

# Learning Support Policy

**Learning together for success and progression**

*Approved by Academy Trust Board: 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024*

# Learning Support Policy

Trustee Committee Responsible:	Curriculum and Quality Committee
Trustee Lead	Link Trustee - Safeguarding
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	Assistant Principal, Safeguarding and Support
Status and Review Cycle:	3 years
Current Review:	July 2024
Next Review Date:	July 2027

## Aims

Godalming College's fundamental aim with regard to Learning Support and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is to ensure equality of opportunity for all students and to offer a wide and varied curriculum for each student in order that they can become an effective learner, able to achieve their maximum potential. We recognise the importance of effective study skills and actively seek to promote these as students make the transition from secondary school to College as well as helping them to prepare for progression to University, employment, apprenticeships or other routes.

The College seeks to identify students with SEND as early as possible in order to provide appropriate learning support and liaises with local schools to ensure prior identification is shared.

## Key Objectives

- Learning Support at Godalming College is a whole College approach. Staff throughout the College are made aware of the specific needs of those students with specific learning difficulties and strive to ensure such learning needs are met and any physical disabilities accommodated
- The Learning Support approach at the College is designed to enable students to perform to their full potential and be as independent as is practicable
- The College mission is 'Learning together for success and progression'. This applies to all students, and we put emphasis on helping SEND students to become more effective at the process of learning
- The College supports students to positively transition from school to sixth form study by familiarisation with the Learning Support Manager through the application process for students with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and Learning Support Facilitators on our Going to Godalming Days
- During their orientation at College, all new students are screened for literacy needs. In addition, those students who have declared learning support needs / SEND are required to meet with the Learning Support team at enrolment, or indeed at any time throughout their studies. The College also trains staff to identify learning needs to support and refer students who may have been previously undiagnosed
- The College offers extensive support for SEND students to successfully progress to their next steps whether that be higher education, apprenticeships, further training or employment
- The College recognises its statutory duties in relation to the SEND Code of Practice for all students between the ages of 16-25 and will use its best endeavours to secure the special educational provision that the student needs

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Learning Support Manager is responsible for all aspects of learning support in the College. The Learning Support Manager liaises with relevant departments such as the Student Guidance team, Exams and Admissions.

Teaching staff are responsible for accessing all Learning Support notes for their students and responding to their needs appropriately in the classroom.

The College aims to anticipate the likely needs of disabled students and place contingency plans in place should a change in Learning Facilitator or Support Worker be unavoidable (perhaps due to staff sickness absence, for example), but if it is not possible to provide a replacement member of staff then the student will be given every assistance to access lesson content retrospectively. This will be achieved through liaison with Subject Teachers.

All members of the Learning Support team are available to help and to advise. The team is made up of the following roles:

- Learning Support Manager
- Specialist Assessor
- Exams Access Arrangement Assessor
- Access Arrangement Coordinator
- Learning Support Facilitators

The Learning Support Team manage the Learning Support area of the Independent Learning Centre (ILC).

Students have the right to confidentiality; the sharing of any information regarding SEND or Learning Support must be in line with GDPR and only be shared with specific purpose, such as for Exams Access Arrangements or for Safeguarding reasons.

The Senior Leadership Team have responsibility for ensuring that SEND policies and procedures are fully implemented. They also ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for training, that the Learning Support Manager will receive statutory training and that all members of staff within the Learning Support team have sufficient and appropriate training and qualifications. Quality assuring and reviewing all SEND provision is part of the College's Quality Cycle.

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the College has appropriate policies in place and that these are updated regularly. Being collectively responsible for ensuring that SEND arrangements are fully embedded within the College's ethos and reflected in College practice.

## **General Learning Support**

General Learning Support may include the following:

Small group work, individual tuition, study skills, essay writing, English as a second language support (ESOL lessons), dyslexia support, time management and organisational support, adaptation of materials and other general support facilities.

In-class support is provided to specific students on A Level and BTEC Level 3 courses only if these students have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and/or are high needs students.

Wherever possible, assistive technology such as laptops, and voice recognition software, will be encouraged. Wherever possible, students will be encouraged to practise their exam access arrangements as their normal way of working, as defined in the Exam Access Arrangements Policy.

The College recognises that effective Learning Support is underpinned by good information gathering prior to a student starting a course, followed by subsequent understanding and positive support from all relevant staff. With this in mind, students are encouraged to disclose needs at the application stage prior to enrolment.

### Education and Health Care Plans

In line with the Admissions Policy, the College has a duty to admit students if the institution is named in an EHCP, based on the assumption that the student and their local authority have fully engaged in a dialogue with the College, in particular the Learning Support Manager, and that the student subsequently meets the entry criteria for the programme applied for.

The Learning Support Manager at College **MUST** be consulted at all stages of the application and enrolment process. If a student enrolls and has failed to disclose possession of an EHCP, then it may not be possible to provide the requested level of support. Equally, if the dialogue between the local authority and the College about the suitability of a placement has not been concluded or resolved, then in this situation it may not be possible to provide the requested level of support.

The Principal's judgement will be final in relation to whether a student can or cannot be offered a place at the College, taking into account 'Other Considerations'<sup>1</sup>, such as an EHCP.

The College will publish the 'Local Offer' on its website as required by the Surrey Local Authority. The Local Offer is reviewed and updated each year.

### Reasonable Adjustments

The College is required to meet its statutory duties as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. It is our duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage, compared with persons who are not disabled. The phrase 'making reasonable adjustments' is defined by the DFE as "to take such steps as is **reasonable** to have to take to avoid the substantial disadvantage to a disabled person caused by a provision, criterion or practice applied by or on behalf of a school, or by the absence of an auxiliary aid or service."

Students have the right to confidentiality, so written agreement is required before passing on any information regarding SEND or Learning Support.

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<sup>1</sup> Reference: Admissions Policy

## **Educational Psychologist Reports**

We are unable to accept privately commissioned reports on their own as detailed in Exam Access Arrangements policy.

## **Student Disclosure and Referrals**

There are a number of ways a student can be referred or refer themselves to the Learning Support Department. Students may be identified by their previous school, through pre-enrolment communications, at interview, by a member of staff during enrolment or orientation, or at any stage of their course.

Alongside screening assessments, students have a number of opportunities to refer, including:

- Declaring on the College application form
- During the Course Advice Session (parent or student)
- During Enrolment
- During Orientation screening
- Teacher referral

The College needs to record all disclosures formally so that information can be shared with staff that need to know. Sometimes a student may make a disclosure later on in the academic year. Likewise, staff may identify that a student may require support for an issue. Every effort will be made to accommodate such late disclosures and referrals with students accessing support, but Exam Access Arrangements may not be possible due to Exam Board deadlines, and the need for a 'normal way of working' to be established.

## **Assistance with Medication**

The College has a First Aid area and First Aid facilities, students with medical requirements or who have Individual Health Care Plans are supported by the Health and Wellbeing Manager. Students over the age of 16 are capable of administering their own medication.

This policy should be read and viewed in conjunction with other relevant College documentation:

Admissions Policy

Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures

Exams Policy

Exam Access Arrangements Policy

Careers and Progression Policy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy