The Westminster
Specialist College

Admissions Policy

2025/26

Approved by Board of Governors on:	**14/10/2025**
Signed by Chair of Governors:	**Mr P Coldicott**
Head of College:	**O Flowers**
Lead Personnel:	**B Taylor**
Date of Review:	**July 2026**

1. Introduction

The Westminster Specialist College is a specialist employment college that provides education and training for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The College is maintained by Sandwell local authority and offers a range of personalized programs designed to prepare learners for meaningful employment, independent living, and active participation in their communities. All learners admitted to The Westminster Specialist College will have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), which outlines their individual needs and the provision required to support their learning journey.

2. Purpose of the Admissions Policy

The purpose of this Admissions Policy is to ensure that the admission process is clear, transparent, fair, and in line with the statutory guidance and the principles of inclusion, equity, and respect for each learner's individuality. The College aims to provide an environment where learners can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, preparing them for successful futures in employment and independent living.

The college provides a curriculum based around the Preparation for Adulthood themes of:

Employment and Work
Community Inclusion

Discrete Maths and English Programmes may also form the basis of their study programmes. This may be a mandatory requirement for some learners in order to fulfil ESFA funding agreements.

3. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for admission to The Westminster Specialist College, prospective learners must meet the following criteria:

- **Have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP):** The learner must have a current EHCP, which is issued by the local authority. The EHCP must identify the learner's needs and set out the provision required to support them in achieving their educational and developmental goals.
- **Age Range:** Learners are typically aged between 19 and 24.
- **Specialist Needs:** The learner must have special educational needs or disabilities that are aligned with the provisions and specialist services offered at the College. This includes learners with moderate learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorders, and/or other health-related challenges.

4. Initial Enquiries and Referrals

4.1 Initial enquiries and referrals are accepted from individuals as well as from the Local Authority.

4.2 An appointment will be made for the young person, parents or carers to visit the college.

4.3 The learner and parents or carers complete an application form if they decide the college is a suitable option. This should be discussed as part of the young persons most recent Annual Review

4.4 Parents/carers should make their local authority aware that they wish The Westminster Specialist College to be consulted in accordance with the Code of Practice.

5 Referrals Process

5.1 Referrals can be made in two ways. Either a self-referral or a referral through the Local Authority.

5.2 All referrals must be accompanied by the young person's current EHCP, the most recent annual review and up to date professionals reports where appropriate.

5.3 Any referral must also be accompanied with the TWSC Application Form.

5.4 Once a referral has been received, senior leaders will liaise with the learners current educational provision, parents/carers and the young person to identify whether the college would be a suitable placement.

5.5 TWSC Response Form will indicate whether or not the college can meet the identified needs of the young person. Any agreement stating that needs can be met, is done so in principle pending a full assessment of the young person's needs.

5.6 The agreement in principle will take into consideration the available high needs funding from the placing Local Authority and whether or not the funding is sufficient to then meet the identified needs of the individual based on that funding.

6 The Placement Assessment

6.1 The Placement Assessment will be conducted by a member of the College SLT and will take place at the college provision where an assessment schedule will have been planned. This assessment may include activities that align with the demands of the world of work – for example Project Search Recruitment Day

6.2 The placement assessment will be used to determine if the college believes it is able to meet the young person's needs, based on the presenting information whilst also considering the Curriculum and Study Programme offering.

6.3 As part of the assessment process, taster days may also be used to make an informed decision about placement suitability.

7 Funding Arrangements

7.1 The Westminster Specialist College accepts referrals from any Local Authority within the West Midlands.

8 Preparation for College

8.1 Once a placement has been confirmed, a transition process will be agreed. This will take place predominantly in the summer term prior to starting full time at the college. However, in-year referrals can be facilitated if the college has adequate capacity.

8.2 A welcome pack will be sent out to the young person or their representative detailing the transition plan and all relevant contact details/forms/consents.

8.3 An induction programme will take place during the first two weeks of the young person starting their course.

9 Initial Assessment Review

9.1 An initial assessment review will take place during the first term of the placement commencing. This will be an informal meeting to discuss how the young person has settled and to gain their voice. “Voice and Choice” is at the heart of everything we do and gaining their opinion is central to this.

9.2 A statutory EHCP review will take place in the Spring term of the young person’s first year at the college.

10 Placement Refusal

10.1 The Westminster Specialist College reserves the right to not offer a place where we believe that we cannot meet the needs of any one individual based on current information presented in the EHCP, and /or as part of our assessment process.

10.2 The Westminster Specialist College also reserves the right to refuse or delay entry to the college on groups of operational capacity.

11 Placement Review

11.1 In the event The Westminster Specialist College determines that it can no longer meet the needs of a young person, a placement review will be called to discuss the reasoning for this and potential options going forward.

11.2 If a young person ceases to engage with the service and therefore is no longer making progress, we will take all necessary steps within our power to support the young person to re-engage. If the young person is still not engaged after an agreed period of time, then a placement review will be called.

11.3 If the behaviours of a young person are having an adverse effect to their learning or the learning and welfare of others (including in the workplace), and after all reasonable behavioural support has been put in place, a placement review will be called. The college SLT reserve the right to temporarily suspend any young person where their behaviours are adversely affecting the learning or welfare of others, pending a placement review meeting.

11.4 If after having explored all reasonable options, the behaviour of any young person continues to put at risk the learning or welfare of themselves or others, The Westminster Specialist College reserves the right to review the placement, with termination as a possible outcome.

11.5 In the event where it is identified for specific reasons that a young person requires additional funding in order for the placement to continue, any agreed action plan will not be put in place until this funding had been agreed by the responsible Local Authority.

12 Appeals Process

12.1 Any parent of/or an unsuccessful applicant wishing to appeal against a place not being granted at The Westminster Specialist College, must do so in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will review the decision documentation and inform relevant people of the outcome. The decision of the Board of Trustees is final.

12.2 Any refusal by the Local Authority place to a young person with us who wishes to attend The Westminster Specialist College, must be taken up using the relevant Local Authority Appeals Process. The contact details for SENDIAS will be provided to the parent/carer.

12.3 In the event that a young person's place at The Westminster Specialist College is terminated following a placement review, parents/carers (or the young person where appropriate) have the right to appeal this decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Board of Governors within 10 working days of the termination decision being communicated.

The appeal will be considered by a panel of governors not previously involved in the original placement review decision. The panel will review:
- The documentation from the placement review.
- The rationale for termination, including evidence of interventions attempted.
- Any additional information provided by the learner, parents/carers, or the Local Authority.

The panel may uphold the termination, recommend further support measures, or reinstate the placement. The decision of the appeals panel will be final and communicated in writing to all parties, with a copy provided to the Local Authority.

13 Data Protection and Confidentiality

All information collected as part of the admissions process will be treated confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation. The College will only share information with authorized professionals, the local authority, and others involved in the learner's care and education, as required by law or as part of the support process outlined in the EHCP.

14. Conclusion

This Admissions Policy is designed to ensure that The Westminster Specialist College provides a fair and supportive process for admitting learners who can benefit from the College's specialist programs and provisions. The College is committed to working closely with learners, their families, and the local authority to ensure that each learner's needs are met effectively and appropriately.

For further information or to start the admissions process, please contact Ben Taylor on 01215616884