

**Ascent Autism Specialist  
College**

**The Autism Specialists**

**Admission and Placement  
Review Procedures Policy**

September 2023

Ascent College  
449 Wargrave Road  
Newton-Le-Willows  
Merseyside  
WA12 8RS

01925 224 899

[enquiries@ascent.college](mailto:enquiries@ascent.college)

[www.ascent.college](http://www.ascent.college)



<b>Reviewer:</b>	Student Admissions & Safeguarding Officer
<b>Co-Reviewer:</b>	Head of Adult Services
<b>Updated:</b>	September 2023
<b>Next Review:</b>	September 2025
<b>Committee:</b>	Ascent Governing Body
<b>Approved by the Ascent Governing Body/Board of Trustees:</b>	

<b>This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:</b>	
1	SEND policy March 2021
2	Partnership with Parents Policy May 2019
3	Visitors Policy 2020
4	Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy November 2023
5	Disability Accessibility
6	
7	

<b>Change History Record</b>			
<b>Current Version</b>	<b>Previous Version</b>	<b>Summary of changes made</b>	<b>Section Heading &amp; Page Number</b>
September 2023	September 2021	LEAP changed to Ascent	All pages and under each heading

**Contents**

Introduction.....4  
Policy .....6  
Policy Impact..... 12  
References and Further Reources..... 12  
Appendix 1 – Admissions Stages..... 13  
Appendix 2 – Admissions Flowchart ..... 16

## Introduction

Ascent College is a registered charitable organisation which offers education and care for children and young people aged 16-25 years. The 16-25 service comprises of the daytime education for young autistic individuals or those with social communication needs

We endeavour to ensure all students have access to a robust and well-rounded curriculum. This policy outlines Ascent college's procedures for Admissions. The process is fair and in-keeping with college's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the education Act 1996. The college promises to provide all admitted students with a safe environment to learn and develop.

## Fees

For post 16 students with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) recommending education in a specialist setting, funding is provided by the Education Funding Agenda (EFA), the placing authority and health where appropriate.

## General values

- To provide an environment in which each young person is given opportunities and teaching to develop his/her ability to become a happy, participating member of the college community.
- To promote a disciplined, happy and friendly atmosphere whilst simultaneously providing situations which encourage independence and autonomy.
- To encourage students as far as possible not only to have a positive self-regard but also to treat others with courtesy, respect and tolerance.
- To develop a clear understanding of right and wrong.
- To compensate for the disadvantage society may place young people with autistic spectrum disorders.
- To develop the self-advocacy skills of the students so that society is influenced in the thinking and actions by the individual and not only by others speaking on their behalf.
- To respect students' rights and needs as individuals, as students, and as members of a wider community with particular reference to issues of culture, religion, age and gender.
- To provide the highest quality education and care for the students in our school and college.

## Aim(s):

To provide an ASD specific environment that enables young people to become:

- Successful students who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve.
- Confident individuals who are able to lead safe, happy and fulfilling lives.
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.
- Independent individuals who are enabled to function to their maximum potential.

With a focus on developing:

- Personal attitudes and attributes, e.g. empowered, adaptable, confident, risk-taking, enterprising.
- Life skills, e.g. self-help, personal care, daily living, occupational skills and skills for work.

## Roles and Responsibilities

**The Student Admissions & Safeguarding Officer** will:

- Support as the first point of contact for prospective placement enquiries and suitability assessment requests.
- Undertake college visits with prospective families
- Work collaboratively with the Head of Adult Services to ensure the referrals systems are effective, professional and timely.
- Support in the thorough, timely and effective Desk Top Assessment of suitability process, ensuring the appropriate members of the SLT and ELT are equipped with the information to implement appropriate decisions for face to face assessments
- Support in facilitating Panel Meetings comprising of the Head of Adult Services, SENCO, and appropriate Speech and Language Therapist to scrutinise and determine the suitability of the young person for our college.
- Complete the High Needs Funding (HNF) application of prospective new students
- Convene and facilitate half termly Admissions meetings with key staff
- Following confirmation of acceptance of placement, liaison to take place with the family of the new admission, distributing necessary admission paperwork and documentation, communicating the start date and supporting the organisation of transition into college
- Attend class meetings for new student where appropriate

