

# Autumn 2023

## COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

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### INTRODUCTION



This newsletter helps identify the steps that make up the college application process. The thought of leaving Pinewood will make some students feel nervous, worried, scared, but hopefully excited about the next steps in their journey.

We are lucky to have different colleges in our surrounding areas for you to choose from and who will continue to meet the needs of our students.

### STEP 1 – VISIT DIFFERENT COLLEGES

Colleges are offering in-person open events. If you are unable to visit in person, colleges will be able to offer you help and support via the telephone or via online meetings. The majority of the colleges also have virtual tours on their websites for you to access.

You may already have an idea of which college would best suit your son/daughter's needs. It is still a good idea to look at more than one college, as you may have done when looking at secondary schools, to gain a better understanding of the different college environments. For example, Hertford Regional College (Ware) has a smaller campus and takes students off site for various curriculum activities while Oaklands (St Albans) has a large campus and has most of what the students need on site. Although these two colleges offer similar provision, the college environment is completely different in each one.

#### **So, which college should you visit?**

We have strong links with Hertford Regional College (Ware), Oaklands and North Herts College. Harlow College has recently updated their foundation courses and also offer a good provision for our students. Historically, the majority of our students have gone to one of these four colleges so it is a good place to start. Each one has a choice of foundation courses to choose from. All the colleges hold open days/evenings throughout the year which provide a good opportunity for you to see the facilities, meet staff and ask specific questions around your child's learning needs.

#### **What to think about when looking at courses?**

When looking at courses, please bear in mind that the majority of our pupils go onto a supported studies course. These courses aim to continue building functional Maths and English skills as well as developing independence whilst also allowing a taster of other subjects. Although some pupils may find it disheartening that they might not be able to go straight onto a mainstream course in their chosen field, most settings should be able to incorporate this into their week. For example, if a pupil has an interest in childcare they could potentially continue with their Maths and English for 2-3 days a week but have a taster of childcare for 1 day per week. All courses should be in the college prospectus but if you contact the supported learning department for each setting you will be able to gain more information and detail.

Most settings only offer part-time courses for post-16. If this is something that is likely to be an issue, you may want to consider requesting the support of the social care team. There are a variety of clubs/programmes that pupils can attend when they are not at a setting, however these will come with a cost. If pupils already receive support, you can request an increase in hours.

Lastly, you will need to consider the location of the setting. As when applying for secondary schools, most local authorities would prefer you to stay in county and to your nearest suitable provision. If you are looking at a place outside of your county or that is not your nearest setting, it may help to make a note of why it is the most suitable.

### **What level of course do we need?**

If you are looking at a supported studies course then the entry level is not applicable. The colleges will assess each pupil and discuss the best fit of level/course with you. Please leave this section of the application blank.

Your young person will be provided with expected levels/grades from their teachers. These are likely to range between Entry Level 1 and Entry Level 3.

## **STEP 2 - APPLY**



You can access the application process on each college's website and complete the necessary steps online. If you are struggling to access or complete the applications, please let us know and we can arrange to support you.

The SEN Teams at the Local Authority request that year 11 annual reviews and post 16 application requests are submitted by the end of **DECEMBER 2023**.

We request that **confirmation of your applications is submitted to Catriona Hinks ([c.hinks@pinewood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:c.hinks@pinewood.herts.sch.uk)) at Pinewood by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023 using the attached form. This is to ensure that we are fully informed of all pupil's destination requests so that transition support can be planned accordingly. If you require any assistance completing college applications, please contact the school office on the usual school number.**

You can apply for more than one college although you must let each college know which placement you are accepting and which one you are declining.

AND THAT IS IT! Once the above two steps have been completed, you can breathe a little easier and begin to help your child focus on their transition.

## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

The colleges will invite your son/daughter to attend an interview and assessment. These are nothing to worry about – they only want to meet your child and find out what level they are currently working at. This interview normally takes place during the working week. If this is the case, just let us know so we are aware when not to expect your child in school. After the interview you will receive a letter with a college placement offer.



## **HOW DOES SCHOOL SUPPORT MY CHILD DURING THIS PROCESS?**

We are fortunate enough to be a part of a transition programme. SfYP Herts, Preparing for Adulthood (Essex) and (Enfield) also work with Pinewood pupils to support transition. Before your child's Annual Year 11 EHCP Review, the link advisors to our school (Nicolette Harley & Emma Delaperelle from Herts, Joanne Speed from Essex and Lee Gilbert from Enfield) will be meeting each student individually, supported by Pinewood staff where needed, to offer information, advice and guidance at this important point of transition. The information collected can be helpful with the EHCP review process too. The link advisors will also attend the review meeting where possible.

From January onwards a Transition Support Worker (TSW) from each college that has received applications from Pinewood will come into school in person on a regular basis. They will join in with our Y11 classes and get to know the students in a familiar setting. They will already know who has applied to their college and will be making sure that the college has everything in place, ready for your child, before they set foot in the door. It also means that you have a college contact and that your son/daughter will have a familiar face to greet them on the first day at college. We also arrange visits for our Pinewood pupils to their chosen settings.

The TSW's sometimes organise summer schemes. These are different to each college and can range from full activity days to a drop-in session for those that need it. They are great to pop along to and help maintain the connection that has been built up within school.

If you already know which college you would like your son/daughter to attend then you can invite a TSW along to the EHCP review during the Autumn term. To do this you can contact the college directly or ask us to invite them on your behalf.

## **WHAT ABOUT TRANSPORT?**



Unfortunately, the school has no involvement with transportation to college. The Local Authority do not have a statutory duty to provide support for 16-18 year olds attending school or college provision. Hertfordshire County Council's Post-16 Transport to Education and Training Policy is available at:

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport).

You can still make a transport application however, you are likely to be required to make a financial contribution. They tend not to get in touch with families until about April/May time. You can get in touch with the transport department at County early by ringing them on 0300 123 4050. Alternatively, you can contact them online.

## **SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE**

We understand that this is an anxious time for all our families. If you are unsure about something, please contact us and we will be more than happy to help in whatever way we can.