

Autumn 2020

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

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Officer



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 the surrounding area for you to choose from, all of which continue to meet the needs of our students.

STEP 1 – VISIT DIFFERENT COLLEGES

Due to the current circumstances with COVID 19, you may not be able to visit colleges as easily as previously. 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 did 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 the same sort of provision, the college environment is completely different in each one.



So, which college should you visit?

We have strong links with Hertford Regional College, Oaklands and North Herts College. Harlow College has recently updated their foundation courses and offer a good provision for our students. The majority of our students will go on to one of these four colleges so it is a good place to start. They have a choice of foundation courses to choose from. All the colleges hold open days/evenings throughout the year but you can ring and book a virtual meeting. This is a good chance to tailor the discussions for your child and make it all about them.

We will be talking to our Y11's about their options for education after Pinewood. Although we will be unable to visit the local colleges this year we will look at the differences between being a Pinewood student and a college student.

What to think about when looking at courses?

When looking at courses, please bear in mind that the majority of our pupils will go onto a supported studies course. These courses aim to continue building functional maths and English skills as well as developing independence and 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 prospectus's but may not include a great deal of detail. I would recommend contacting the supported learning department for each setting for more information.

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 way it is the most suitable.

What level of course do we need?

If you are looking at a supported studies course than 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 form 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 find application forms on each college's website. You can also ask for one when you visit. All application forms need to be handed in to me by **FRIDAY 18th DECEMBER 2020**. Once I have received the application form I will attach a school qualification report and forward it to the college. I will also keep a copy of the application on our school records. 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. From January onwards a Transition Support Worker (TSW) from Hertford Regional College, Oaklands and North Herts College will either come into school in person or virtually 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.

The TSW's also 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. To do this you can contact the college directly or ask us to invite them on your behalf.

We will be unable to hold our Post 16 Evening this September, however we will still aim to provide you with as much information and support as possible.

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. You can still make a transport application however, you are likely to be required to make a financial contribution to the cost of approximately 20%. 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 4043. Alternatively, you can contact them online. This could bring about a slightly earlier decision and allocation for you, although I can't guarantee it.

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.