

TreeHouse School Admissions, Charging and Remissions Policy for Admission September 2022

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1. Introduction

This policy applies to TreeHouse School which is registered with the Department for Education as a Non-Maintained Special School (NMSS).¹

The school is owned and run by the national charity Ambitious about Autism (AaA). AaA is a national charity for autistic children and young people. AaA's vision is for a future where every autistic child and young person can be themselves and realise their ambitions and our mission is that we stand with autistic children and young people, champion their rights and create opportunities. TreeHouse School is funded through Local Authority fees and voluntary income.

The school is located within the London Borough of Haringey and has relationships with Local Authorities across London and the Home Counties.

The school has a Published Admissions Number (PAN) of 100 pupils.

The school complies with the Children and Families Act 2014², SEND Code of Practice 2015³ and where applicable the School Admissions Code (-September 2021)⁴ along with any subsequent amendments thereof.

2. Admissions Criteria

TreeHouse School will admit autistic children and young people age 3 to 19 with a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition⁵ (ASC) and who may also have a learning disability, where the establishment is named on the child's or young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The school may on an exceptional basis admit a child or young person where they demonstrate behaviours frequently associated with autism or who have a similar social communication difficulty to autism.

NMSS are schools that the Secretary of State for Education has approved under [section 342 of the Education Act 1996](#). As part of the process of finalising an EHC plan, parents/carers have the right to request their Local Authority to consult with the school of their choice, provided that the school is one of those listed under Section 38 of the Children and Families Act. As a non-maintained special school listed under section 38, a parent/carer can request their local authority consult with TreeHouse School. The authority will be required to consider if the placement at school is a) suitable for the particular needs of the child b) incompatible with the efficient education of other children and c) an efficient use of resources.

Funded places in 2022-2023 (Reception to Sixth Form) are up to the Published Admissions Number of 100. A reduced capacity of pupils may be applied based on the needs of the cohort of pupils on roll at the school at any time, where admission of an additional pupil to a class group would impact on the efficient education of others.

Pupil Admission Number (PAN): 100

Primary maximum class group: 8* Reception (EYFS⁶)

¹ NMSS schools are included on the Secretary of State's list of eligible school in accordance with section 41.

² Children and Families Act 2014 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

³ SEND Code of Practice 2015 Department of Education Reference: DFE-00205-2013

⁴ School Admissions Code (September 2021 – DFE-00728-2014) applies to all maintained schools, Academies and Free Schools in England. NMSS and Colleges are not specifically designated in the code as public funds are received there is an implied obligation to comply with the spirit of the Code.

⁵ Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the designation used by the Department of Education

⁶ Early Years Foundation Stage

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		Years 1-6 (Key stage 1-2)
Secondary maximum class group:	8*	Years 7-11 (Key stage 3-4)
Sixth Form maximum class group	8*	Years 12-14 (Key stage 5)
Oversubscription places:	0	

The national curriculum is an important element of our school curriculum. In keeping with the Statutory Inclusion Statement (National Curriculum, 2013) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015), we set suitable learning challenges, respond to pupils' needs and prepare teaching to enable pupils to overcome potential barriers to learning by providing highly differentiated and personalised access to the national curriculum. This includes drawing from programmes of study outside age-appropriate levels where suitable. For example, due to their learning disability, appropriate learning challenges for a secondary aged pupil may be found in the primary curriculum programmes of study, although teaching would be presented through age-appropriate activities and approaches. Placements should be made with this in mind.

Places are commissioned by the Local Authority in which the child or young person resides. Prior to naming the school on the child or young person's EHCP, the Local Authority will have consulted with the school in line with their statutory obligations as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

Places are usually taken up at the start of the academic year. By arrangement with the Head of School places may be accessed at any time of the year based on the suitability for a child or young person.

Each application is considered on an individual basis. In every case, our admissions process evaluates the needs of the individual child or young person and determines whether the school can meet the special educational needs (SEN), provide the Special Education Provision (SEP) and meet the outcomes in their EHCP with particular reference to the following factors set out in Section 39 (4) of the Children and Families Act:

- The school is unsuitable for the child or young person's age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs;
- The admission of the child or young person at the school would be incompatible with the efficient education of others.

Additionally, the following factors will be considered:

- The parents/carers or the child or young person have expressed a preference for the school (or in the case of dispute the Local Authority intends to name the school);
- The needs of the child or young person 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 on a regular day-to-day basis;
- The school may need to provide additional support for a child or young person whose safety or that of others is unusually at risk. This would not necessarily prevent admission. The additional support would be determined by assessment with the cost of the placement adjusted accordingly;
- The distance from the school and the time of travel to school will be considered during the admissions process.

