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1. AIMS

This policy applies to all applicants to the Shrewsbury Colleges Group (SCG) applying for Further Education courses.

We encompass all aspects of the UK Quality Code in our Admissions processes. (*A separate policy exists for Higher Education programmes.*)

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the *Single Equality Scheme*, the *Student Criminal Convictions Policy*, the *Student DBS Policy*, and the *Fees Policy*.

This policy will be consistent with key messages in the College's prospectus, course leaflets, website, and all other marketing material.

1.1. Statement of Principles

- I. Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit, and consistently applied
- II. Fair, effective, and timely procedures exist for handling students' complaints and appeals
- III. All offers of places on courses are conditional and subject to the College being able to meet each learner's individual support and programme needs.

1.2. Equality and Diversity

- I. The College is committed to ensuring that the admissions process is open and transparent and that no individual or group receives less favourable treatment by virtue of age, disability, economic status, faith, gender, marital status, sexuality, race, colour, and nationality including citizenship, ethnic or national origin
- II. At all times, SCG will consider and adhere to their commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion in line with the Single Equality Scheme.

2. PROGRAMME EXPECTATIONS

2.1. What you can expect from us

TIMESCALES

- I. Applications are received online via the Colleges' website and an automatic acknowledgment of receipt is sent on the next working day.
- II. Applicants will hear from the Admissions Team within 2 weeks of receipt of an application about the next stage / date of interview (where a criminal conviction has been declared this may delay the process)

A LEVEL PROGRAMMES

- I. Are available as full-time study for those aged 16-19 with the intention of progressing to University, apprenticeships, or employment. Applicants aged 20+ will be supported to find out about alternative courses to progress to a specific intended destination e.g. Access courses. In exceptional cases, the College will consider individual applications to support specific career plans.
- II. Applicants must meet our entry requirement for A level study achieving a minimum of five GCSEs at grade 4 or above including English Language (grade C or above for applicants studying in Wales)
- III. Students are admitted to study programmes of normally 3, occasionally 4, and exceptionally 5 advanced level subjects. There are additional extension and enrichment activities e.g., extended project, sport, music and dramatic arts or work-related activities.
- IV. Applicants aged 15 on 31 August in the September enrolment period will not normally be accepted. Where a partner school provides relevant information, an application will be considered on an individual basis and safeguarding arrangements are appropriate.

VOCATIONAL / DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES

- I. Generally available to students aged 16-19 as fulltime programmes. For applicants aged 20+ each individual application will be considered based on intended destination. Students will be advised on what level diploma to start at, depending on previous qualifications, experience, and industry specific requirements. The college reserves the right to not offer a full-time course to anyone over 20 by recommending a part-time route instead as appropriate.
- II. Some students aged 16-19 studying on a Level 3 Diploma may have the option of also studying an A level alongside (see websites for possible combinations)

ENGLISH AND MATHS GCSE REQUIREMENTS (ALL STUDENTS)

- I. Where students, aged 16-18, have not gained a grade 4/C in Maths or English Language GCSE they must continue to work towards English Language and/or Maths GCSE until they have achieved a grade 4 in both subjects.

2.2. What we expect from you

- I. Applicants are responsible for providing accurate information at all stages of the application process. Any student found to be providing fraudulent or false information will have any offer made withdrawn

- II. Applicants should inform the College directly if they decide to withdraw from the offer
- III. It is expected that applicants will accept or decline an offer of a place at the College within 2 weeks of the offer being made
- IV. Applicants must provide information at application and enrolment stage, regarding their care circumstances and declare criminal convictions – See Appendix A
- V. Applicants should inform the College about any additional learning support needs, including EHCP information or medical conditions
- VI. Applicants and their representatives must treat all SCG staff respectfully
- VII. Once enrolled all students will agree to follow all SCG policies and procedures.