- Be a point of contact, advice and support for the family of the new admission when and where necessary
- Work with the family of the new admission to organise visits into college as necessary
- Work alongside the School Family Liaison Officer (FLO) to organise yearly Post 16 Open mornings for Wargrave House year 11 students and external prospective students

### **The Head of Adult Services** will:

- Meet with the SASO in half termly meetings to discuss current admissions
- Convene and attend panel meetings for prospective students, offering advice and providing guidance surrounding possible class allocation and start date.
- Attend Tribunals when required in support of possible placement for prospective students

### **The Head of Finance in support** will:

- Liaise with the Local Authority when an offer of placement is made regarding costings for said placement
- Organise the exchange of contracts as necessary where a placement has been agreed by the Local Authority.
- Support with costings for placements and HNF forms as required

## **Policy**

Ascent College is registered with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as an approved post-16 institution. The College is owned and run by Remarkable Autism Ltd.

- Our Vision: A world where autistic people live happy and fulfilled lives.
- Our Mission: To support and educate autistic people throughout their lives, and redefine what's possible by providing innovative and transformative services.
- Our Values: We are Creative, Aspirational, Resilient and Respectful

The purpose of Ascent College is to support young adults with ASD and social communication needs to live ordinary lives as part of their own community. We know that with the right opportunity and support they can achieve great things. We measure outcomes toward this goal in both accredited and non-accredited areas:

Non Accredited areas are measured across the following Four Preparation for Adulthood disciplines:

- Independent living
- Employment
- Health and Fitness
- Community Skills

Accredited areas are measured across the following disciplines:

- Open Awards and City and Guilds qualifications
- Maths and English (City and Guilds) Entry level 1 - Level 2
- Open Awards Functional Skills ICT Entry 1 – Level 2
- Skills for Further Learning and Education (Open Awards)
- Employability and Professional Development (RQF), Entry Level 1 to Level 2
- Access to HE
- Supported Internships
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Open Awards Skills for travelling in the Community E2 – E3
- Btec as well as other accredited learning

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

Ascent College has relationships with Local Authorities across the North West of England. Ascent College complies with the SEND Code of Practice 2015

## Procedure

### Admissions Criteria:

- Students aged 16 to 25 with a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), who also have a Learning Difficulty and have achieved a minimum Entry level 1 in an accredited qualification, 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 student has a highly personalised study programme with a focus on outcomes.
- Students attend for 5 days (32.5 hours) per week for a 38 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 Head of Adult Services, places may be accessed at any time of the year based on the suitability for a young adult.

- Places are generally commissioned by the Local Authority in which the young person resides and in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2015.
- Consideration for all student applications will include whether the young person is suitable and compatible with their intended cohort. This will take into account their possible impact on peers.
- 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:
  - (i) The parents/carers or the potential student 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 students. The additional support would be determined by assessment with the cost of the placement adjusted accordingly.

### **Admissions process**

Applications can be made either by the parent/carer, the potential student or by the Local Authority. We encourage parents/carers/potential students to visit the College prior to them stating a preference. To book a tour/visit parents, carers, potential students can telephone or email Ascent college – details of which can be found on the Ascent website [Admissions - Ascent](#). A visit and tour for a potential student can be accommodated on request, the



preference is for 'visit and tours' to be conducted in groups, to minimise the impact on students attending the College.

***Applications by Parent/Carer or potential student:***

The parent/carer/potential student completes a 'Parental Expression of Interest' application and return it with relevant documentation such as a finalised EHCP. The College will send to the parent/carer/ potential student 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 will inform the Local Authority in which the family lives that interest in our college has been shown and an application has been submitted.