For children and young people in a transition year (defined in Regulation 2 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014) (the SEN Regs) the school expects the Local Authority to finalise an EHC plan by the statutory deadline in line with its duties under Regulation

* Class sizes may temporarily increase over the maximum class size with arrangements made for education delivery in smaller sub-groups.

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18 of the SEN Regs. Where this deadline is missed, the school reserves the right to delay commencement of the place until after the start of the academic year
The school reserves the right to delay commencement of the place until after the start of the academic year, should the Local Authority name the school on an EHCP or confirm funding of the place after the 31 March in any given year.

The school will provide the Local Authority with the prospectus and the link to the school to be provided on the Local Authority's Local Offer.

3. Admissions Process

We encourage parents/carers to visit the school prior to making a request for a place at TreeHouse School to their Local Authority. The details of our visit and tour events and how to book a space are published on our website. From time to time there may be situations where we are not able to provide onsite visits. In this situation virtual visits and/or question and answer sessions would be provided.

Following a visit, we ask the parent/carer to request that their Local Authority apply to us on their behalf for a place at the school.

The Local Authority will consult with the school in line with their statutory obligations. The school will respond within 15 days, from receipt of the consultation from the Local Authority.

The school's response is determined by the documentation received (i.e. draft or final EHC Plan, Annual Review reports, professional reports) and by observing and assessing the child or young person.

Our observations and assessments should ideally be conducted in the child's or young person's current school or education placement first and then at TreeHouse School. Where this is not possible, individual arrangements can be made including assessment via a home visit or where appropriate a virtual assessment.

In most cases there is no charge raised for the assessment. If the current education placement is a significant distance outside the Greater London area, requiring extended travel and a potential overnight stay, the school 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 our Staff Expenses Policy.

The school's Admissions Panel will consider each consultation prior to making a response, and in all cases this will comply with the 15-day requirement unless agreed otherwise with the Local Authority.

If agreed that the school can meet the needs of the child or young person, a place is offered conditional to funding being approved and the costs for the place are provided to the Local Authority, to be considered and approved by the Local Authority.

When funding has been approved by the Local Authority and after enrolment new pupils are provided with a 6-week assessment period on entry to the school to determine baseline learning levels, curriculum and to confirm the level of resource required to meet the child or young person's needs.

Diagrams showing the admissions process can be found in Appendix A (parent initiated) or Appendix B (local authority initiated)

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4. Oversubscription Criteria

The oversubscription criteria applies to and complies with the School Admissions Code (September 2021) and specifically paragraph 1.7 and 1.8.

If the school is oversubscribed, the priority for admission will be given to those children or young people who meet the criteria below:

Priority Category	Criteria
1	Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children including those children/young people who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (as defined in paragraph 1.7 of the School Admissions Code (September 2021))
2	And thereafter, the full, half or step siblings who are twins or children from a multiple birth of existing pupils, living permanently at the same address.
3	And thereafter, the full, half or step siblings of existing pupils living permanently at the same address.
4	And thereafter, the qualifying children of staff who work at the school and have sufficient service under paragraph 1.39a of the School Admissions Code (September 2021).
5	And thereafter, the qualifying children of staff who are recruited under paragraph 1.39b of the School Admissions Code (September 2021).
6	And thereafter children of UK service personnel and crown servants in accordance with paragraph 2.21 of the School Admissions Code (September 2021).
7	And thereafter children as defined, under paragraph 1.39A of the School Admissions Code (September 2021), who are eligible for pupil premium.
8	And thereafter children, as defined under paragraph 1.39A of the School Admissions Code (September 2021), who are eligible for service premium.
9	And thereafter children who are twins or children from a multiple birth,
10	Lastly, distance from school as defined by time using route planner software from home postcode to school postcode. Where parents have shared parental responsibility, we will use the furthest address postcode.

Where two applications are equally ranked within an individual category (categories 1 to 9 above), a tie-break situation will occur. The tie-break priority will be decided on a combination of the individual category 1 to 9 and category 10, where the least distance will have the higher priority. Where the distance between the two children's or young person's home and the school is the same, a random allocation will be used as a tie break. This process will be independently verified.

