Learning Support Policy

Policy Title:	Learning Support Policy
Issue date (mm/yyyy):	11/2022
Author(s):	Director of Student Services, Safeguarding & Support
Approved by:	Senior Management Team
Review date:	11/2023
Related Policies & Procedures:	Personal Risk Assessment Policy Admissions Policy and Guidance Equality and Diversity 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 learners with disabilities so that they can effectively access and 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?**	N/A	
6	**What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?**	N/A	
7	**Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?**	N/A	

SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE

Learning Support Policy

1.   INTRODUCTION

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

This policy complies 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 learners with any special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND) by providing access to appropriate and timely interventions, which may include for example in and out of class support through a Learning Support Practitioner, exam access concessions and assistive technology. We actively encourage learners with additional learning needs to tell us about their requirements as early as possible so that we can endeavour to meet them as soon as possible.

The College is passionate about inclusion and takes its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) seriously and has a commitment to:-

- Actively promote equality of opportunity;
- Actively encourage involvement of learners who have needs in 'helping us shape the support 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 full-time and part-time learners aged 16-24 inclusively with special educational needs and / or disabilities, and should be adhered to by all staff. Those aged 25 and over are outside of this policy.

2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This policy will be applied consistently to learners 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 and does not tolerate any form of harassment or abuse. Where any incidents do occur, we will fully support learners and take appropriate action, as required, for any breaches to our policies and offence / harm caused to others.

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 wellbeing, including against abuse, sexual harassment, radicalisation and online harm.   Learners are supported to connect with care online, and e-safety forms an integral part of the College's curriculum and commitment to safeguarding. The College will take appropriate action where the safeguarding of learners is threatened. This policy is therefore applied with safeguarding in mind.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

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

In assessing support needs, the College will exercise judgement and make reasonable adjustments on an individual basis. This judgement and the decision on any support will be determined by the Learning Support and SEND Team in liaison with the curriculum teams and based upon information supplied by the Local Authority in an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) where one is available or other appropriate documentation from the learner's previous school, College or previous provider. A discussion will take place between the course team, Additional Learning Support, the learner and where appropriate parents / carers /

next of kin (for example a social worker) and any external agencies / support services.

The College has a large team of experienced and highly skilled Learning Support Practitioners (LSPs) who support learners with High Needs (HN) to access their learning. Our Learning Support Practitioners are supported through a development programme which helps to ensure they remain up to date and knowledgeable with regards to provision of support. LSPs are adept at identifying developing independence and will always seek to encourage independent access to learning tasks where it is appropriate, relevant and safe for learners to do so.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Staff

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

5.2 Directors, Heads of Areas; Curriculum Co-ordinators

To ensure their staff consistently apply the procedures outlined within this policy, ensuring parents / carers / next of kin of learners with special educational needs and / or disabilities are kept informed of progress and of the support that the College are providing access to.

5.3 Learners

Are encouraged to make the College aware of any learning difficulty, disability or additional learning need and to accept the support offered. Learners may be required to access support as part of a College action plan, in order to improve their opportunity for achievement / success. Learners are also encouraged to provide feedback on the support they are receiving / accessing (including any assistive technology).

5.4 Director of Student Services, Safeguarding & Support

To ensure that assessments of learners needs are carried out, and accurately recorded, in a timely manner to facilitate effective transition for learners onto study programmes. For learners with high / complex learning needs, this will involve pro-active liaison with the Local Authorities regarding the timely processing of EHCP consults.

5.5 Learning Support & SEND Manager

To ensure timely communication of in-class support requirements (including any assistive technologies) and where appropriate out of class specialist support requirements which address the learning outcomes identified in a learner's EHCP. These strategies must be clearly identified

for staff attention within Pro-Monitor / Smart Assessor.

To ensure that coherent, day-to-day support for learners is planned and implemented by the Learning Support Team Leaders, in consultation with Heads of Area and Curriculum Co-ordinators; and where relevant external support services / agencies, in a timely manner.

To ensure that EHCP consults from the Local Authority are processed and responded to in accordance with statutory timescales.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Learners 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 learner'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 learner's disability / learning difficulty when this is necessary. Guidance regarding the nature of support required is recorded on Pro-Monitor / Smart Assessor for sharing with all staff involved in the learner's study programme, and via the Group Profile.

A learner with a disability has the right to request confidentiality about the nature or degree of their needs. In such cases, learners 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 learner are made with sensitivity and are made as discreetly as possible. Such adjustments will be agreed with the learner and their parent/carer/next of kin as relevant, recognising that sharing of certain information on a need-to-know basis will be required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and learners.

