



Suffolk
New
College

Learning Support Policy

Policy Title:	Learning Support Policy
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Author(s):	Director of Quality Support and Teacher Development
Approved by:	SMT
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Related Policies & Procedures:	Personal Risk Assessment Policy Admissions Policy



Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Name of Policy: Learning Support Policy

		Yes/No	Comments
1	Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	Race or ethnicity	No	
	Disability	Yes	Favourably - to provide appropriate support to students with disabilities so that they can effectively participate in learning
	Gender	No	
	Religion or belief	No	
	Sexual orientation	No	
	Age	No	
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	
	Maternity and Pregnancy	No	
	Gender Reassignment	No	
2	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	Yes	As above
3	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	No	
4	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	No	
5	If so, can the impact be avoided?	NA	
6	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	NA	
7	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	NA	

SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE

Learning Support Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy aims to make best use of the funding it receives from the Educations and Skills Funding Agency, and where applicable the Local Authority, to support High Needs Students (HNS) and disadvantaged students, and as such will implement support within the boundaries set by the limited resource available. Specific guidance for High Needs Students is given in Part A, and disadvantaged students in Part B.

This policy has been revised to comply with the statutory requirement laid out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25 (2014), which defines Special Educational Needs as:

A young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others at the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream post-16 institutions.

The intent of this policy is to level the playing field for all current and potential students with an additional learning need or disability by providing appropriate and timely interventions and support. We actively encourage those students with learning support needs or disabilities to disclose their requirements as early as possible so that we can endeavour to meet them as soon as possible.

In particular, the College takes its responsibilities under the Equality Act seriously and has a commitment to:-

- Actively promote equality of opportunity;
- Actively encourage involvement of students who have disabilities in 'identifying priorities for action' to help shape the support they are funded to receive in order to remove barriers to access, achievement and progression;
- Meet individual needs in ways that make everyone feel valued and respected in order that they can develop and make progress.

1.1 Scope

The policy is for the benefit of FE full-time and part-time students aged

16-24 inclusively, full-time 14-16 year olds and apprentices with additional learning needs, learning difficulties or disabilities, and should be adhered to by all staff. Learning support for part-time 14-16 students is agreed and provided by the school. Those aged 25 and over are outside of this policy.

2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This policy will be applied consistently to students regardless of their disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, faith, background or personal circumstance, or whether they attend on a full or part-time basis. We are a diverse College and want everyone to feel valued and included in the College community and to achieve. The College is opposed to any form of discrimination. There are procedures in place to tackle all forms of bullying, and students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions in all cases.

3. SAFEGUARDING

Suffolk New College recognises its legal and moral duty to provide a safe environment, for everyone, implementing procedures and training to ensure support and protection for their well-being, including against radicalisation. Students are supported to act safely on-line, and awareness-raising for e-safety forms part of the student's Induction period, and is further explored through the Professional Development hour. The College will take appropriate action where the safeguarding of any person is threatened. This policy is applied with safeguarding in mind.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Additional Learning Support (ALS) will include any activity that provides direct support for learning to individual students, over and above that which is provided in a **standard study programme**. The need may arise from a learning difficulty or disability.

In assessing support needs, the College will exercise reasonable judgement and make reasonable adjustments on an individual basis. This judgement and the decision on support will be determined by Student Support in liaison with the Programme Leaders or Heads of School and based upon information supplied by the Local Authority in an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC) or other appropriate documentation (e.g. Learning Disability Assessment (LDA),) from the student's previous school, College or previous provider. A discussion will take place between the course team, Student Support, student and where appropriate parents/carers and external agencies.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Staff

All staff are to be aware of and recognise and apply the contents of this policy to individual students and their needs.

5.2 Curriculum Managers (Heads of Schools; Programme Leaders; Curriculum Co-ordinators)

To ensure their staff consistently apply the procedures outlined within this policy. Programme Leaders are to ensure parents/carers of students with learning difficulties or disabilities are kept informed of their son/daughter's progress.

5.3 Students

Are encouraged to make the College aware of any learning difficulty or disability and to accept appropriate support offered. Students may be required to access support as part of a College action plan, in order to improve their chances of achievement/success. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback on the support they are receiving.

5.4 Director of Quality Support and Teacher Development

To ensure that assessment of students are carried out, and accurately recorded, in a timely manner to facilitate effective transition for students onto study programmes. For students with high/complex learning needs, this will involve pro-active liaison with the Local Authority regarding the processing of EHC Plans, or other appropriate documentation for example: LDAs, to ascertain previous support packages, which will inform College assessments.

5.5 Student Services Manager

To ensure effective SEND Plans are produced by the Specific Needs Advisors which address the learning outcomes identified in the EHC Plan, clearly identifying in class support requirements and where appropriate out of class specialist support requirements.

