

Admissions Procedure

INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College is a non-residential Independent Specialist Provider, for students who require a significant level of support beyond that which can normally be accommodated within a mainstream college or post-16 provision within a school or 6th form.

This procedure describes how places are allocated for courses at Orchard Hill College and how priority for places will be set if there are more applications than there are places available in any academic year.

It is very important to read the specific criteria for allocation of places on courses as well as the general eligibility criteria for all courses as this provides more detail to the admissions selection process.

The planned number of places for both full and part time courses varies from year to year and is influenced by availability of resources (buildings and staff) and allocation of funding. Where there are fewer applications than planned number of places all applicants will be allocated places provided they meet the required criteria.

Where there are more applications than planned number of places applications will be considered according to the specific criteria detailed in this procedure.

ELIGIBILITY

Criteria of eligibility

Because of the College's Specialist College status, students are only eligible for a place if they have a recognised learning difficulty and/or disability **or** significant barriers to learning, such as those which have resulted in the student becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) or whose health has resulted in significant gaps in learning alongside additional support needs and who require Entry 1-Level 2 courses, **and** have identified learning goals and aspirations that can be met through attendance at the College.

Applications are open to young people and adults with a wide range of learning difficulties/disabilities which include moderate/severe/profound learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as those with additional requirements relating to autistic spectrum disorders, challenging behaviour, visual and hearing impairments and mental health issues. Applications from NEET students and students with significant health issues may also be considered if mainstream provision is not suitable.

All places are subject to availability of funding and funding eligibility criteria as laid out in the Education & Skills Funding Agency's funding regulations – further details can be accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision>. The College will support application for this where possible through appropriate funding channels. Parents/carers and their representatives, and agencies acting on behalf of individuals may also purchase places on a fee-paying basis, subject to the criteria set out in this policy.

The College offers apprenticeship places which are open to employees of the College and OHC&AT as well as applications from those interested in a career in a College or similar setting. For these applications, places will be subject to young people and adults meeting the criteria for an apprenticeship place i.e. they have to be in employment for the vocational apprenticeship and be able to meet the entry requirements for Maths, IT and English.

General criteria for allocation of places on courses

Places are offered in accordance with the following criteria provided that the College has been sent the necessary pre-assessment documentation and that the places available match the individual support needs of the student, for example regarding compatibility within groups.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, applications will only be considered if they have been accepted in time to allow full assessment before the commencement of the course (see p.7 'The Assessment' for further information).

Before offering a place, consideration will be given to the order in which consultations/applications have been made, availability of a suitable place to meet individual needs (including support for personal care, mobility and management of challenging behaviour), and suitability of the nearest College Centre(s)/satellite(s) in terms of matching each student's personal aspirations and goals.

Priority consideration may also be given in exceptional circumstances – for example where there are significant safeguarding concerns or where there are other significant needs that cannot be met elsewhere.

Where a student applies for a course but is unsuccessful due to availability of places, a student will be given the choice to remain on the application intake list should a place become available for the current academic year or to have the option to transfer the application to the following academic year.

CORE PROGRAMMES

Provision on these full-time (4 days: 3 in College, 1 in work / 2 in College, 2 in work) term time courses is usually funded by each individual student's Local Authority. Subject to agreement of funding by the Local Authority or another body or individual, students follow a sixth form curriculum (subject) area tailored to individual needs, taking account of the individual's Education Health and Care plan/Statement.

Foundation Skills for Life (16-18) (19+)

Full-time (4 days term time) provision on the College's Foundation Skills for Life Programme, for up to three years, is usually funded through the High Needs Student (HNS) budget by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the student's Local Authority. The Local Authority is responsible for commissioning this course. The option to self-fund may be available.

Subject to agreement of funding, individual places are normally available to:

- 1) School leavers who meet the College eligibility criteria and the funding body criteria.
- 2) Students over 19 and under 25 who have not previously attended a three year full-time funded programme.

Skills for Work and Living (16-18) (19+)

Full-time (4 days term time) provision on the College's Skills for Work and Living Programme, for up to three years, is usually funded through the High Needs Student (HNS) budget by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the student's Local Authority. The Local Authority is responsible for commissioning this course. The option to self-fund may be available.

