

TreeHouse School Admissions Policy For Admissions September 2027

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out TreeHouse School's admissions criteria, processes, and decision-making responsibilities for admitting pupils aged 4–19. The policy explains how applications are considered, how statutory duties are met, and how TreeHouse School works with parents/carers and Local Authorities to ensure placements are appropriate, fair, and transparent. This policy applies to TreeHouse School, a Non-Maintained Special School (NMSS) registered with the Department for Education, owned and operated by Ambitious about Autism (AaA), a national charity supporting autistic children and young people. It sets out the process, criteria, and responsibilities involved in admitting pupils aged 4–19, including those with a primary diagnosis of autism spectrum condition (ASC) and, in exceptional cases, those without a formal diagnosis but with similar needs.

2. The Statutory guidance

The following statutory guidance shall be followed by Ambitious about Autism and TreeHouse School:

- Children and Families Act 2014 – [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- SEND Code of Practice 2015 - [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK](#)
- Equality Act 2010 – [Equality Act 2010](#)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2015 - [The Special Educational Needs and Disability \(Detained Persons\) Regulations 2015](#)

3. Policy statement

AaA and TreeHouse School will ensure that all admissions decisions are made fairly, transparently, and in accordance with statutory guidance. The school will admit pupils who meet the eligibility criteria and ensure that their special educational needs are met, while balancing the needs of the existing cohort and the school's capacity. Admission decisions will take into account the child or young person's EHC Plan, additional support needs, and practical considerations such as travel. The school is committed to working collaboratively with parents/carers and Local Authorities to identify suitable placements and meet pupils' special educational needs wherever possible.

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 where space is available, depending upon the application of the admissions criteria and needs of the child/young person and other pupils.

As part of the process of finalising an EHC Plan, parents/carers have the right to request the Local Authority that maintains the plan to name their preferred choice of school (s 38 (2)(b) (ii) Children and Families Act (C and F Act)). Where TreeHouse School is given as a preference, the Local Authority will be required to consult with the Head of School (s 39 (2) C and F Act). The Local Authority is required to name the parent/carers preference unless it can show one of the following apply (s 39 (4) C and F Act):

- That the proposed placement is unsuitable to the age, ability, aptitude and SEN of the child/young person.

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| Policy Owner | Director of Education | Next Review Date: | Feb 2027 |
| Policy No. | 102b | Version No. | 7.0 |

- Naming the proposed placement is incompatible with i) the efficient education of other children, and or ii) an efficient use of resources.

Each application to TreeHouse School is considered on an individual basis. In every case our admissions process evaluates the needs of the individual child or young person. It determines whether the school can meet the special educational needs (SEN), provide the special education provision (SEP) and meet the outcomes in their EHC Plan with reference to the factors set out above in s 39 (4) of the C and F Act.

4. Key principles

The following key principles should be followed to support the policy statement above:

TreeHouse School admits autistic children and young people aged 4–19 with a primary diagnosis of autism spectrum condition (ASC), and who may also have a learning disability. In exceptional circumstances, pupils without a formal diagnosis of autism may be considered where their needs and presentation are similar to those of autistic learners. Admissions decisions take account of the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2015, Equality Act 2010, and other relevant legislation.

Each application is considered on an individual basis, with reference to whether the school can meet the child or young person’s special educational needs, provide the required special educational provision, and achieve the outcomes set out in the EHC Plan. Admissions are subject to the school’s capacity, which is normally up to 112 funded places. Capacity may be reduced where the needs of the existing cohort mean that admitting an additional pupil would impact on the efficient education of others.

The school recognises parental preference rights under section 38 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and will respond to consultations from Local Authorities within statutory timescales. Practical considerations, including travel distance, journey time, and any additional support required to ensure safety, are considered as part of the admissions process.

Where offers of a school place are made these are **not reserved** until such time that a Local Authority notifies the school in writing that they agree to fund the place, and the school confirms a space is available. Conditional offers will **automatically lapse** after 6 weeks. To request that place does not lapse, either the relevant Local Authority or parents will need to contact the Admissions Team to ask for the conditional offer to remain open and must provide the reasons why. Prompt consideration will be given to this request. Once an offer is over 3 months old, the School Admissions Panel reserve the right to carry out a new assessment to confirm the conditional offer of a place. If the School becomes over capacity, it reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place. Should this occur the Local Authority and parent/carers will be notified as soon as possible.

ii) Funding

Our school receives funding from the Department for Education (DfE) 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. 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.

ii) 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

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|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------|
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contracting of placements together with the Schedule 1 (Arrangements for the Provision of Education, Health and Care in Schools)

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

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Applications to the school are processed by the AaA Admissions Team and considered by our School Admissions Panel. The panel comprises of:

- The Head of School
- Assistant Head Teacher/s
- Admissions Manager/members of the admissions team
- Business and Contracts Manager
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Specialist
- Any other professional staff required to support the admissions process.

Responses to consultations for a school place are determined by:

- Consideration of the documentation received (i.e., draft or final EHC Plan, Annual Review reports, professional reports)
- Observing the child/young person in the current educational setting.
- If appropriate, observing the child/young person during an assessment at TreeHouse School.

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

6. Other Key Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following other policies, which can be found on the TreeHouse School website, or requested:

- Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Compliments and Complaints Policy

7. Further details found in Appendix A

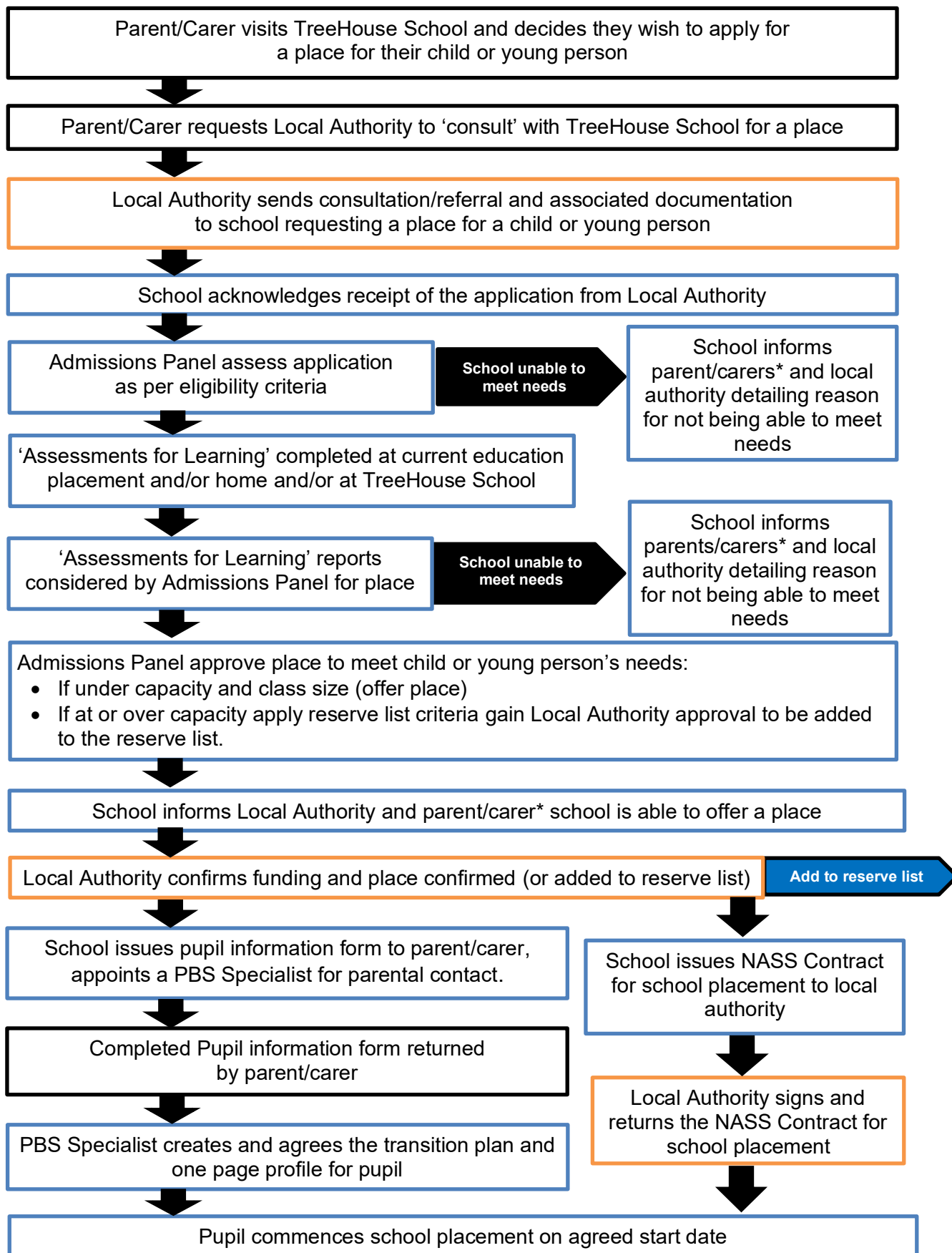
- The application process.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy shall be reviewed by the Director of Education and Care and approved by the Education and Care Committee on an annual basis.

