

# Spring School Admissions Policy

## for admission September 2024

### 1. Introduction

This policy applies to Spring School which is a special free school and is part of the Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust (AaAST). AaAST is a multi-academy trust that runs and supports the development of special schools to enable autistic children and young people to learn, thrive and achieve. AaAST schools are funded through Local Authority fees and voluntary income. Within the trust our collective vision is a future where every autistic child and young person can be themselves and realise their ambitions. Our mission is that we stand with autistic children and young people, champion their rights and create opportunities.

Spring School is due to open in September 2023. It is located within Kingston and will develop relationships with local services and Authorities.

Our admissions processes consider applications in light of our duties arising under the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2015 and the Equality Act 2010. Admission to Spring School will be by way of the school being named within an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan).

To understand the cohort of children suitable for a school place, please visit [Prospectus | Spring School](#)

### 2. Admissions Criteria

Spring School will admit children and young people from age 4 to 19 years with a primary diagnosis of autism spectrum condition (ASC). They will be largely expected to follow the national curriculum. Any additional diagnoses of either learning disabilities or medical conditions must be assessed on an individual basis, to determine whether the school will be able to meet the child's or young person's needs.

It is intended that Spring School opens in September 2023 and as a brand new school it is building its pupil cohort strategically over a 7-year period. It is intended that by 28/29 the school will reach its capacity of 90. In the academic year 24/25 54 pupils will be admitted, made up of the following key stages:

#### Academic year 2024/2025

<b>Total School Capacity</b>	<b>54</b>
Reception and Key stage 1	14
Key stage 2	20
Key stage 3	20

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 and depending upon the application of the admissions criteria and needs of the child/young person and other pupils.

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2024
Policy No.	102d	Version No.	2

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 Spring 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;
- 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 Spring 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 the child/young persons EHC Plan with reference to the factors set out above in s 39 (4) of the C and F Act.

Additionally, the following factors will be considered:

- Whether 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 and any concerns reported.

### 3. Admissions Process

Parents/carers must be asked by their Local Authority to give their school preferences at the time a draft EHC plan is issued. Occasionally there may be other circumstances - whether parent/carer or Local Authority driven - when a new school place is sought. We encourage parents/carers to attend 'drop in' sessions prior to requesting a place at Spring School to their Local Authority. The details of these will be published on our website.

If following a visit, a parent/carer is interested in a place at the school, they must contact their Local Authority to ask them to consult<sup>1</sup> with us. Where Spring School is given as a preference by a parent/carer thereby initiating a consultation process, or where a consultation process is initiated by a Local Authority itself, we will communicate the decision to the Local Authority and in most instances to the parent/carer unless otherwise advised.

#### i) The School Admissions Panel

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

- Head of School;
- Admissions Manager/members of the admissions team;
- Any other professional staff required to support the admissions process.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a process whereby the Local Authority makes a formal request to ask whether The Spring School can meet the SEN and SEP of a child or young person as set out in their EHC plan and whether a place at the school will be offered. As part of this process a Local Authority may send a number of documents pertaining to the child/young person including their EHC plan, annual review and reports from other professionals.

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2024
Policy No.	102d	Version No.	2

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 some instances where a decision cannot be made on the documentation alone;
- Once the school is built offering an assessment in school for a child/young person in some instances where a decision cannot be made on documentation and observations.

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 Spring School. Where this is not possible, individual arrangements can be made including assessment via a home visit or where appropriate a virtual assessment. This is likely to be the case until the school itself is built.

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 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.

## ii) Outcome of Panel decision

If the School Admissions Panel agrees that Spring School can meet the special educational needs and provision of the child or young person, a school place is offered, and the costing provided to the Local Authority. The offer may contain other conditions which will need to be considered by the Local Authority concerned. We will communicate the decision to the Local Authority and in most instances to the parent/carer unless otherwise advised.

The offer of a place is conditional upon funding being approved and confirmed by the relevant Local Authority. Where Spring School is named on an EHC Plan, Spring School will assume that the Local Authority has agreed to fund the place.

If after carefully considering an application, the School Admissions Panel feels it cannot meet the special educational needs and provision of the child/young person, or if admitting the child/young person would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, the parent/carer and local authority will be advised of the outcome. There is a right to appeal this decision with our Appeals Panel (please see below). This right to appeal is independent of the right to mediation or to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) set out within the C and F Act and the Special Educational needs and Disability Regulations 2014.

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 3 months. To request that a 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 it need to so, this will be communicated to the Local Authority and parent/carers as soon as possible.

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2024
Policy No.	102d	Version No.	2

The school reserves the right to delay commencement of a new placement where funding decisions are made by Local Authority after the statutory deadline set out in Regulation 18 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2015.

## 4. Reserve List

Where we are unable to offer a school place because we are at capacity (having taken into account our duties under the Children and Families Act and SEND Code of Practice) we may decide to open a reserve list. For a child or young person to be added to our reserve list, the Local Authority must first have agreed to fund a place at the School. A reserve list will operate for class groups and key stage. Pupils on the reserve list for their appropriate class group will be ranked in accordance with the criteria below:

1. Looked after children or previously looked after children;
2. Children with siblings already attending Spring School (for this purpose, sibling includes natural sibling, half-sibling, step sibling, foster sibling and adopted sibling permanently living at the same address);
3. Children with a medical or social need who require a place specifically at Spring School, as supported with appropriate evidence;
4. The time and date that funding was confirmed by the responsible Local Authority.