***Applications by Local Authority:***

The Local Authority will consult with Ascent 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 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 Merseyside 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 Remarkable 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 student 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 Head Adult Services. The Head of Adult Services, or in their absence the CEO, will make the decision to offer a place at Ascent 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 student, a place is offered and an exemplar study programme and the costs for the Ascent.

College place for the potential students are provided to the Local Authority via the High Needs Funding application, 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 student. The start date for the new student will be agreed as two weeks from LA agreement date and communicated to both the LA and parent/ carer/ potential student. After admission, students are provided with a 6 week assessment period on entry to College to determine the level of resource required to meet the student's needs. The 6-week assessment period is also a requirement to fully assess the impact the new learner will have on peers across the Ascent college environment before making a confirmed placement offer.

Please see:

- Appendix 1 – stages of Admission
- Appendix 2 – Admissions Flowchart

### **New learner induction:**

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

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

## **Review Process**

### **Annual Review**

The Annual Review of EHCPs are conducted in accordance with the requirements set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2014). Students' needs, identified outcomes and provision are reviewed and evaluated as part of this process. Wargrave House endeavours to work in partnership with students, parents and all agencies (LA Education, Social Care, Health, other) to ensure that students' needs are accurately identified and appropriately met.

(See WHS SEND Policy 2019, Appendix 1)

## Transition Review

If the student is on a 3 year plan of study, we advise that in year 2 that the parent/ carer/ LA look at next steps in preparation for moving on. College will support in recognizing and working towards next steps into either a social care or further education pathway, as necessary.

## Discharge

- One term's (12 weeks) fees in lieu of notice is required should it be decided that Ascent College no longer meets the young person's needs.
- The students EHCP will be reviewed annually through each academic year and at each key point of transition; Post 16, Post 19
- A 'Placement Review' to consider the appropriateness of a student's placement can be convened at any time between annual reviews
- In the SEND code of practice January 2015, it states that all Children/ young people's EHC plans should be "*used to actively monitor progress towards their outcomes and longer term aspirations. They must be reviewed by the local authority as a minimum every 12 months. Reviews must focus on the child or young person's progress towards achieving the outcomes specified in the EHC plan. The review must also consider whether these outcomes and supporting targets remain appropriate*". This process will enable us to determine whether the placement continues to be effective.
- Should any student become a danger to other students he/she will be considered for exclusion only if all positive intervention programmes have not been successful. Similarly should the sustainability of educational progress and the presence of any student be considered detrimental to the education of other students or impair the efficiency of the college the appropriate LA will be asked to withdraw the student.
- If all positive intervention measures have not been successful, consideration will be made as to the sustainability of the student's educational progress and Ascent College. This will be done in conjunction with the team around the student including parent/ carer and the Local Authority to ensure the best outcome is sought for the student.

## Legal Context

This policy were written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- (i) Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, January 2015

- (ii) DFE School Attendance, Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, August 2020
- (iii) Education Act 1996

## Policy Impact

We have a rolling programme for reviewing our Company policies. We regularly review the impact of our policies on the needs, entitlements and outcomes for students, service users, staff and parents.

## References and Further Resources

Department for Education (2015) Special educational needs and disability code of practice 0 to 25 years. London: The Department for Education.

Department for Education (2021) School National Restrictions Guidance. London: The Department for Education.

## Appendix 1 – Admissions Stages

Ascent admissions stages to be implemented.



STEP	WHEN	WHAT	PARENT/CARER ACTION	ASCENT ADMISSIONS TEAM ACTION
1	3 - 4 years prior to attendance (parents of year 9 YP)	Parent/Carer Open Day or invite to café/events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One Open Day/café/event per term is available. Advertised through website and social media channels</li> <li>Visit the campus and see all that Ascent has to offer.</li> <li>Prospective student is welcome to attend, but does not need to as dedicated days are set aside for them to visit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information pack to parents about our admissions process, and signposting to external information.</li> </ul>
2	2-3 years before start date	Parent/carer expression of interest form	Young Person (YP) and family request Admissions Enquiry Form (AEF), to complete and return to Admissions.	Review completed AEF and risk screen. If agreed, send invitation to YP to attend a Young Person Experience Day
3	2 Years before start date	Young Person Experience Day (group sessions)	YP attends Experience Day on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review feedback on YP's interests and involvement in the Experience Day.</li> <li>Assess whether Ascent College can meet YP's needs and aspirations.</li> <li>Having reviewed all feedback and paperwork to date, Admissions Team send out Admissions Application Form to family for completion and return</li> </ul>
4	2 Years before start date	Admissions Application Form - Parent/Carer Expression of Interest Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and return Admissions Application Form, ideally within two weeks of receipt.</li> <li>Additional key documents will be requested at this stage, e.g. EHCP, BSP, key reports, etc.</li> </ul>	The Admissions Application Form is assessed by the Admissions Team, and a 1:1 online (Teams) IAG session for the family is arranged, to discuss details of the application
5	1-2 years before start date	1:1 Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) session	Meet (virtually) with the Admissions Team to discuss specifics of the application, as detailed in the documents submitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admissions Team review all documentation and feedback to date, to assess needs and aspirations of YP.</li> <li>Once agreed, an invitation for a 1:1 Assessment Day with the YP will be sent</li> </ul>
6	12-18 months before start date	Young Person Assessment Day (individual by YP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arranged on dates, in agreement with YP and family, from January through to October half-term (for intake in September the following year)</li> </ul>	Within four weeks of the Assessment Day, a Pre-Entry Assessment Report will be prepared and presented to the Admissions Panel.



**Ascent admissions stages to be implemented.**

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YP visits curriculum areas of interest, meets key staff, discusses their preferences.</li> </ul>	
7	10-18 months before start date	An offer can be sent to the YP along with the LA	Once the offer has been accepted and funding has been confirmed by the local authority, then the College can start the enrolment process with the YP.	Start enrolment and on boarding process.

Note: We recognise it is not always possible to begin the admissions process so early.

In these cases, please contact Admissions to discuss your situation. Email: [jullietdoherty@wargravehouse.com](mailto:jullietdoherty@wargravehouse.com) Tel: 01925 224899

**Decisions**

The college Admissions Panel meets every week during term time to consider parent/carers applications and applications from local authorities. This panel decides on who will need assessment and makes decisions on those already assessed.

**What the Panel considers**

- ❖ Is the college suitable for the young person’s age, ability and special educational needs?
- ❖ Is the college able to deliver all the special educational provision in Section F of the young person’s EHC plan?
- ❖ Have parents or carers expressed a preference for the college? (Or in cases of dispute does the local authority intend to name Ascent College on the EHC plan?)
- ❖ Would the young person’s attendance be incompatible with the education of other learners at the college that they would come into contact with on a regular day-to-day basis, or with the use of college resources?
- ❖ Is there a place available for the young person?

**Making an offer**

- ❖ If an offer is made, we will inform parents or carers and the local authority. The offer will be conditional until local authority funding is approved and subject to the place being available at that time.
- ❖ If an offer is not made, the decision of the Head of Adult Services is final, but we will always explain our reasons.



**Ascent admissions stages to be implemented.**

**Inform us if you plan to appeal**

If you decide you will appeal it is important that you let the Admissions team know as soon as possible. We will notify the Head of Adult Services who will advise if the place is still available. We then try to provide you with evidence and support, but what we can do will depend on various factors including the number of appeals taking place at the time.

**On acceptance of place: Induction**

The course induction will take place on the first half term of their course. Each student will be subject to an induction / initial assessment period, the purpose of which is to establish and/or consolidate subject baselines ensure that the student is on the correct course and that they receive the personalised support that is required. The initial assessment will allow the teacher to complete the students Individual Education Tracker and to assess the students for any additional learning needs.

## Appendix 2 – Admissions Flowchart