To ensure effective communication of the appropriate strategies to support the students learning between Student Support and the programme teams, utilising Pro-Monitor Additional Support pages to facilitate this, and information sharing through the Group Profile.

To ensure that coherent, day-to-day support for students is planned and implemented by the Additional Learning Support Team Leaders,, in consultation with Heads of School or Programme Leaders and Curriculum Co-ordinators; and where relevant external agencies, in a timely manner. To liaise with relevant staff, parents/carers, and external agencies; supported by the Local Authority, to ensure that the move from LDAs to EHC Plans is achieved within the legislative timescales.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Students agree to the sharing of information about them when they complete the on-line application on the College website. It is the College's responsibility to ensure that relevant staff are informed of a student's disability/learning difficulty and how this may impact on their learning. Staff should be clear on their responsibility to make adjustments and to share information about a student's disability/learning difficulty when this is necessary. Guidance regarding the nature of support required is recorded on Pro-Monitor for sharing with all staff involved in the student's study programme, and via the Group Profile.

A student with a disability has the right to request confidentiality about the nature or degree of their disability. In such cases, students should be able to discuss their disability and its implications for their study programme in private, in a way that suits them. Besides preserving confidentiality staff will, of course, need to ensure that any adjustments required by a student are made with sensitivity and are made as discreetly as possible. Such adjustments will be agreed with the student and their parent/carer as relevant, recognising that sharing of certain information on a need to know basis will be required to ensure the safety and well being of staff and students

7. LOCAL OFFER

The college is committed to the Local Offer and co-operate with the Local Authority in the development and review of the Local Offer. Details of the College's commitment to the Local Offer can be found at www.infolink.suffolk.gov.uk; and on the Suffolk New College website: www.suffolk.ac.uk.

8. SUPPORT PROVIDED BY CENTRAL SERVICES

The College endeavours to provide support to students with additional needs through its central services, as follows:-

The Learning Curve

The Learning Curve is committed to developing access to all students and its facilities include:

- Large print versions of LRC information sheets;
- Learning Curve inductions devised for different ability levels;
- Some aural versions of texts on CD and in PDF format;
- Large keys keyboards;
- Height adjustable PC tables;
- Magnifiers with options to change font and background colours for students with visual impairments – read and write;
- Customisation of workstations and displays on PCs (e.g. enlarging text, changing background colours and font styles) – read and write.

Through the Student Support Team

- Support for students during admissions;
- Assessment and support for students in the use of assistive technologies;
- Special exam arrangements are available where regulations permit and these will be organised by the Student Data Team following receipt of a JCQ8 from Student Support indicating the specific needs of the students. Additional support in exams cannot be allocated where the student has not taken up the classroom support needed. Special arrangements may include the provision of note takers, readers, or oral language modifiers, communicators/signers;
- Students who need support for progression to HE may receive advice from Specific Needs Team e.g. application for Disabled Students Allowance.

SECTION A – High Needs Students Policy

Definition – Students whose support needs require funding above the ESFA threshold.

1. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

- 1.1 In recognition of the legal duty, the College will comply with legislation within identified timescales. Wherever possible, we attempt to be anticipatory in our readiness, and aim to make reasonable adjustments to support students, subject to the volume of funding awarded by the Local Authority.

Following the SEND reforms the Local Authority have specific measures in place for the processing and the issuing of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans. The College will respond to the draft EHC Plan within the specified timescales, objecting if necessary, but recognising that we may still be officially named in the final EHC Plan. Where the College are named in the EHC Plan, we will apply reasonable adjustments to support students, subject to funding provided by the Local Authority.

EHC Plans will be fully implemented from 2017, in the transition period, applications for funding will be determined from the information contained in the Student Profile form (), or other relevant documentation provided by the Local Authority the student is funded by.

2. APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 It is College policy to consider all applications from students with disabilities on the same grounds as those applied to students i.e. students are offered a place dependent upon meeting the entry requirements and additional funding being available from the Local Authority to make reasonable adjustments.
- 2.2 Students who disclose a disability or learning difficulty which will require high levels of support are invited to have a pre-course guidance meeting with the course team and Student Support following application. Parents/carers, the school SENCo, and relevant specialist agencies may be involved in this meeting.
- 2.3 Students who have more complex support needs, may be considered for individual study programme packages. However, detailed assessment of support required in relation specific aspects of the study programme will be carried out to determine whether or not appropriate support packages can be provided and that awarding body requirements for assessment can be met. Support packages will entail

support for the student on College site, or on study programme related trips and external activities. Any such individual support package must be approved by the Local Authority for funding.

