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# College Offer Document

October 2014



**LEARNING SUPPORT DEPARTMENT – ‘COLLEGE OFFER’  
(FORMS PART OF ESSEX CC ‘LOCAL OFFER’)**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Sixth Form College is a diverse, international and multicultural community which is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all of our learners.

The College welcomes learners with difficulties and disabilities and seeks to provide all learners with appropriate, individually tailored support. All learners are required to meet the College entry criteria. Those learners with strong support needs will develop person-centred inclusive support plans in conjunction with the Learning Support team. Inclusive learning is at the centre of the learning experience:

*“Put simply, we want to avoid a viewpoint which locates the difficulty or deficit with the student and focus instead on the capacity of the educational institution to understand and respond to the individual learner’s requirements.”*

*“This means we must move away from labelling the student towards creating an appropriate educational environment; concentrate on understanding better how people learn so that they can be better helped to learn; and see people with disabilities and/ or learning difficulties first and foremost as learners.”*

*‘Inclusive Learning’ 1996, John Tomlinson*

This document sets out to outline the methods of supporting learners at The Sixth Form College. The document is divided into the following sections:

- (1) Identification of Learning Support Needs
- (2) The Range of ‘Distinct’ Support at College
- (3) The Range of ‘In Curriculum’ Support at College
- (4) Measuring the Impact of the Support Given
- (5) Accessing External Agencies
- (6) Support for the Learners Overall Wellbeing
- (7) Training given to Staff
- (8) Accessibility
- (9) Support for Trips and Visits
- (10) Transfer Arrangements
- (11) Complaints Procedure
- (12) Supporting Documentation

Should you require further information, then please contact:

Sarah Prince: Director of Learning Support

## **(1) Identification of Learning Support Needs**

Early identification of Learning Support Needs is the cornerstone of success and therefore we have ensured that there are a number of opportunities for learners to disclose Learning Support Needs in the College Admission process. These include a question being asked both on the College application form and later during the formal College application interview. Learners are encouraged to be open and honest about their Learning Support Needs so that provision can be organised for the very start of the term in September.

Learners who disclose Learning Support Needs are then referred to the Learning Support Dept. who may liaise with learners School SENCOs/ Head of Year to further discuss how we might help and support their learning at College. The team may also discuss this further with the learner/ parents/ carers. This information is then written up as a 'Higher Level Needs' confidential document, which is passed on to the learner, teaching staff, personal tutor and the senior tutor.

In addition, we have Specialist Teachers at College who are able to assess for Examination Access Arrangements and Dyslexia. Learners can be referred for an assessment at any stage throughout the College year, but they need to be completed in the Autumn Term if we are to meet the deadline for applying for Examination Access Arrangements.

## **(2) The Range of 'Distinct' Support at College**

Learners are offered a range of 'distinct' support within the Learning Support Department at College. It is important to note, that as Young Adults, this support is offered on a voluntary basis – no learner is 'required' to attend support. That said, learners quickly realise that the support offered is invaluable and we have a high demand for the range of support on offer.

- ✓✓ **Academic Access Workshops** – 15+ workshops designed to develop study skills. Each workshop runs once a week for three weeks. The groups are very small (max. 6 per group), entirely learner centred and led by a Learning Support Tutor.
- ✓✓ **Academic Access: One-to-one Workshop** – Bookable sessions where learners can have a three week rotation working individually with a Learning Support Tutor. ✓✓
- Mentoring** – One-to-One sessions weekly, every other week or monthly with our College Mentor. These sessions are particularly useful for our Asperger or visually impaired learners. The sessions focus on study skills and social skills.
- ✓✓ **Coaching** – One-to-one sessions weekly, every other week or monthly with our College Coach. These sessions focus purely on study skills and target setting.
- ✓✓ **College Counselling Service** – we have a number of trained counsellors at College, which are bookable via Senior Tutors.
- ✓✓ **Exam Access Arrangements** – We have specialist teachers and trained scribes, readers and transcribes. We can also assess learners for Exam Access Arrangements and Dyslexia.
- ✓✓ **Services of a Teacher of the Deaf, BSL Communicator and Note Taker** – bought in as needed.

- ✓✓ **Providing Specialist Software/ Resources** – We can provide some specialist software and can bid for additional funding for software and resources should a learner require something specific.

In addition, the Learning Support Department offers a number of other services/ resources:

- ✓✓ Specialist teachers for Exam Access Arrangements – trained scribes, readers, transcribes.
- ✓✓ Services of a Teacher of the Deaf, BSL Communicator and Note Taker bought in as needed. ✓✓ Specialist software/ resources as needed: Laptop, 'Dragon Speaking Naturally', 'Zoomtext', 'Mind Genius', Dictaphones, Large print texts, CD's, texts scanned to disk, coloured overlays.

### **International Learners**

As a multicultural and international community, we receive applications from learners who have 'English as a second language'. It is essential that these learners begin College life confident that the right support programme is in place for them, therefore we recommend some additional help. We offer a tailored weekly yearlong workshop entitled 'Conversational English' in which learners will be encouraged to meet in small groups (max 6 learners) with a specialist learning support tutor and improve the spoken and written English.

### **(3) The Range of 'In Curriculum' Support at College**

In addition to the 'distinct' support offered by the Learning Support Department outlined in the previous section, all learners will receive 'in curriculum' support for each of the subjects they are taking. Support offered in lessons is diverse, but may include:

- ✓✓ Moodle – College Intranet Site – specialist sites for each of our subject, each offering various resources in each topic using multiple learning styles e.g. audio, visual, text, diagrams etc.
- ✓✓ A range of material for each topic – something 'basic', then building up to materials which take the learner beyond A level.
- ✓✓ Student mentors – learners can be paired/ linked with another learner of the same ability or an AS learner may be given an A2 mentor.
- ✓✓ In-department support – additional revision sessions, support sessions, extension sessions.