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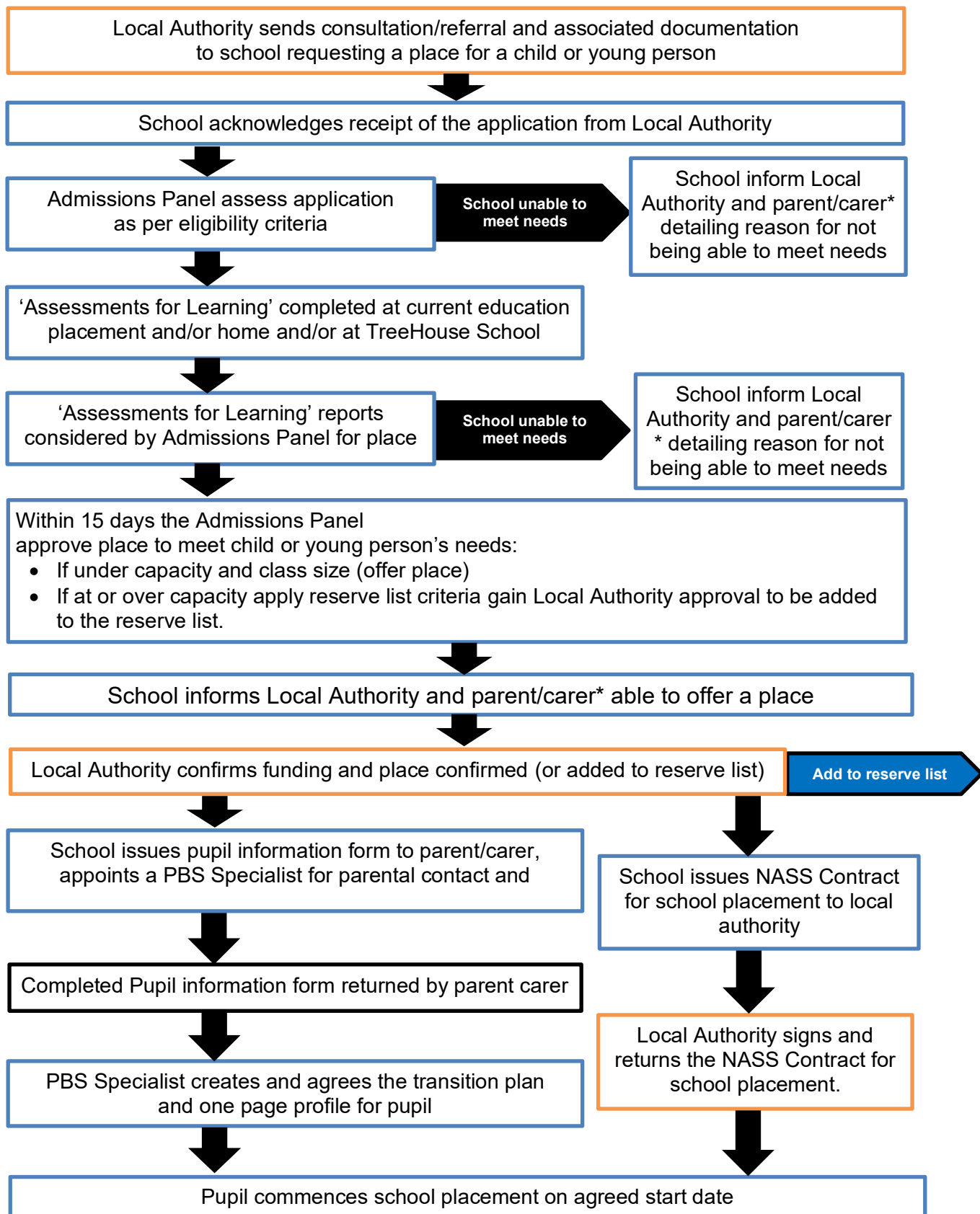
Appendix A: Application process parent initiated by preference expressed to local authority



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

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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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|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------|
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