Subject to agreement of funding, individual places are normally available to:-

- 1) School leavers who meet the College eligibility criteria and the funding body criteria.
- 2) Students over 19 and under 25 who have not previously attended a three year full-time funded programme.

Foundation Skills for Life (16-18) (19+) and Skills for Work and Living (16-18) (19+) – Extended Programme

Both of these programmes can be extended to one or two year, 3 or 4 day programmes usually funded by the ESFA and the student's Local Authority. Subject to agreement of funding, individual places are normally available to:

- Students returning to the local area e.g. from residential provision
- Students who require additional time to complete their identified outcomes e.g. due to ill health during the three year programme.

ESFA Traineeships

The College offers Traineeships to students at Entry 3 to Level 2.

Traineeships last for up to six months and may be preceded by a pre-traineeship study programme for a further 6 months. Most of the Traineeship programme takes place in the workplace. If applicable, students will need to complete maths and English qualifications and a work qualification in order to meet the funding requirements. Students applying for Traineeships will be assessed prior to places being allocated, in order to ensure that the correct level of qualification is selected.

Subject to agreement of funding, individual places are normally available to:-

- 16-18 year olds who have an EHC Plan
- 19-24 year olds who have an EHC plan

Specific criteria for full time places

Where the number of suitable applications exceeds the number of available places, priority is given to:

1. Students currently accessing a programme at Orchard Hill College
2. Students that are new to the College and have completed a school link course

OTHER PROGRAMMES

Enrichment Programmes

Students have the opportunity to self-fund a range of self-development enrichment opportunities. These focus on enabling students to participate in local healthy living and sports activities and schemes in close liaison with key local leisure groups.

These programmes are usually funded by the individual or through Social Services Personal Budgets. Subject to agreement of funding, individual places are normally available to:-

- Students attending core programmes at the College
- Students who have previously attended core programmes at the College

Skills and Adult Education (SFA) Traineeships

These programmes are funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and are for students who want to develop work-ready skills. Traineeships last for up to six months and may be preceded by an Into Work programme for a further 6 months.

Subject to agreement of funding, individual places are normally available to:

- 1) Students aged between 19 and 24 at the start date of the traineeship who do not have a Learning Disability Assessment or EHC plan

Into Work

These programmes are similar to Traineeships: they are funded by the SFA and are primarily work-related. Into Work programmes last for up to one year. Students will need to undertake a work-related qualification during this course.

Into Work places are normally available to:

- 1) Students aged 25 and over who are not in full time employment and are in receipt of benefits
- 2) Students aged between 19 and 25 at the start date of the course who do not have an LDA or EHC Plan and are not in full time employment

Adult Work and Community Programmes

Adult Work and Community Programmes provide an opportunity for students to sustain the outcomes they have achieved during their core studies. Programme strands include: supported living in the home and community; community participation and advocacy; leisure, healthy living and social networking; developing work skills and social enterprise.

These programmes are only available to:

- 1) Students who have completed a 3 year Foundation Skills for Life course at Orchard Hill College
- 2) Students who have completed a 1 year Extended Core Programme/ Traineeship after returning to their home borough
- 3) Students over 25, who do not need to have completed a prior course

Adult Work and Community Programmes may be funded by the student/family in one of the following ways:

- Personal budgets or other funds offered by Local Authorities
- Self-funding

In some circumstances the College will be able to use other funding for these programmes and students. If this is the case, students will be advised prior to the start of the course. Funded applications will be allocated in the order in which applications are accepted.

Transport

The College does not provide transport to or from College.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Submission of Application

A student or a person acting on behalf of a student may apply. Alternatively, a consultation may be received from the Local Authority.

The enrolment process can only begin when the College receives a fully completed application form or consultation.

Receipt of Applications

Applications or consultations are date stamped on reaching the College.

Places will be offered if Orchard Hill College is able to meet the individual needs of the applicant. This is done in the order in which applications or consultations are received. Consideration will be given priority where a consultation has been provided by a Local Authority within a timely manner.