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5. Waiting List

We maintain a clear, fair, and objective waiting list and for our school the list will be in ranked order in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The Local Authority would have agreed funding for a child or young person for the child or young person to be placed on the waiting list.

A waiting list would be established if:

- During the school year, where the PAN has not been reached but the maximum class sizes have been reached within an area of the school as detailed below:

Primary maximum class group:	8*	Reception (EYFS ⁷) Years 1-6 (Key stage 1-2)
Secondary maximum class group:	8*	Years 7-11 (Key stage 3-4)
Sixth Form maximum class group	8*	Years 12-14 (Key stage 5)

- During the school year, where the PAN has not been reached and the maximum class sizes have not been reached within an area of the school, as detailed above, but the introduction of an additional pupil would be incompatible with the efficient education of others;
- During each school year, where the school has reached PAN plus the oversubscription criteria.

To meet the special educational needs of each individual pupil, class sizes at TreeHouse School will not exceed the numbers stated above. Waiting lists will therefore operate in class groupings.

When a place becomes available in a class operating a waiting list, the relevant Local Authority will be notified.

6. Appeal Arrangements

Admission appeals will be considered by the AaA Independent Appeals Panel and conducted in accordance with School Admissions Appeals Code⁸ (February 2021) and any subsequent amendments thereof. Where it is not possible to hold a face to face meeting a virtual meeting may be held.

7. Funding and Contracting

7.1 Funding

TreeHouse School receives funding from The Department for Education (DfE) through the allocation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). ESFA funding is allocated based on the date that funding was agreed by the Local Authority and the admission date for the child or young person.

⁷ Early Years Foundation Stage

* Class sizes may temporarily increase over the maximum class size with arrangements made for education delivery in smaller sub-groups.

⁸ School Admission Appeals Code Reference: DFE-57508-2012

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The level of funding required is detailed in the offer letter sent to the Local Authority. The school will negotiate the additional (top-up) funding from the Local Authority commissioning a place and these fees are paid by the Local Authority.

The school assumes, by the establishment being named on an EHCP, that the Local Authority has agreed to fund the place.

7.2 Contracting

Our school uses the 'National Schools and College Contract' with the Schedule 2 (short form version) and the Schedule 6 for a variation due to General Data Protection Regulation for the contracting of placements together with the Schedule 1 (Arrangements for the Provision of Education, Health and Care in Schools).

In accordance with the ESFA requirements, a contract signed by all parties must be in place prior to the commencement of the placement.

8. Charging and Remissions

During the school's day, all activities that are a necessary part of the curriculum will be provided free of charge as this is included within the fee paid for the education placement. This includes any materials, equipment and transport to take children and young people between the school and the activity. There will be no charge for any activity that is an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination or accredited course of study.

Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school's day which entail additional costs, for example visits to a museum. In these circumstances no child or young person will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not contribute. (If insufficient funds are available, it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities).

From time to time we may invite a non-educational organisation to arrange an activity during the school's day. Such organisations may charge the school who may then ask parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution. Again, no child or young person will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not contribute. (If insufficient funds are available, it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities).

8.1 Optional activities outside of the school day

We will charge for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school's day, for example a visit to the theatre. Such activities are not part of the curriculum nor are they part of an examination syllabus.

8.2 Education partly during the school day

If a non-residential activity happens partly inside the school's day and partly outside of it, there will be no charge if most of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school's day.

Conversely, if the bigger proportion of time spent falls outside of the normal day, charges may be made. When such activities are arranged, parents/carers will be told how the charges were calculated.

8.3 Residential Visits

Charges will be made towards board and lodging, except for children or young people whose parents/carers are in receipt of eligible benefits, however, no child or young person will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not contribute. On many occasions, donations from funders have enabled the school to heavily subsidise educational visits and significantly reduce the charge to parents/carers.

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8.4 Minibus

Travel in the educational establishment's mini-bus is free.

8.5 School meals

School meals can be provided at lunchtime, paid for by parents/carers, and are optional. If a pupil is eligible for Free School Meals the cost will be charged to the Local Authority. School meals are invoiced in advance on a termly basis. Parents/carers Parents are able to pay online for school meals using a secure web application called ParentPay.

8.6 Calculating charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school's day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who cannot or will not. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising.

Parents/carers who would qualify for support are those who are in receipt of eligible benefits.

Eligible benefits are:

- Income support;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190);
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit; or
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get).

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the educational establishment and/or charges to parents/carers.

