

# **Further Education and Apprenticeships Admissions Policy**

### **Our Mission**

Raising Aspirations, Unlocking Potential, Advancing Futures

### **Our Values**

Excellence, Passion, Teamwork, Integrity, Innovation,  
Sustainability, Valuing Others and Supportiveness

### **Sparsholt College Group**

The Sparsholt College Group (the College Group) includes Sparsholt College, Andover College, University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College Services, Westley Enterprises and Andover Town Football Club. College Group policies apply to each part of the group unless specified otherwise.

The FE & Apprenticeships Admissions Policy was approved by the Board of Governors in April 2025 and supersedes previous versions.

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# FURTHER EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIP ADMISSIONS POLICY

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# **FURTHER EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIP ADMISSIONS POLICY**

## **Scope**

Sparsholt College Group, incorporating the Sparsholt and Andover campuses, (the College), seeks to make the admissions process as convenient as possible for the applicant whilst ensuring that the College holds the information needed to provide for our community. The College welcomes feedback on this policy and processes as part of its transparent and continuous improvement process.

This policy provides applicants with clear statements as to what they can expect from the College and also sets out a number of statements which the College will abide by and, in some cases, restrictions which the College is required or has decided to adopt in order to safeguard its wider community or to protect the standards on individual programmes.

This policy applies to all applicants who are seeking admission to either campus of the College for any type of Further Education (FE) course, including:

- First time applications to a full-time programme of study
- Learners who are already at the College and wishing to progress from one programme of study to another
- Part time applicants to either classroom based or work-place study
- Apprenticeship applications

For Higher Education (HE) admissions, please see the University Centre Sparsholt Admissions Policy.

## **Policy Statements**

### **Information and Advice**

The College will ensure that applicants receive information from the Admissions team, Apprenticeship team and the Course Teams in order to help them decide on the course of study best suited to their needs.

The College will provide help, support and information to applicants at all stages of the admissions process and by offering applicants the opportunity to visit the College and view its facilities prior to the commencement of any courses lasting longer than two weeks through open days, taster events and/or course interview days/afternoons.

Applicants with disabilities or learning difficulties are guided to access appropriate support from the College's Learning Support teams and will be given the opportunity to disclose their support needs at application and via the College online 'Next Steps' portal prior to enrolment.

## **Applications Process**

FE applicants make their application via the College website. Application forms are also available in hard copy on request from the College's Admissions Team. Applications for full time or part time FE and apprenticeship programmes can be made either by completing an application online or by sending a hard copy of the application form to college Admissions Departments.

Applicants are regularly updated as to the stage their application has reached and will receive replies to all correspondence within 10 working days of receipt.

All applicants who accept an offer will receive an email link to the College's online Registration Form which will include a Disability Questionnaire. This will give applicants who have not declared a disability on their original application the opportunity to inform the College of any help and support that they will require during their studies. Applicants and their representatives must make a full and accurate disclosure of all medical conditions and support needs through the 'Next Steps' portal by 1<sup>st</sup> June on the year when the student plans to enrol. Portal completion is necessary to enable the College to undertake the subsequent necessary checks and balances to be able to advise whether the College is able to meet the support needs of the learner. Applicants who are aware that they have specific needs must disclose these or risk a rescinded offer should the College subsequently determine that relevant information has not been disclosed to the College and it is unable to meet learner need.

## **Entry Criteria**

The College has published academic entry criteria for all courses. Existing College students applying to undertake a further programme of study are required to fulfil the relevant entry criteria, along with any special criteria for progression, and to follow the admissions procedure for internal applicants.

Applicants for whom English is a second language may be asked to complete an assessment of their reading, writing and comprehension as a condition of entry onto non-ESOL courses.

Students under the age of 16 would only be considered to study on a FE programme if they have achieved a minimum of 8 GCSEs at a grade 4 or above and are enrolled for sound educational reasons, if safeguarding arrangements are in place and if any admission is authorised by the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead prior to enrolment.

Full time students under 18 who have not achieved a grade 4 or higher in their GCSE English and Maths examinations will be required to work towards a minimum of a 4 grade in these subjects alongside their main course of study. This is a mandatory study requirement and therefore attendance at Maths and English classes is a condition of study for learners aged under 18 who have not achieved a grade 4 or above in GCSE Maths and or English.

