



Wac Arts
College

Wac Arts College
Admissions Policy
2015-16

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Background

Wac Arts College provides alternative education for 14 – 19 year olds, delivered through a creative curriculum of arts and media. The college has consolidated fifteen years' experience of using arts and media education to turn disengaged young peoples' lives around. Based in Camden, we work with young people who have been excluded from college, or who have left statutory education with no qualifications and have failed to move on to further education training or employment.

The driving belief behind Wac Arts College is that every young person has a talent and it is our job to find it. Wac Arts College cultivates the energy, curiosity and resistance of these young people through our creative curriculum so they are able to succeed in all areas of their lives.

Our ethos is founded on a number of principles, which we have embedded over 30 years of practice in non-statutory arts and media education for those aged 5-25, specifically that excellence and engagement through the arts:

- unlocks individual talents;
- fosters aspiration and achievement;
- empowers young people to acknowledge and celebrate their heritage;
- develops transferable skills for employability such as communication, problem solving, team work, entrepreneurship, leadership.

We believe passionately that learning can – and should be – enjoyable, and that, particularly for those who have been alienated from or excluded by 'traditional' and 'mainstream' statutory education, the creative curriculum puts pleasure back into learning. Often, behaviour such as avoiding and resisting learning in college can in fact be signs of imagination and creativity and many young people in alternative provision are most suited for a career in the creative industries.

Wac Arts College provides alternative education for 14 – 19 year olds. Opening in September 2014, with sixteen places for 14 – 16 year olds and twenty places for 16 – 19 year olds, growing over 2 years to offer places for twenty 14 – 16 year olds and forty 16 – 19 year olds. A large part of the curriculum is delivered through performing arts and digital media classes with life skills, literacy and numeracy embedded in the sessions. The creative curriculum is varied and innovative, giving equal status to non-western art forms and starts with the subjects that young people connect with, such as popular music, street dance, TV production.

- Wac Arts College is a publicly funded Alternative Provision Free School
- Responsibility for the admission of pupils rests with the Governing Body
- All applications for places at Wac Arts College will be considered in accordance with the referral arrangements outlined below

Wac Arts College aims to widen the reach of the Free Schools programme to some of the most vulnerable children in our community. Wac Arts College was established to provide alternative education, using performing arts and media to re-engage young people of compulsory school age (years 10 and 11) who, for a variety of reasons, are failing to thrive in mainstream education. The admissions process in an alternative provision context has to be flexible to accommodate the varying circumstances young people outside of mainstream education find themselves in. Some students are referred by agencies and local authorities and may become fully registered at Wac Arts College. This is may be following a permanent exclusion. However, many students are referred directly by other schools and academies and are dual registered.

Direct referrals can be made by schools or academies taking on the role of ‘commissioner’ and working with Wac Arts College to ensure the best outcomes for individual students. Transition arrangements are designed to encourage incoming students to settle into the College confidently and quickly and to ensure their needs are identified and comprehensively met from the outset. Wac Arts College also admits external post 16 students. These students may self-refer or be referred by an agency specialising in post 16 placements, through a discussion with their predecessor college, or their college if it feels they are failing to cope.

This will include young people with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) plan including behavioural and emotional needs, as well as those who have had disrupted education due to family circumstances.

Some post 16 students will have been referred previously during KS4 and have progressed to post 16 as a natural continuum; however progression from pre to post 16 is not guaranteed but assessed on a needs basis & on levels of engagement.

Admissions Profile

Wac Arts College has the following agreed admissions numbers:

	Current number of places (FTE)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
KS4 (14-16)	0	16	20	20	24	24	24
16-19: Pupil allocation	0	20	40	40	40	40	40
Totals	0	32	60	60	64	64	64

Referrals to Wac Arts College will be processed using the eligibility criteria and referral processes set out below.