3. CRITERIA FOR OFFERING PLACES

3.1. Factors to consider

- I. The applicant should be committed to continuing with their education and in agreement with the programme expectations
- II. The applicant should meet the entry requirements for their chosen course. (Entry criteria for some vocational courses may be waived at the discretion of the tutor, particularly where experience may be deemed to stand in place of certification.)
- III. There should be evidence that the applicant can reasonably be expected to achieve and will be capable of working independently
- IV. The course/s offered should be appropriate for the student and be at a higher level than previously achieved in most cases
- V. Where students are assessed to have a high level of need and support, then all parties must be assured that the appropriate level of support can be provided and funded in college where SEND applies and EHCP is in place
- VI. Offers for Apprenticeships require both the employer and the College to make an offer. Offers can be declined if the literacy and numeracy assessments do not demonstrate ability to complete the standard. Appropriate advice and guidance will be offered to provide suitable options towards an Apprenticeship
- VII. Admission is subject to places on courses being available. Places on courses will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis, provided that the course entry criteria are met. Under exceptional circumstances the Principal reserves the right to approve amended arrangements

- VIII. SCG reserve the right to withdraw an offer or close a course if there are insufficient student numbers. We will inform applicants as soon as possible and offer a suitable alternative
- IX. SCG reserve the right not to admit a student who has any outstanding debts to the Colleges
- X. SCG reserve the right to decline an application from any applicant who has previously been involved in the SCG disciplinary process
- XI. SCG reserve the right to decline any application from current or past students who have not met course contract or target
- XII. SCG reserves the right to decline any application from any applicant student where offering a place to study with the college would represent a specific concern for the welfare of staff and/or current students.

3.2. Students who wish to re-start or to re-enrol

Students who wish to re-start or to re-enrol having not completed the course/or achieved pass grades will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Re-enrolment is not automatic. Students must complete an application form and be interviewed.

Students may have specific conditions placed on their re-application which they must meet, for example a certain level of attendance. They also may need to demonstrate their suitability for further study at interview. A course contract will be agreed with the student and placed on ProMonitor

The assumption is that students who wish to re-start at the same level having achieved sufficient pass grades to progress will not be re-enrolled.

3.3. Existing Students wanting to apply for another course

The college reserves the right to decline an application made by a current student for the next academic year where the student record indicates poor behaviour, attendance, or progress.

3.4. Applicants transferring from another institution

We will consider any external applications on an individual basis. Entry is dependent on there being sufficient room in classes and would be subject to satisfactory references including comments on performance and attendance from applicant's previous institution. We would also need to be assured that progression to our syllabus would be practical in terms of successful outcomes for the student.

4. TUITION FEES

For full details of funding of the learning plans, please refer to the 'Fees Policy' for current funding criteria and costs.

Points 4.1 and 4.2 give a broad overview of the College's approach to tuition fees.

4.1. Details of Fees

In order for a student to be eligible for funding of their learning programme, the learner must have the legal right to be resident in the UK at the start of the programme.

Students will be informed of any additional fees before enrolment.

Details of fees can be found on the websites or by contacting Admissions.

4.2. Who does not pay

Students in the following categories will not be charged tuition fees on full-time programmes:

- I. aged 16 to 18 (as on 1st September of year of enrolment)
- II. Under 16 but have completed key stage 4 and with a British passport.

5. APPLICANTS WITH HEALTH, DISABILITY AND/OR ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

5.1. Additional Learning Support

Additional Learning Support is a service that is provided to help learners who have disclosed a disability, learning difficulty or medical condition. We aim to remove any potential barriers to learning to ensure that learners develop their personal skills and confidence and become as independent as possible in their learning and achieve their learning goals, personal goals, and employment ambitions.