Applications that arrive after the allocated number of places has been filled are held for the duration of the course. If a space becomes available due to an application/consultation being withdrawn, consideration will be given to the order in which outstanding applications/consultations have been made, availability of a suitable place to meet individual needs (including support for personal care, mobility and management of challenging behaviour), and suitability of the nearest College Centre(s)/satellite(s) in terms of matching each student's personal aspirations and goals.

The College will discuss applications/consultations received for Core Programmes for students under 25 with the relevant Local Authorities.

The Assessment Process for Core Programmes

All applicants that are new to Orchard Hill College must undertake an initial screening and/or an assessment before being considered for a place on any course. Where offers are made on the basis of initial screening only, applicants will be required to attend an assessment prior to starting at the College.

Before the Assessment

Before being invited for an assessment the student and/or their parents/carers or representatives must provide the following information:

- 1. Consultation/Application form** – submitted by or on behalf of the prospective student
- 2. Education Health Care PLAN (EHCP)**
- 3. Any other information relevant to support needs**

The College can provide advice and guidance for this.

The Assessment

Before attending an assessment the student and/or their parents/carers or representatives must provide a copy of their most recent school and/or College report and any additional information requested by the College relevant to their support needs.

1) All new and prospective students participate in an initial screening and/or an assessment prior to being considered for a place on a course. This will include:

- face-to-face meetings with the student
- meetings with parents and carers
- visits to schools or homes where appropriate
- conversations/meetings with other agencies or professionals (e.g. therapists)
- completion of questionnaires filled in with curriculum, therapy and nursing staff.

2) **All** new prospective students are required to attend an assessment, either prior to an offer being made or prior to taking up their place at College. The assessment will be carried out by curriculum, nursing and therapy staff.

3) The purpose of assessment is to ensure that:

- students meet the criteria of eligibility
- funding processes are satisfied
- the courses offered meet the learning needs of the individual student
- resources are in place and appropriate to individual needs
- groupings are appropriate for all students

Where possible, school leavers accepted for full time courses will be offered a transition programme during the summer term prior to of their placement. This provides opportunities for further assessment and identification of learning goals.

Offer of placement

Composition and Content of Courses:

- 1) The student groupings will be informed by:
 - the needs and views of individual students
 - safety of the individual and the group as a whole
 - compatibility of group members
 - effective and efficient use of resources
 - the student's choice of current timetable of other activities whenever reasonably possible
 - Students chosen vocation pathway.
- 2) The curriculum (subject) area will be determined by the needs of the individual students
- 3) Staffing levels within groups will reflect:
 - the support needs of individual students
 - the identified support levels within the funding criteria

Expectations at enrolment

- 1) The College will endeavour to work with colleagues in other provision (e.g. therapy services, links to other educational establishments) in order to make the best possible arrangements for the students.
- 2) The parent/carer and care manager are responsible for ensuring that the College is fully informed at all times regarding any additional support required
- 3) Where an application and offer has been made it can be shown that the application complies with the student's wishes.
- 4) All students during enrolment will receive an enrolment pack detailing all relevant information relating to their programme offer.

Appeals process

If applicants have been unsuccessful in securing a place on a course and they wish to appeal this decision this should be discussed in the first instance with the Head of Assessments and Placements. If there is not a successful resolution an appeal can be made through the Pre Admissions Board.

The Pre Admissions Board

The Orchard Hill College Pre Admissions Board is made up of representatives of the Curriculum, Therapy, Admissions and Admin teams. Its role is to consider applications and make decisions in particular around exceptional circumstances, appeals from unsuccessful applicants and requests from students who have completed a previous part time course and wish to return.

Local Authority Tribunals and Panel Decisions

Sometimes the College is asked by Local Authorities to assess whether it can support a student whose first choice, or the first choice of their parent or carer, might be for an alternative provision.

In such cases Orchard Hill College will always:

- support the best interests of the student
- provide a thorough, honest and unbiased assessment
- contribute positively to an amicable resolution

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admissions Policy

Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Mental Capacity and Consent Policy

Privacy Statement GDPR

[SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years](#)