal proceedings.

For further information on our curriculum and cohort of learners please visit our website:

<https://www.st-johns.co.uk/st-johns-college/admissions/>

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