- I. The framework for the SEND policy is provided by: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, The Children and Families Act 2014, The Education Act 1996, The Single Equality Scheme 2013-16 and The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014. Changes in policy or practice will be updated as new legislation emerges.
- II. Applicants in receipt of an Education and Health Care Plan are required to complete a college application as well as submitting their EHCP document to the college. The college will attend review meetings and transition meetings in school, where invited, to ensure accurate information is received to support the application. The application will be processed in conjunction with the SEND Code of Practice 0-25
- III. Others will be made as appropriate to course and level based on information provided.

5.2. Assessment

The College will help applicants who declare any learning difficulties/disabilities by assessing their learning needs and providing additional support where appropriate.

- I. Applicants are able to let the College know about any help they are likely to need i.e. by talking confidentially to a member of staff at an advice event,

by telephone or in writing, or through someone else such as an advocate, parent or carer who can accompany the applicant.

- II. Any student who declares a learning difficulty or disability at application, enrolment or during the course will be entitled to an assessment of needs with a suitably qualified member of staff. Support requirements are shared on ProMonitor and termly reviews are held in line with the progress checks which feed into the annual review.
- III. Applicants who have an EHCP should declare this on the application form. The Additional Learning Support team will review the information in the EHCP before a course interview takes place to ensure that we have the correct information. Where a course interview and offer occurs before the declaration of an EHCP, the College will review the offer accordingly and may make alternative offers.

5.3. Looked after students

Applicants are asked to inform us at application stage if they are looked after by a local authority so we are aware should any additional support be necessary. Please see Appendix C Admissions Policy LAYP and Care Leavers.

5.4. Fitness to study

- I. We aim to support students' learning and academic achievements and will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to enable students to access their course of study that is considered to be appropriate to their disability, learning difficulty or physical and mental ill-health. It may also apply when a student's condition compromises their safety or the safety of others whilst participating in a work placement or other off-site activity.
- II. We provide a range of services to support students during the application and enrolment process and their time at college, for example:
 - Health and Wellbeing Services
 - Learning Support
 - Careers and Employability Team
 - Safeguarding Team
- III. We recognise that each case will be different and may require liaison with the student, parents or carers and internal and external agencies in order to reach a decision. The agreement reached in each case will differ according to the circumstances and the advice received from medical practitioners and other external experts
- IV. The following are examples of when it is appropriate to consider reasonable adjustments:
 - Where students are affected by conditions that require long periods of absence and treatment

- Where participation in an assessment or other course related activity would jeopardise the long-term health and wellbeing of the student due to an existing medical condition.
- Where there are doubts from staff over the student's fitness to study in the college and/or within their placement because of an existing medical condition.
- Where we consider the ability to study to be neither manageable nor achievable in relation to specific tasks or activities because of an existing condition. It may be necessary to consider awarding body criteria and the ability to study in order to complete assessments/ assignments.
- When there is disruption to teaching, learning and support of other students not otherwise covered by the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures or where unreasonable demands are being made on staff or students.
- Where there is a risk to self and others because of an existing condition.

6. INFORMAL REVIEWS & APPEALS PROCESS

6.1. Applicants right to an Informal Review

Applicants have the right to an Informal Review of any decision taken during the application process.

- An Informal Review request should be made in writing to the College Director of Communications, Admissions and Marketing within 10 working days of an application being declined.
- The applicant will be made aware of the outcome of the Informal Review within 20 working days.

6.2. If an applicant wishes to Appeal against the decision made

If an applicant wishes to Appeal against the decision made following an Informal Review, it must be made in writing to the Principal within 10 working days of the review outcome.

- The Appeal should state the reason given for the decision and the grounds for an Appeal.
- Appeals to the Principal can only be made on the following grounds:
 - The College Admissions Policy and Procedure was not followed correctly
 - OR
 - New information is available which should be considered.

