



WAC Arts College  
Admissions Policy  
2014-15

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## 1. Background

Wac Arts College provides alternative education for 14 – 19 year olds, delivered through a creative curriculum of arts and media. The school 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 school, 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 school 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 16 places for 14–16 year olds and 20 places 16–19 year olds and will grow over three years to offer places for 24 14–16 year olds and 40 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 is 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 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 school, 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 continuance.

## 2. Admission Profile

Wac Arts College has the following agreed admissions numbers:

	<b>Current number of places (FTE)</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>KS4 (14-16)</b>	0	16	18	24	24	24	24
<b>16-19: Pupil allocation</b>	0	20	40	40	40	40	40
<b>Totals</b>	0	36	58	64	64	64	64

Referrals to Wac Arts College will be received on a first come first served basis until the admissions profile has been reached.

Looked after Children (including previously Looked After Children) and children with EHC plans will be given priority.

## 3. Key Stage Four Eligibility Criteria

Referrals are received from commissioners where alternative provision is required to provide education for pupils who have an interest in creative arts and media and;

- Are showing a level of disengagement from mainstream provision which is placing them at risk of permanent exclusion or;
- Are showing a level of disengagement or underachievement from mainstream provision which is resulting in non-attendance
- Have been permanently excluded from mainstream provision or;
- Have difficulty in securing a school place or;
- Have a fixed period exclusion or their behaviour needs improving to prevent permanent exclusion.

Applications are not restricted by location.

#### **4. Key stage Four Referral Process**

Children aged 14-16 can only be admitted to an Alternative Provision Free School through being referred by Local Authorities, Schools and Academies using their existing referral powers or duties. Parents cannot choose to send their child to Wac Arts College.

Local authorities, schools 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 cannot attend mainstream education
- Academy or school – for a young person who is failing or unlikely to complete formal education.

#### **5. Key Stage 4 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). Wac Arts College's Principal manages the referral process. Once a commissioner makes contact with Wac Arts College, the Principal (or nominated representative) arranges for a discussion with the prospective student, an appropriate commissioning representative and a parent/carer. In most cases, a student referral form will be completed at this stage and the student placed on an initial assessment plan, which includes baseline testing in numeracy/literacy.

After the initial assessment, the Principal (or nominated representative) contacts the commissioner and parent/carer with details of the student profile and a recommendation for next steps. In most cases, the student then starts a six week (half termly) programme of study customised and tailored to suit individual student needs.

Depending on the type of placement (long-term/short-term, part-time/full-time), an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) will set out a route which will lead to opportunities for students to have access to accredited examinations (either through Wac Arts College or the commissioning school). Places at Wac Arts College are subject to on-going review. In exceptional circumstances, where the placement is deemed not in the best interests of the young person and/or other students, the commissioning agreement will be reviewed after the initial half term period. The views and wishes of young people and their families are an integral part of the referral process.

Wac Arts College also admits students who do not currently attend school or are at risk of being excluded, along with those who have an EHC plan naming Wac Arts College.

## **6. Referral Processes**

Wac Arts College's Principal (or nominated representative) will maintain direct and regular contact with Local Authorities, schools 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 schools and academies can also make direct referrals.

### **Direct Referral Contracts (Service Level Agreement between the School and Commissioners)**

All referrals lead to an annually reviewed Service Level Agreement between Wac Arts College and the Commissioner. The contracts usually run from September to July but, where there are available places, students can be referred to take up a placement at the beginning of any of the three school terms on a pro rata basis. In addition, referrals can be made through Managed Transfer, Fair Access Panels 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 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 Principal. In some cases (e.g. Managed Transfer) local transfer arrangements may allow for trial periods of up to 12 weeks.

## **7. Post 16 Referrals Arrangements**

Wac Arts College offers post 16 provision for young people who have an interest in performing arts & media but few or no qualifications.