- 2.4 For the College to determine the level of need and support required for new students, Student Support will assess the relevant documentation and use this together with the outcomes of the meeting with the young person, their parents/carers as relevant, and where required: the SENCo, LLDD Support Officer and relevant specialist agencies. The outcomes of this process will inform the support package for the student. For students with an EHC Plan, this will be detailed in a SEN Plan. For progressing students, and those aged over 17 at first application to the College, information from the Annual Reviews will also be used to determine the support package/SEN Plan for the student.
- 2.5 Student Support will plan support for High Needs Students in conjunction with curriculum managers. SEN Plans will be drafted identifying how the student needs and outcomes identified in the EHC Plan (or other relevant documentation) will be met by the College. Where required, the SEN Plan will also identify which external agencies will be engaged to support the student's educational progress. All aspects of the SEN Plan will be costed to ensure support is delivered according to the funding budget allocated.
- 2.6 College policy is to integrate students needing additional support, wherever possible, into an appropriate study programme by providing suitable support for each individual. However, where learning difficulties are greater, and reasonable adjustments cannot be made the College Student Support team will work with the Local Authority to provide advice on potential alternative provision.
- 2.7 Where awarding bodies have specific requirements for successful completion of qualifications, the College will need to agree the extent of acceptable reasonable adjustments with the awarding body prior to confirmation of the student's place on their chosen course.
- 2.8 The College will seek to ensure a good student experience for all, however, the College will object in response to an EHC Plan if the required programme is not available or is uneconomic to provide. Please see Section 5.1 in Admissions Policy for full details.

3. DURING THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- 3.1 All students are reviewed every 6 weeks by their Personal Tutor, in line with the Quality Assurance Calendar, to review progress across their study programme. For students with an EHC Plan a full termly review of their SEN Plan will also take place led by the Student Support Team, in conjunction with the appropriate curriculum manager, Personal

Tutor, and where relevant, external agencies involved in the student's support package. Where a review of English and Maths applies, the relevant tutors will be consulted.

- 3.2 At the end of the study programme, the Student Support Team will carry out an Annual Review with the student and relevant staff and agencies supporting the student to review progress in full and identify appropriate next steps.
- 3.3 In scope students with emerging needs may be referred to Student Support for assessment in year, through the Programme Leader.

4. CENTRAL AND EXTERNAL SERVICES

- 4.1 The Student Support Team provides help and support for all students in the College as well as advice and guidance for people considering coming to College and transition support for College students and those progressing from secondary school.
- 4.2 The Student Support Team are responsible for ensuring out of class support that students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties on a study programme, at any level, might need, is provided effectively, subject to funding.

Services include:

- Personal care
- Specialist Support for Autism and ADHD students
- Specialist Speech and Language Therapy support (SALT)
- Physiotherapy referrals

SECTION B – Additional Support for Low Needs/Students assessed with Low Level Support

Definition – Students who have support needs below the declared ESFA threshold.

1. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

- 1.1 Wherever possible, we attempt to be anticipatory in our readiness, and aim to make reasonable adjustments to support students.
- 1.2 Additional support may benefit students at each stage of their College experience and information regarding support needs may be gained through any of the following strategies:
 - a) Pre-course via schools links, at College open evenings and Course Information events, and taster events;
 - b) In addition, for all full-time students, we encourage disclosure of additional support requirements at the application stage. Student Support contact any student who declares a learning need on application, to determine whether low needs assessment is required;
 - c) For full-time students, part-time students and apprentices, there are further opportunities for disclosure at enrolment, induction, through screening or in Progress Reviews with Personal Tutors. Teachers are vigilant to identify additional support needed by all students joining their class. A referral form may be completed by the tutor and sent to the Programme Leader who will determine whether appropriate to refer to Student Support for an exam concessions assessment to be booked with the student;
 - d) Following the assessment, information on strategies regarding how to support the student to make progress in their learning and be supported by teaching staff or Learning Support Assistants is recorded on Pro-Monitor;
 - e) Where tutors identify a potential learning need during the year, this must also be raised at the course team meeting to ensure all tutors and learning support staff involved in the student's learning are aware and can plan learning and support accordingly;
 - f) Where a student has a low level learning need identified, the Programme Leader should refer this to Student Support, for a low needs and exam concession assessment. Strategies to support learning will then be recorded on Pro-Monitor for the course team to access and apply in the learning environment. Strategies will

include those which encourage the student to develop independent learning skills to make good progress;

- g) For students with literacy or numeracy specific learning needs, paper-based exams will be offered where this method of assessment is deemed to provide the student with better access to the exam;
- h) Students who decline to disclose during admissions and induction are further encouraged to do so by tutors for exam entry and for educational trips. Students may self-refer via Student Support or request their tutor to refer them for specialist support at any time during their course at College;
- i) It is important that tutors refer students early in the academic year for an assessment, to enable time for the assessment to be carried out. Late referral for exam concessions may put the allocation of these concessions at risk.