7. LOCAL OFFER

The College is committed to the Local Offer and will 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 on the Suffolk New College website: www.suffolk.ac.uk. The Learning Support and SEND Manager is responsible for ensuring the College's Local Offer remains up-to-date and accessible.

8. SUPPORT PROVIDED BY CENTRAL COLLEGE TEAMS

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

The Learning Curve

The Learning Curve is committed to developing access to all learners and its facilities including:

- 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 (including promoting access to the RNIB's bookshare);
- Large keys keyboards;
- Noise cancelling headphones;
- 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) – texthelp's 'Read&Write'.

The Additional Learning Support & SEND Team

- Transition arrangements;
- Support for learners at interview;
- Personal care;
- Mobility support (such as for learners with physical or visual access needs);
- Communication support (such as for learners who are British Sign Language – BSL – first language users);
- Note-taking;
- Modification of learning materials;
- Provision of in-class support;
- Assessment and support for learners in their use of 'Assistive Technologies' (for example reading pens, texthelp's 'Read&Write'). The Team will identify with curriculum staff and from written documentation made available to the College (such as through an EHCP) those learners whom might benefit from regular use of a reading pen.
  Learners will have access to training sessions on a drop-in basis so that they understand how to get the best use of the reading pen. Reading pens will also be made available to learners on a trial basis when requested to help establish whether such technology would enhance their ability to independently access the curriculum. *For 'Read&Write' refer paragraph below related to the role of the IT Team.* Training sessions for use of 'Read&Write' will also be made available to learners on a drop-in basis;
- Annual review of EHCP (where learners have one);
- Special exam arrangements are available where regulations permit and these will be organised by the Student Data Team following receipt of a JCQ8 indicating the specific needs of the

learners based on their normal ways of working. Additional support in exams cannot be allocated where the learner has not accessed the support offered in / outside of class. Special arrangements may include the provision of scribes, readers, or oral language modifiers, communicators / signers;

- Making external referrals, including but not limited to:

  - ➤ completion of EHC Needs Assessments (EHCNA) for learners whom do not have an EHCP and where the College feels applying for such would be beneficial to the learner (these are completed by the team and submitted to the Local Authority for consideration)
  - ➤ Speech and Language Therapy
  - ➤ Occupational Therapy
  - ➤ Social Care Needs assessments
  - ➤ Requests for support from Local Authority specialist communication support services, for example HI and VI service teams.

The IT Team

- Roll out across college of texthelp's 'Read&Write' literacy software. At the time of updating this policy the College is rolling out 'Read&Write' across all PCs and networks. The programme is available to all users of IT (including staff). It is an IT support tool that offers help with everyday tasks like reading text out loud, understanding unfamiliar words, researching assignments and proof reading written work. Read&Write is available to absolutely all users of IT, including those without declared needs. It aims to support all users to develop in confidence and independence.

SECTION A – High Needs Learners Policy

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

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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 learners, 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 and Health Care (EHC) Plans. The College will respond to the draft EHC Plan at a "consult" stage, identifying whether we can / can't meet needs, and recognising that we may still be officially named in the final EHCP. Where the College are named in the EHCP, we will apply reasonable adjustments to support learners, subject to funding provided by the Local Authority.

. 2. APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 It is College policy to consider all applications from learners with disabilities on the same grounds as those applied to learners without i.e. learners are offered a place dependent upon meeting the entry requirements and subject to additional funding being made available from the Local Authority to make reasonable adjustments.

2.2 Learners who disclose a high level / complex inclusion / special educational need or disability which will require high levels of support are invited to have a pre-course guidance meeting with the course team and the Additional Learning Support and SEND Team following application. Parents / carers / next of kin (where appropriate), the school SENCo, and relevant specialist agencies may also be involved in this meeting.

2.3 Learners who have more complex inclusion 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 learner 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 learners, the Additional Learning Support and SEND Team will assess the relevant documentation and use this together with the outcomes of any discussions with the young person, their parents / carer / next of kin as relevant, and where appropriate the SENCo and relevant specialist agencies. The outcomes of this process will inform support. For learners with an EHCP, this will be detailed on Pro-Monitor / Smart Assessor. For progressing learners, and those aged over 17 at first application to the College, information from the Annual Reviews will also be used to determine the support.