9. New Pupil induction

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

- Send out a pupil information form for the parent/carer to complete and return. The fully completed form must be returned at least a week in advance of the start date or a week before the end of the academic year for pupils commencing in September;
- Allocate a member of staff to be the point of contact for parents/carers.

The staff member will develop a transition plan and agree this with the parent/carer, the existing placement, if any, the placing Local Authority and, if appropriate, the child or young person.

The staff member will create a 'One Page Profile' for the child or young person. The One Page Profile will detail all the important information for the child or young person on a single sheet of paper under three simple headings 'What is important to me', 'What people like and admire about me' and 'How best to support me'. The school uses the One Page Profile to improve relationships and communication between staff, pupil and parents/carers.

10. Further information

Website: www.treehouseschool.org.uk

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Phone: 020 8815 5424

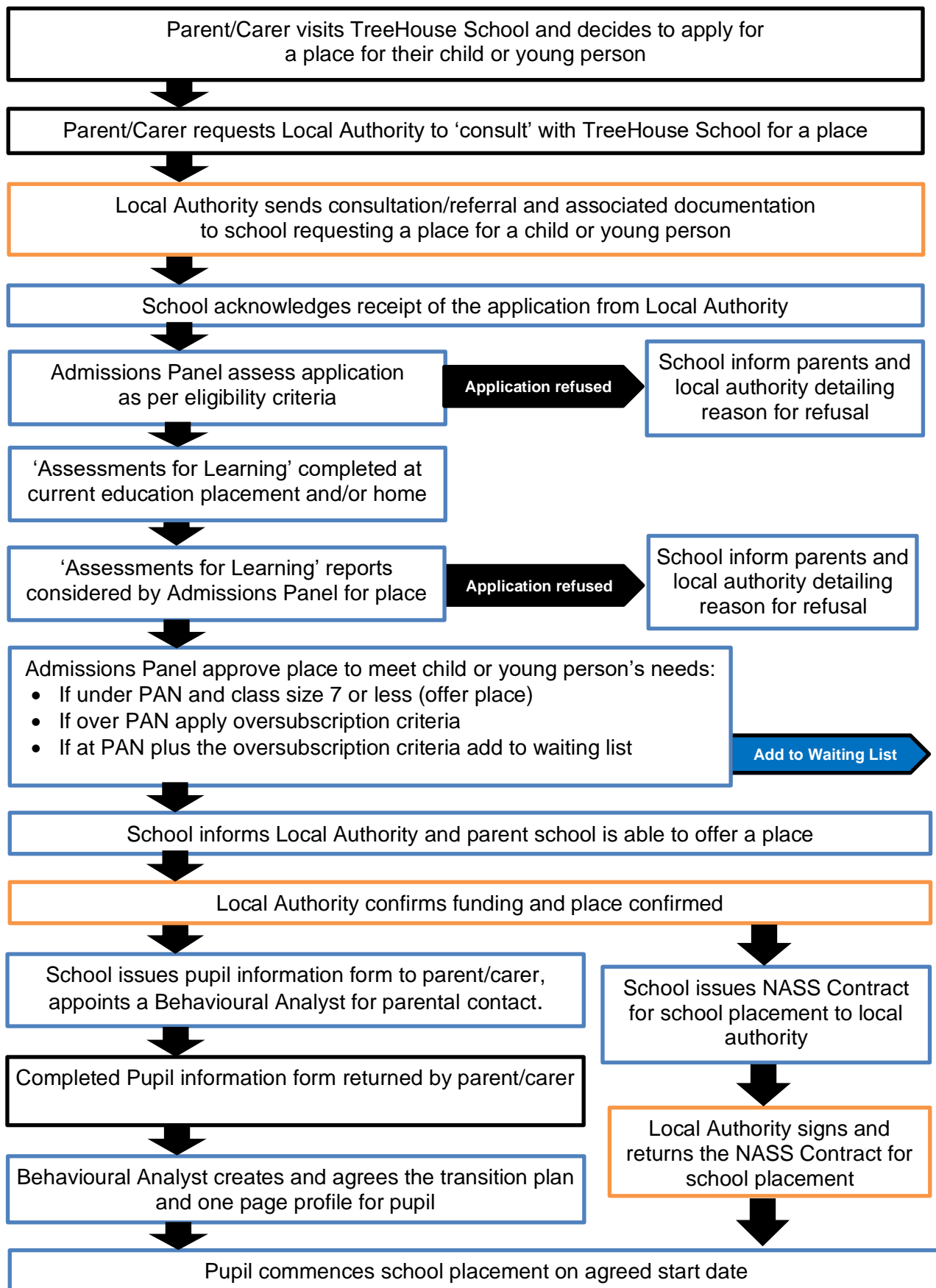
Admissions Team

Phone: 020 8815 5428

Email: admissions@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

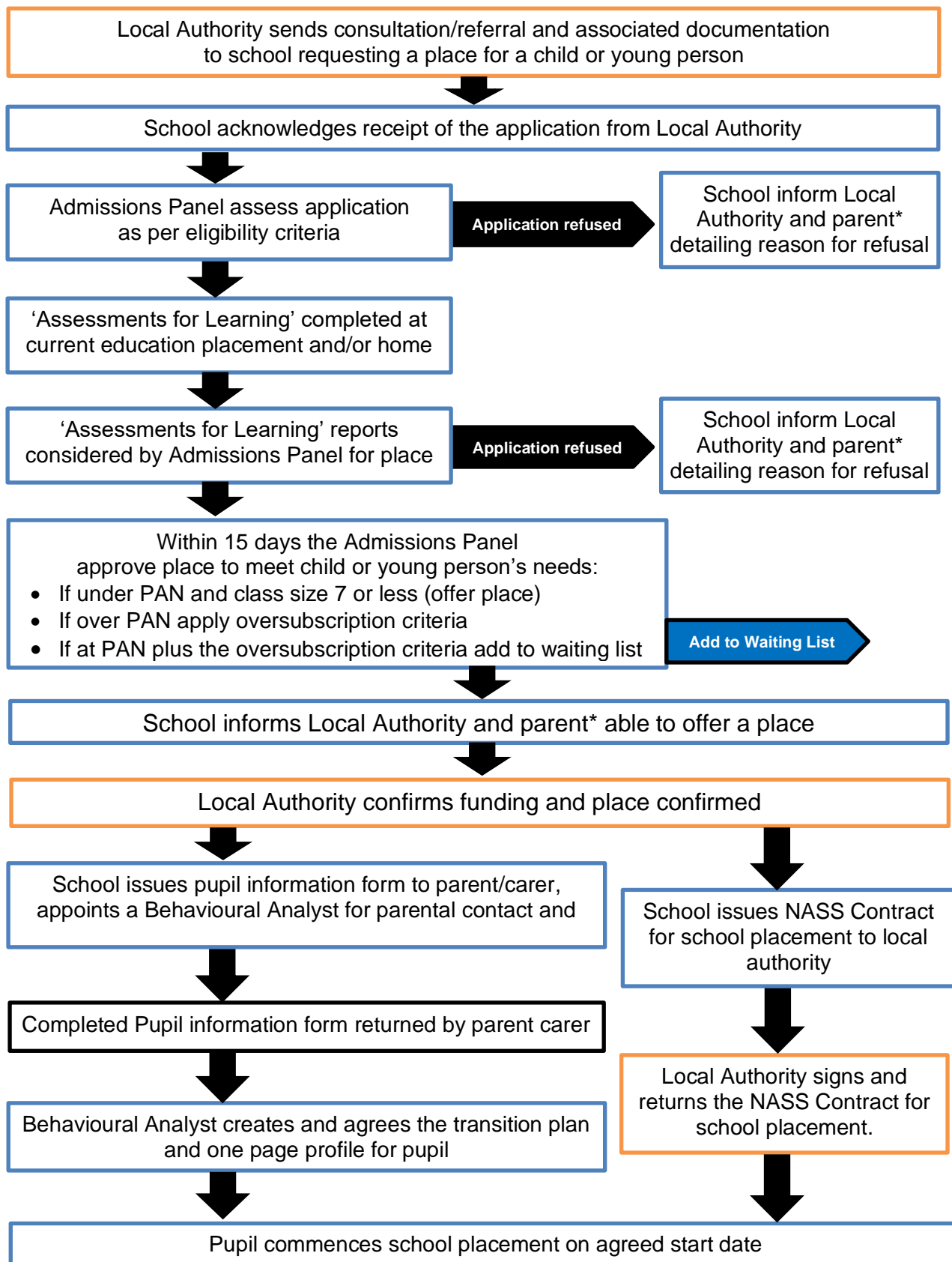
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Appendix A: Application Process (Parent initiated)



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Appendix B: Application Process (Local Authority initiated)



* Where directed by the Local Authority a parent would not be informed.

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