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

## 5. Appeal Arrangements

If a parent or carer is unhappy about a decision made by the Admissions Panel, they can appeal to the AaAST Appeals Panel. This is separate to any remedy available under the SEND legal framework.

## 6. Funding and Contracting

### i) Funding

Our 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.

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

Policy Owner	Director of Education	Review Date:	March 2024
Policy No.	102d	Version No.	2

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

## 7. Further Information

Website: [www.springschool.org.uk](http://www.springschool.org.uk)

Phone: 020 8099 0644

Email: [enquiries@springschool.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@springschool.org.uk)

Admissions Team

Phone: 020 8099 0644 select option for Admissions Team

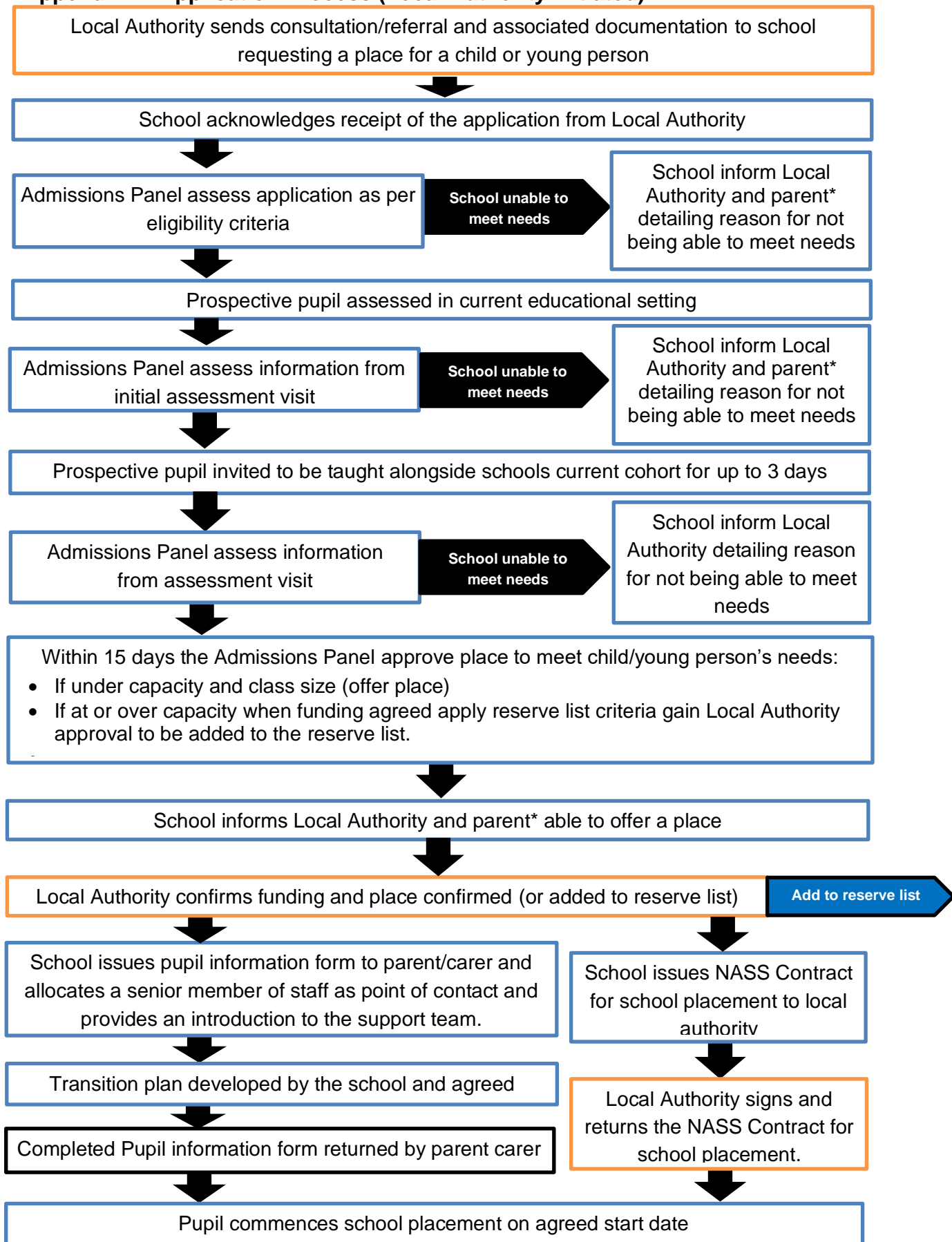
Email: [admissions@springschool.org.uk](mailto:admissions@springschool.org.uk)

Other school policies and further information can be found via the following [link](#):

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

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## Appendix A: Application Process (Local Authority initiated)



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

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