Apprenticeships are available to applicants aged 16 or above. There are different entry requirements depending on the sector and job for which the applicant is applying. Applicants will be considered against the individual entry criteria for the apprenticeship they are seeking to undertake. Apprentices aged under 19 years of age who have not previously

attained GCSE grade A\* to C or grades 9 to 4 in English or Maths (or both) on the day they start the apprenticeship, will be required to study towards a functional skills qualification which builds upon their prior attainment as a component of their apprenticeship programme and as a condition of study. Apprentices who are aged 19+ who have not previously attained GCSE grade A\* to C or grades 9 to 4 in English or Maths (or both) on the day they start the apprenticeship will be able to decide if they wish to study for the English or Maths GCSE as part of their apprenticeship.

### **Initial Assessment**

Information from initial assessments will be used to determine the appropriate level of study and used as a diagnostic for assessing potential learning support needs for students to help them with their studies. Reasonable adjustments to the initial assessment process maybe made for candidates with disabilities.

### **Equality and Diversity**

The College welcomes applications from applicants irrespective of any protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and in line with the College's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability**

The College encourages participation in its learning programmes by all sections of the community and the industries it serves, and welcomes applications from applicants who have a disability. Information provided in relation to disability will be used in the initial assessment of applications to ascertain whether the College offers an appropriate programme of study to adequately meet the needs of the learner  
The Learning Support Coordinator will arrange an interview with the applicant to discuss appropriate arrangements to support their studies prior to their enrolment.

The College will assess where students with learning difficulties and / or disabilities are able to follow a programme of study suitable to their needs, with best endeavour to provide appropriate support within available College resources. This support will be monitored and amended as necessary.

If the College is unable to meet additional needs adequately or can only do so by compromising the learning experience which would disadvantage either the applicant or the community, the College undertakes to inform the applicant immediately the situation is apparent.

Applicants with new additional needs identified part way through a course of study will be guided through an assessment process to establish how or, in certain circumstances, whether they can be supported.

## **Fitness to Study**

The College aims to nurture an ethos of independence, self-knowledge and personal responsibility amongst its learners. Learners must therefore take an active part in the process by taking appropriate measures to manage their own health and well-being so that they can achieve and succeed.

Many opportunities are provided to learners throughout the academic year to engage in activities delivered through the tutorial system, which will incorporate safeguarding, British values, equality and PREVENT so that learners may learn about and develop their own well-being. The College therefore has an expectation that its learners should demonstrate that they have the capacity to study by showing both awareness and ability.

Awareness of:

- their own well-being, health and safety and that of others; the risk of physical danger to themselves and others.

Ability to:

- communicate effectively with fellow learners, staff and other professionals through which ever method is usual to that learner;
- attend and engage in classes, practical sessions, tutorials/progress reviews and private study, with their usual support adjustments as necessary;
- submit coursework and engage with the assessment process within the required timescales, within appropriate adjustments.

The College's FE Fitness to Study policy applies to learners, progressors and applicants, throughout all aspects of their College life, and where their behaviour impacts upon their capacity to fulfil the commitments of the study programme, or upon the reputation of the College community. It applies to learners if the FE Student Code of Conduct is breached whether this is on or close-by College premises, during travel to learn periods or during study activities offsite such as outings, visit, residentials, fieldwork or placements, or when brought to the attention of the College through a third party.

The FE Fitness to Study policy applies to applicants where there is cause to believe at application that they may not be fit to study or where all the information requested by the College, relevant to this policy, is not forthcoming within the stated time period.

The College strives for consistency and sensitivity in these matters so any decisions will only be reached following consultation and advice from relevant individuals. The learner's views will form part of the consideration, as will the views of the learner's parents, guardians or advocates where appropriate

However, the College senior staff's decision about a learner's awareness and ability to learn, study, achieve and interact with the College community will be final, subject to appeal to the Vice Principal.

Applications for Veterinary Nursing (VN) including VN Apprenticeships are subject to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) '*Guidance on Recruitment of Students with Disabilities*', the RCVS fitness to practice guidelines and the College's Fitness to Practise Policy for Veterinary Nurse Students.