- The Principal may decide that there are insufficient grounds for an Appeal in which case the applicant will be notified and there will be no further right of Appeal to the College.
- Where an Appeal meeting is convened, it will normally be held as soon as can be arranged following receipt of the letter and no later than 10 working days.
- The applicant has the right to be accompanied to the Appeal by a person of his/her choosing, the name and status of the person to be notified to the Principal at least five days in advance of the Appeal meeting.
- The applicant will receive the Appeal outcome within 10 working days.
- There is no Appeal against the Principal's decision.
- There is no right of an Informal Review or Appeal where a student has been excluded or refused a place as an outcome from a Conduct Hearing.

7. RELATED POLICIES

- *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy*
- *Higher Education RPL Policy*
- *Student Criminal Convictions Policy*
- *Student DBS Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Student ALS & SEND Policy and Procedure*

APPENDIX A – CRITERIA FOR ENROLLING STUDENTS TO SPECIFIC COURSES

1. Students need to meet the minimum entry requirements for the level of course. See College website and prospectus for general entry requirements for full-time programmes.
2. Students will be advised at interview to choose courses and therefore a programme which has a clear rationale - (including career plans). Where students can demonstrate a convincing rationale at interview and enrolment this will support the student's wishes to enrol on the courses that make up the programme.
3. Interviewers may record during the interview process evidence of research into the course and the student's knowledge/understanding/expectations. Where there is evidence of sound research, a basic understanding, and realistic expectations this will support the student's wishes to enrol on the course.
4. Where student demand for places on specific courses is greater than the spaces available then staff will make judgements based on the above criteria. Where students are not offered places on particular courses they will be informed of the underlying rationale if required. Students will have the opportunity to pursue their case through the Appeals Procedure.
5. The College has a Student DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Policy as courses in the following areas require DBS clearance:
 - Childcare
 - Health and Social Care
 - Education
 - Public Services and Sports

Any other course that requires students to work with children or vulnerable adults

- The DBS process will be explained to the applicant and the College will be responsible for checking the identity of the applicant prior to the DBS application form being submitted. If the DBS check discloses information of concern the College will discuss the appropriate next steps with each applicant. This could be a change of course, seeking appropriate references or withdrawal of the offer of a place.
 - The College has the right to refuse any application it considers inappropriate relating to subject choice and history. Any applications received that raise concern will be discussed and a response will be made to the applicant.
 - Any student that is refused a place at College will have the right of Appeal to the College Director of Communications, Admissions and Marketing within 10 days.
6. All applicants will be written to individually to confirm their enrolment date and time. All students enrolling must sign a copy of the Learner Agreement. All students are expected to attend the College Pre Enrolment/Enrolment Days which provide the opportunity to find out about chosen courses, College life and support available.
 7. As a matter of policy, the College monitors the demand for courses in terms of overall numbers, gender, and school of origin.

APPENDIX B – 14 - 16 Applicants

1. Shrewsbury Colleges Group is not a 14- to 16-year-old college and any application to study with the college by pupils from this age group, and/or their parents/carers/guardians on their behalf, will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.
2. Shrewsbury Colleges Group is committed to working with secondary schools to provide taster and small awards to pupils in Year 10 & 11. Any requests will be considered between SCG and the school and a service level agreement will be agreed between both parties.
3. Shrewsbury Colleges Group is willing to work with the local authority in considering a personalised timetable for pupils in Year 10 & 11 where the local authority remains the owner of the pupil record and funding and a service level agreement is in place. This will be dependent on appropriate support being provided without cost to the college. The college will also need to be assured of who is on site or responsibility for anyone under the age of 16.
4. All 14-16 sessions must be supported by pupil profiles to ensure teaching staff are able to consider learning styles and needs.
5. All 14-16 enrolled to College provision must be accompanied by a school member of staff at all times whilst on college property. The details of responsibility will be with each Service Level agreement
6. Shrewsbury Colleges Group will in exceptional circumstances consider individual applications from young people aged 15 if moving from another country and academic ability is appropriate. The Principal and CEO reserves the right to decide if an application continues to an enrolment.

APPENDIX C – Process Flow Chart

LAYP and Care Leavers