### **(4) Measuring the Impact of the Support Given**

We are keen to measure the impact of the support given to learners. Impact is measured in a number of ways:

## **Learners Self-Assessment**

We ask that all learners who undertake any 'distinct' support within the Learning Support Department complete a Learner Satisfaction and Confidence Questionnaire. During the first session the learner is asked to rank their confidence on a sliding scale and also to provide some information about why they are attending the support and what they hope to gain from it. At the end of the support, learners are asked to complete a second Learner Satisfaction and Confidence Questionnaire, asking them the same questions as the first. We use these questionnaires to make a judgement about the impact of the support given – whether the learners' confidence has increased and whether the learners' ability has increased. We also ask learners to provide us with feedback about what went well and how we can improve the quality of support.

## **Learning Support Tutors Assessment - Workshops**

In addition to the learners' self-assessment, the workshop learning support tutor will ask learners to complete a skills assessment at the beginning of the workshop rotation and a similar skills assessment at the end of the workshop rotation. This enables a judgement to be made about the learners' ability and also the impact of the workshop. It also enables the learning support tutor to signpost further support should they feel this is necessary.

## **Learner Satisfaction Questionnaires**

All learners are asked to complete a learner satisfaction questionnaire for all subjects that they take at College. Within this questionnaire, there are specific questions about how supported learners feel at College. This information is used to make judgements about the effectiveness of the support in each department and allows Heads of Department to make changes to the support offered.

### **(5) Accessing External Agencies**

We have developed links with a number of external agencies to ensure that our learners can access the support they need, e.g. CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), YES (Youth Enquiry Service), TPS (Transitions Pathways Service) etc.

### **(6) Support for the Learners Overall Wellbeing**

The College has very well developed procedure for supporting and guiding all learners. The foundation for this is the pastoral system which aims to ensure that Personal Tutors and Senior Tutors provide the level of support and guidance necessary to ensure continued high levels of retention and achievement.

Learners with mental health difficulties benefit from this system. Personal Tutor responsibilities include developing close individual relationships with learners through daily monitoring of attendance, regular one-to-one meetings and contact with parents/ carers. Where appropriate, and with the student's consent, Personal Tutors and/ or Senior Tutors will liaise with outside agencies. We also encourage learners who need a 'quieter' place in

College to come to the Learning Support building ('Number 58'), which is has small rooms and staff available throughout the College day.

In-College Support:

✓✓ Personal Tutors ✓✓ Senior Tutors ✓✓ Subject Tutors ✓✓ College Counselling Service ✓✓ The College Nurse ✓✓ The College Welfare Officer ✓✓ The Tutorial Programme ✓✓ Learning Support Department:

- **Academic Access Workshop:** 'Dealing with Stress and Anxiety'. 3 week programme in small groups (max 6 learners).
- **Workshop:** 'Coping with College' – small group (max 6 learners) who meet once a week for the academic year.

### **(7) Training given to Staff**

Staff training forms an important part of the College year. There is a strong focus in training staff on issues relating to learners with specific learning needs, disabilities or difficulties. The training ranges from 'new initiatives' in an area to 'refresher courses'. The staff training programme varies year-on-year, with the coordinator developing a programme that meets the needs and requests from staff. Examples of recent training courses are:

- ADHD refresher.
- Teaching learners with Selective Mutism.
- Learning Support Update.
- Equality and Diversity Training.
- Teaching a profoundly deaf learner. - Level 1 Autism Training.

In addition, each member of the Learning Support Department is linked to a specific subject and liaises closely with that curriculum area in order to support our colleagues and ensure that our expertise is shared.

### **(8) Accessibility**

Colchester Sixth Form College is a large open access site in the centre of Colchester. We have parking on-site for disabled learners, visitors and staff. The College site is accessible to wheelchair users and those with mobility difficulties via lifts and ramps on site. We endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to the College site where possible.

### **(9) Support for Trips and Visits**

The College will make every effort to ensure that all learners have access to the wider curriculum. This may include making reasonable adjustments to staffing, transport and timetabling of extracurricular trips and visits.

## **(10) Transfer Arrangements – Post College**

Learners are encouraged to consider their post-College options through a variety of careers sessions which form a part of the tutorial programme. In addition, the Learning Support Department is available to liaise with Universities and other post College options. We can also help and give advice on applications, interviews etc.

## **(11) Complaints Procedure**

The Corporation (Governing Body) of the Sixth Form College, Colchester aims to discharge its duties and responsibilities in such a way as to minimise the likelihood of public concerns occurring with regard to its oversight of the work of the College and stewardship of attendant public funds.

However, any complaints arising from members of the public will be treated seriously and resolved as quickly and satisfactorily as possible either informally or, at the complainant's option, in accordance with the Corporation's Complaints Procedure.

Please do pass on any complaints or concerns to Sarah Prince: Director of Learning Support or a member of the Governing Body - see Complaints Procedure as documented on the College website.

## **(12) Supporting Documentation**

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years. July 2014
- Children and Families Act. September 2014.
- Equality Act. 2010.
- Index for Inclusion (updated 2001)
- The Sixth Form College: Inclusive Learning Policy.
- The Sixth Form College: Equality and Diversity Policy.
- The Sixth Form College: Complaints Procedure.