## **Criminal Convictions and DBS Checks**

Applicants are required to declare criminal convictions within the application process, prior to starting their course. The course offer *may* be refused for applicants with certain criminal convictions on the basis of safeguarding the whole student community. Learners with unspent convictions who fail to declare a criminal conviction will have their College place revoked.

The College does not normally require applicants to be DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked other than those who apply for specific courses in Health and Social Care and Child Care for reasons of professional requirement in that sector. This DBS checking will normally be completed as part of the interview process. All offers for courses where there is a DBS check requirement will be conditional on successful DBS clearance.

Under exceptional circumstances, the College might require an applicant to have a DBS check as an admission requirement.

## **Course Offers**

Course offers may have conditions in addition to the standard academic entry criteria.

Course offers will be made in writing via the Admissions team within 10 working days of the application and interview subject to all relevant supporting information requested being received. The Admissions and Student Support Teams will advise of the next steps once the offer of a place is made.

Part time offers will be made in writing within 10 working days of receipt of application or interview (where interviews are applicable). The College will confirm place on course within 5 days of receipt of payment.

Apprenticeship offers will be made once all relevant supporting information requested has been received and checked. This includes information relating to application, interview, employer checks and prior qualification evidence.

If a course is thought not to be suitable, or the applicant does not meet the required course entry criteria, where possible, they will be offered an alternative course at the College which is believed to provide appropriate progression or, where practicable, referred to another provider.

Applicants who have been unsuccessful in obtaining a place on their chosen course are welcome to re-apply and will be guided towards alternative courses (where appropriate), if the applicant feels that is suitable and has taken into account the reason that their original application was unsuccessful.

## **Confirmation of Course of Study Post Enrolment**

The completion of the College Learning Agreement is the means by which applicants accept their place at College. The Learning Agreement will contain clear statements specifying precisely what the College is offering to the student and details of the commitment the student is making to the College. Any changes to the student's course choice will

automatically require a full review of the Learning Agreement.

Apprentices and their employers are required to contribute to and sign a Training Plan which outlines the training that will be delivered in the practical period of the apprenticeship and how all three parties (apprentice, employer and the College) will support the achievement of the apprenticeship. If any circumstances change which affect the practical period of the apprenticeship, then the Training Plan will be revised and agreed.

## **Course Closure**

Where a course is not viable to deliver because of being under-subscribed (too few students) or because of a significant change to funding by the government which creates non-viability, the College reserves the right to withdraw the course (including after an offer has been made or accepted). In such cases, applicants will be offered advice and guidance on the availability of alternative courses both at the College and with other suitable alternative education providers, wherever possible.

## **Data Protection**

The College will handle data and information in a manner that ensures that it safeguards individuals and personal data. Information will always be managed in a manner that complies with the College's Data Protection Policy. All staff involved in admissions will have received training that enables them to discharge their responsibilities in relation to data protection.

The College may share applicant data with programme delivery partners or employers, where they are directly involved in the admissions process, and with the applicant's previous places of study. All such third parties are prohibited from using an applicant's personal information except for this purpose, and they are required to maintain the confidentiality of this information.

## **Admissions Checks and Requirements**

The College reserves the right to:

- Request references and/or school/college reports for applicants.
- Refuse a course offer for applicants with certain criminal convictions.
- Require DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks prior to entry on courses that lead to careers where this is a requirement or where work experience providers have this as a requirement.
- Review and possibly refuse admission to an applicant/learner who has previously been excluded from this or any other educational institution.
- Conduct risk assessments, review, refuse or revoke a College place for individuals where there is evidence either at the point of application or subsequently when enrolled as a student that they could be a threat or danger to themselves or others in a College environment. This is in relation to the College's duty of care to learners and staff.
- Review and refuse admission or progression to an applicant/learner who has any outstanding debt to the College.

- Require that learners are funded by a government body, another funding body or are self-financing their course in order that the College receives payment for the cost of studying.

### **Complaints or Appeals**

If applicants feel that the process has not been followed or the decision reached by the College is unfair or incorrect, they have a right of complaint. Complaints should be sent in writing for the attention of the Admissions Manager and will be dealt with under the College's Complaints Policy (available on the College's website)..