Pre-16 Eligibility Criteria

In order to be considered for a place, applicants must meet criterion 1 & at least one of criteria 2-6:

1. Demonstrate a passion for the creative arts and media
2. Show a level of disengagement or underachievement from mainstream provision which is resulting in non-attendance
3. Show a level of disengagement from mainstream provision which is placing them at risk of permanent exclusion
4. Have a fixed period exclusion or their behaviour needs improving to prevent permanent exclusion
5. Have been permanently excluded from mainstream provision
6. Have difficulty in securing a college place

Pre-16 Referral Process

Children aged 14-16 can only be admitted to an Alternative Provision Free School through being referred by Local Authorities, Colleges and Academies using their existing referral powers or duties.

Parents cannot choose to send their child to Wac Arts College although they can express an interest in a place.

Local authorities, colleges and academies act as 'commissioners' - the Commissioner is responsible for referring the pupil where the following conditions apply:

- Local Authority – For a young person permanently excluded or who is not on the roll of a mainstream school
- Academy or school – For a young person who is failing or unlikely to complete formal education.

Pre-16 Admission Arrangements

To acquire a place at Wac Arts College, applicants in KS4 have to be referred by an educational establishment or local authority (commissioners).

Once a commissioner makes contact with Wac Arts College the Principal (or nominated representative) arranges for a meeting/interview with the prospective student, an appropriate commissioning representative and a parent/carer.

A student referral form must be completed at this stage and prior attainment data must be provided by the referring college or LA. The referral form will include a commitment by the college or local authority to fund the placement if the application is successful.

The student will attend a taster day and/or trial period (two-three weeks).

Referral Processes

Wac Arts College's Principal (or nominated representative) will maintain direct and regular contact with Local Authorities, colleges and academies. If possible we will begin discussions with Commissioners to identify pupils in year 9, who would benefit from a managed transfer for Key Stage 4. Individual colleges and academies can also make direct referrals.

All referrals lead to an annually reviewed Service Level Agreement between Wac Arts College and the Commissioner.

There are two points in the college year when new referrals can begin - September & January - though we are willing to meet with prospective students throughout the year.

In addition, referrals can be made through Managed Transfer, Fair Access Panel or other similar formal referral routes already in place in each of the Local Authorities.

Although many students will be dual registered in KS4, Wac Arts College will take responsibility for the progress of each student referred, including entry to formal examinations where appropriate. The 'top-up' cost depends on the level of need and is agreed and paid annually in advance. All additional funding (for example free school meals and pupil premium where applicable) must follow individual students. This is agreed through discussions with Wac Arts College's Principal on a case-by-case basis.

In some special cases (and where places are available), informal referrals (usually more short-term and part-time) can be made and support can be provided to respond specifically to an individual student's circumstances and specific needs at the time of the referral. Students referred this way cannot be guaranteed entry to formal examinations with Wac Arts College. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis through discussions with Wac Arts College's SMT. In some cases (e.g. Managed Transfer) local transfer arrangements may allow for trial periods of up to 12 weeks. Before any new students begins, Wac Arts College must have received all the required prior attainment & attendance data, behaviour logs, SEN information etc. as set out in our SLA.

Post 16 Referrals Arrangements

Wac Arts College offers post-16 provision for young people who have demonstrated a passion for the performing arts & media.

Self-referrals can be received directly from young people but in some instances from parent/carers, local authorities, colleges, colleges, SENCos, YOTs, YOS, hostels & Connexions advisers. Applications are not restricted by location.

Once a prospective student or commissioner makes contact with Wac Arts College, the Principal (or nominated representative) arranges for a meeting/interview with the prospective student, an appropriate commissioning representative and a parent/carer.

A student referral form must be completed at this stage and prior attainment data must be provided by the referring college or LA. If the student qualifies for element 2 high needs funding, the relevant local authority must agree to provide the relevant funding.

The student will attend a taster day and/or trial period (two weeks).

Post 16 Eligibility Criteria

In order to be considered for a place, post 16 applicants must meet criterion 1 and at least one of criteria 2 to 5.

1. Demonstrate a passion for the performing arts & media
2. Unable to achieve level 2 qualifications
3. Have an EHC plan
4. Are care leavers, ex-offenders, homeless and/or young parents
5. Have difficulty learning within large environments such as mainstream colleges

Note: all young people will be required to show proof of residence (i.e. parents' utility bill) and an original or certified copy of a birth certificate or a passport. Pupils born outside the UK will be required to present their passport and proof of appropriate visa. The Governing Body reserves the right to seek verification from the local authority in which the applicant resides.

Oversubscription

Wac Arts College will support a maximum of 64 students aged 14-19 at any one time. This will consist of a maximum of 24 of students at Key Stage 4 (aged 14-16) and 40 students aged 16-19.

The closing date for initial applications for pre 16 places will be 31st May each year. The closing date for initial applications for post 16 places will be 30th June. If at that time referrals for either pre 16 or post 16 places exceed the number of places available at Wac Arts College, priority will be given to:

1. Looked After Children who meet the essential admission criteria
2. Students with EHC plans that name Wac Arts College
3. Exceptional social/medical needs
4. Students living nearest to the college

If places remain after the initial closing date, they will be allocated to students that meet the essential criteria (see sections 3 and 8) in the order that their applications are received by the College.

Definitions

Looked After Child & Previously Looked After Child

A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a Local Authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their Social Services functions (under section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). A Previously Looked After Child is one who immediately moved on from that status after becoming subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order.

Exceptional Social/Medical Need

The term 'exceptional social/medical need' means that the child's and/or parent's health and/or welfare would be best served if they attended Wac Arts College. Parents would need to provide evidence in the form of a letter or report from a doctor, social worker or other professional in the area of children's health or welfare to support their case. Parents would have to establish that Wac Arts College is the best or only college to serve their child's and/or parent's needs. Parents would also need to state why other colleges could not provide the appropriate support. The Governing Body of the Wac Arts College will consider applications under this criteria and where necessary seek independent advice from professionals concerned with children's health and welfare.

Distance

Proximity to the college is measured on a computerised mapping system of the area, measured in a straight line ('as the crow flies') between the property address to the centre of the college, with those living closer to the college receiving higher priority.

Objections

As all types of referral involve case by case scrutiny, consultation and discretion from Wac Arts College's Principal, the offer (or not) of a place will usually be through mutual agreement during the referral process. However, in exceptional cases where agreement cannot be reached, the commissioner should write to the Principal outlining reasons supporting the referral and any supporting documentation. The Principal will consider this and reply within 28 days, stating the College's position. If a place is not granted after that process, the commissioner may make a final appeal and request a review from the Governing Body. A final appeal should be put in writing to the Chair of Governors. Cases will then be heard by at least three governors (including the Chair) within 28 days of the final appeal being received and final outcomes notified within five working days of the hearing. Further objections will be referred to the EFA.

In cases of SEN referrals where Wac Arts College is named as the preferred school, the statutory processes set out in Annex C of the Funding Agreement will be adhered to.

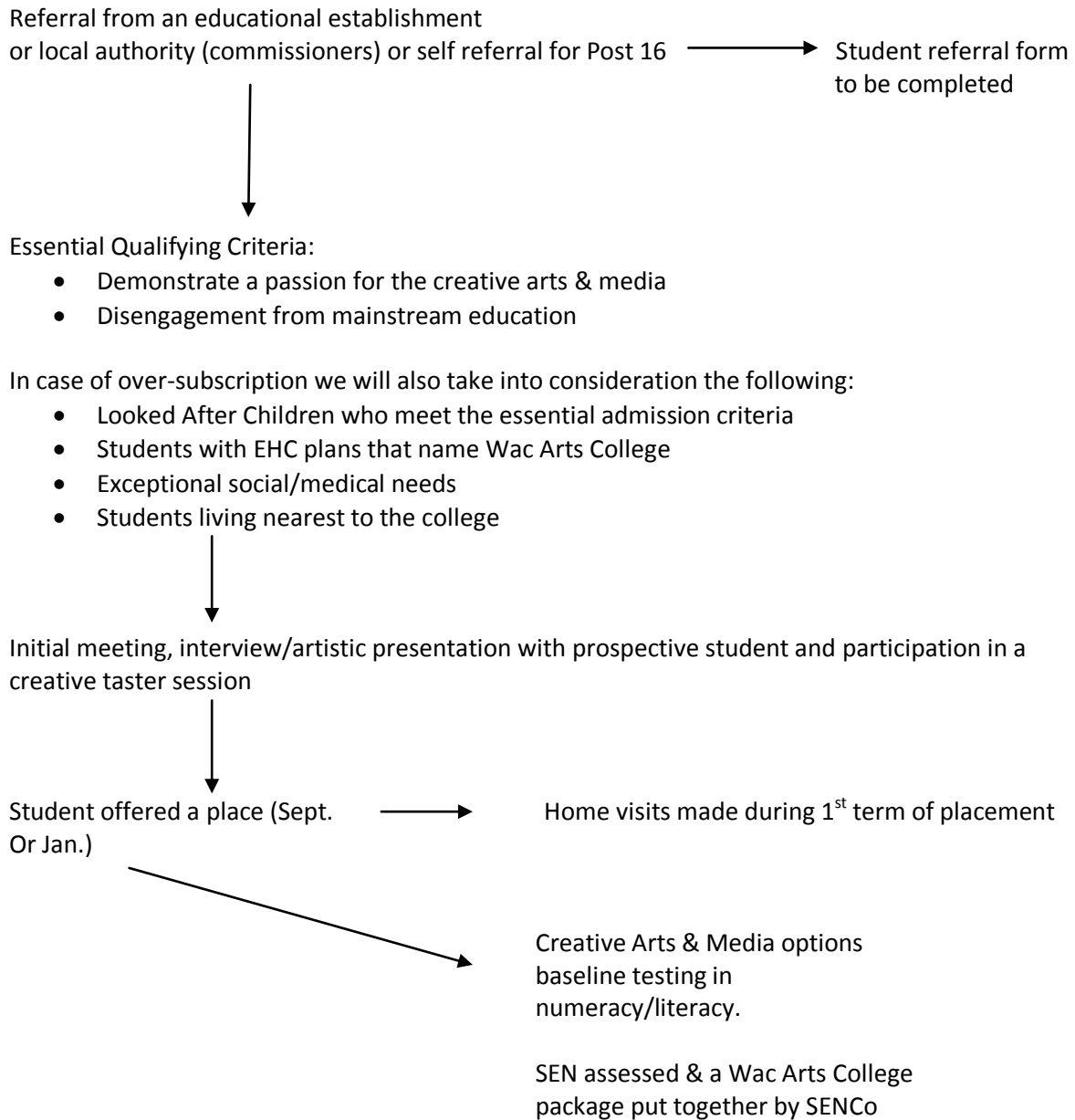
Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Principal will report the effectiveness of all policies as a regular feature of the termly updates to governors. It is expected that governors will challenge the College to ensure policies are relevant, up to date and implemented appropriately and consistently. This reporting will be informed through monitoring and evaluation on a regular basis by the Senior and/or Extended Leadership Team. Views of stakeholders will also be sought through on-going consultation events, questionnaires, team meetings, training and informal discussion. The review of policies will be embedded within the College's self-evaluation process and will be related to the strategic development plans of the College.

The review cycle will ensure that every policy is checked at least once in a two year period. The effective monitoring of policies will involve each member of the Senior Leadership Team being allocated specific responsibility for reporting back the monitoring, evaluation and review of certain policies to the Governing Body. This policy is allocated to The Principal.

Flow Diagrams

Pre & Post 16 Application Process



Complaints/Objections

The commissioner should write to the Principal outlining reasons supporting the referral and any supporting documentation.



The Principal will consider this and reply within 28 days, stating the College's position.



If a place is not granted after that process, the commissioner may make a final appeal and request a review from the Governing Body. A final appeal should be put in writing to the Chair of Governors.



Cases will then be heard by at least 3 Governors (including the Chair) within 28 days of the final appeal being received and final outcomes notified within 5 working days of the hearing. Further objections will be referred to the EFA.



In cases of SEN referrals where Wac Arts College is named as the preferred College, the statutory processes set out in Annex C of the Funding Agreement will be adhered to.

Places at Wac Arts College are subject to on-going review. In exceptional circumstances, placements may be withdrawn.

The views and wishes of students and their families are an integral part of the referral process.