2.5   The Additional Learning Support and SEND Team will plan support for learners with High Needs (HN) in conjunction with curriculum teams. Strategies will be identified with regards how the learner's needs and outcomes as identified within the EHCP (or other relevant documentation) will be met by the College. The support will be costed to ensure it is delivered according to the funding budget allocated.

2.6   College policy is to integrate learners needing additional support, wherever possible, into an appropriate study programme by providing access to suitable and appropriate support for each individual.

2.7   Where awarding bodies have specific requirements for successful completion of qualifications, the College may need to agree the extent of acceptable reasonable adjustments with the awarding body prior to confirmation of the learner's place on their chosen course.

2.8   The College will seek to ensure a good learning experience for all, however, the College will declare in its response to the Local Authority to an EHCP if the required study 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 learners are reviewed every 6 weeks by their Progress Tutor, in line with the Quality Assurance Calendar, to review progress across their study programme. For learners with an EHCP for whom the College has allocated in class support 6-weekly reviews of their progress against their identified learning outcomes will take place led by the Additional Learning Support Team, in conjunction with appropriate curriculum staff and where appropriate including external support services.

3.2   Our SEND Officers will convene an Annual Review with the learner and their parent / carer / next of kin (where appropriate) including any relevant staff and agencies supporting the learner to formally review their progress in full and identify appropriate next steps.

3.3   In scope learners with emerging needs may be referred by staff to the Additional Learning Support and SEND Team for assessment in year..

4.   EXTERNAL SERVICES

4.1   The Additional Learning Support and SEND Team are responsible for ensuring out of class support that learners with special educational needs and / or disabilities on a study programme, at any level, might need, is provided effectively, subject to funding.

4.2   The Additional Learning Support Team are responsible for ensuring timely and appropriate referrals for external support services, which may include:

> ➢ completion of EHC Needs Assessments (EHCNA) for learners whom do not have an EHCP and where the College feels applying for such would be beneficial to the learner (these are completed by the team and submitted to the Local Authority for consideration)
> ➢ Speech and Language Therapy
> ➢ Occupational Therapy
> ➢ Social Care Needs assessments
> ➢ Requests for support from Local Authority specialist communication support services, for example HI and VI service teams

SECTION B – Additional Support for Low Needs/Learners assessed as requiring Low Level Support

Definition – Learners 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 learners.

1.2 Additional support may benefit learners 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, we encourage disclosure of additional support requirements at the application stage. The Additional Learning Support and SEND Team will contact any learner who declares a learning need on application, to determine whether a low needs assessment is required;

c) There are further opportunities for disclosure of needs at enrolment, induction, through assessment or in Reviews with staff. Tutors are vigilant to identify any additional support needed by all learners joining their classes. For example, staff can request exam concession assessments for learners, which would be undertaken by the Assessment Officers;

d) Following an assessment, information on strategies regarding how to support the learner to make progress in their learning and be supported by teaching staff or Learning Support Practitioners (LSP) is recorded on Pro-Monitor / Smart Assessor;

e) Where tutors identify a potential learning need during the year, this must also be raised to ensure all tutors and learning support staff involved in the learner's programme are aware and can plan delivery of teaching, learning and support accordingly;

f) Where a learner has a low level learning need identified, the curriculum team should refer this to the Additional Learning Support and SEND Team, for a low needs and exam concession assessment Strategies to support learning will then be recorded on Pro-Monitor / Smart Assessor for the course team to access and apply in the

learning environment. Strategies will include those which encourage the learner to develop independent learning skills to make good progress (for example, active use of Read&Write assistive technology might be recommended at that point);

g)   For learners with literacy or numeracy specific learning needs, paper-based exams will be offered where this method of assessment is deemed to provide the learner with better access to the exam;

h)   Learners who decline to declare any needs during admissions and induction are further encouraged to do so by tutors for exam entry and for educational trips. Learners may self-refer via the Learning Support and SEND Team or request their tutor to refer them for support at any time during their course at the College;

i)   It is important that tutors refer learners as early as possible 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 timely and effective allocation of these concessions at risk, potentially impacting the learner's ability to be successful in their exams

j)   At the time of updating this policy the College is rolling out texthelp's 'Read&Write' literacy software across all PCs and networks. The programme is accessible to all users of IT (including staff). It is an IT support tool that offers help with everyday tasks like reading text out loud, understanding unfamiliar words, researching assignments and proof reading written work. Read&Write is available to absolutely all users of IT, including those without declared needs. It aims to support users to develop in confidence and independence.