Self referrals can be received directly from young people but in some instances from parent/carers, local authorities, schools, SENCos, YOTs, YOS, hostels & Connexions advisers. Applications are not restricted by location. Students will be accepted on the following basis:

- a) Prospective students can apply for post 16 places using the Wac Arts College application form.
- b) Students may apply for full or part-time places.
- c) Students will be interviewed at the end of August, following GCSE results, to determine whether Wac Arts College can meet their needs.
- d) Prospective students can also be referred by an educational establishment or local or other authority (commissioners).

e) In some cases (and where places are available), late referrals and applications 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 application or referral.

f) In case of over-subscription students will be admitted in the following order:

i) Looked after young people or previously looked after children (children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order);

ii) Students who have previously been referred to Wac Arts College;

As with Key Stage 4 provision our post 16 provision follows a clear referral process and selection criteria, which is based on an inclusive approach. It is evident that where a referral is made with the support of a professional, the Key Stage 4 model is applicable. However, where young people themselves make applications, a modified process is implemented.

### **8. Post 16 Eligibility Criteria**

Referrals for this provision include direct applications, referrals from carers, local authorities, schools, SENCos, YOT, YOS, hostels & Connexions advisers, where post compulsory education is required to provide;

- Education for young people who have been unable to achieve level 2 qualifications
- Education for young people with an EHC plan
- Education for young people that are care leavers, ex-offenders, homeless and young parents
- Education for young people who 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.

### **9. 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. If at any time referrals exceed the number of places available at Wac Arts College, first priority will be granted to Looked After Children who have individual needs and SEN students with specific educational needs and/or EHC plans that the College can help through the support offered, then to students with exceptional social/medical needs. Next, Wac Arts College will engage with commissioners to prioritise and admit those with the greatest individual needs that are best suited to a creative curriculum and the support that the College offers at that time.

### **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) 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 the 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 school to serve their child's and/or parent's needs. Parents would also need to state why other schools 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.

### **Objections**

As all types of referral involve case by case scrutiny, consultation and discretion from Wac Arts Free School'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 School'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 School, the statutory processes set out in Annex C of the Funding Agreement will be adhered to.

## **10. 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-16

Referral from an educational establishment  
or local authority (commissioners) → Student referral form to be completed



Essential Qualifying Criteria:

- i) Evidence of an interest in the creative arts
- ii) Disengagement from mainstream education

In case of over-subscription we will also take into consideration the following:

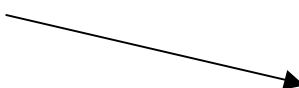
If at any time referrals exceed the number of places available at Wac Arts College, first priority will be granted to Looked After Children who have individual needs and SEN students with statements in which Wac Arts College is specifically named or to students with exceptional social/medical needs. Wac Arts College will engage with commissioners to prioritise and admit those with the greatest individual needs that are best suited to the support that the college offers at that time.



Initial interview/artistic presentation with  
prospective student and/or participation in a creative taster session an appropriate  
commissioning representative  
and a parent/carer.



Student placed on an initial assessment plan,  
which includes baseline testing in  
numeracy/literacy. → Home visit by tutor group leader



SEN assessed & a Wac Arts College  
package put together by SENCO



Contact with the commissioner and parent/carer with details of the student profile and a  
recommendation for next steps.



Creation of Individual Learning Plan (ILP)



SLA reviewed annually

### **Post-16**

Prospective students can apply for Post-16 places using the Wac Arts College application form.



Students may apply for full or part-time places.



Students will be interviewed at the end of August, following GCSE results, to determine whether Wac Arts College can meet their needs. And participation in creative taster sessions



Prospective students can also be referred by an educational establishment or local or other authority (commissioners).



In some cases (and where places are available), late referrals and applications 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 application or referral.



Students will be admitted in using the following criteria:

Essential Qualifying Criteria:

- i) Evidence of an interest in the creative arts
- ii) Disengagement from mainstream education

In case of over-subscription we will also take into consideration the following

- i) LAC or previously LAC
- ii) SEN
- iii) Students who have not achieved suitable qualifications (e.g. below level 2 English & maths)
- iv) Vulnerable students (e.g. bullied, safeguarding concerns, homeless, ex-offenders, young parents etc.)
- v) Students who have previously been engaged with Wac Arts College or Wac Arts

Wac Arts College will prioritise and admit those with the greatest individual needs that are best suited to the support that the college offers at that time.

## 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 School, 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 & their families are an integral part of the referral process.