

Special Educational Needs

How does the college know if students need extra help?

There are various ways in which West Thames College determines whether students require additional support.

- Information received from previous school/college.
- Information received from an external agency e.g. Connexions.
- Indicated on application form, at interview or during enrolment.
- Self disclosure by student and/or parent.
- Outcome of initial and diagnostic assessment.
- Needs identified by Student Learning Advisor or Curriculum staff.

What should a parent do if they think their child may have special needs and requires extra help?

Parents can indicate this information on their child's college application form. They can direct their son or daughter to complete a referral or they can ask to speak to their child's Student Learning Advisor or the Disability Support Manager.

How will the college support a student?

Support will be allocated according to need and can include:

- Extra 1:1 Literacy or numeracy input (from specialist staff members).
- Small group support.
- Differentiated teaching.
- In class support.
- Adapted materials and/or furniture.
- Adapted curriculum and/or modified assessment arrangements.
- Specialist support (British Sign Language interpreter, sighted guide etc).
- Mentoring.
- Counselling.
- Specialist equipment and/or software.
- Transport for curriculum related trips.

Who will oversee and plan work with the student and the parents?

Various staff members will work with the student and their parents including:

- Key support staff member.
- Student Learning Advisor.
- Disability Support Manager.
- Head of Foundation Learning.
- Curriculum Staff.
- Personal Tutors.

How often will this happen?

Students will receive a 1:1 tutorial on a fortnightly basis. The students support arrangements will be reviewed on a minimum termly basis and support targets and issues are reviewed every half term.

Who will explain to parents what is happening for their child?

Parents will receive regular updates from either:

- Student Learning Advisor/Student Support Assistant and/or Disability Support Manager as appropriate.
- Curriculum staff/personal tutor.
- Course leaders.

How will the curriculum be matched to a student's needs?

- Extension to the length of time over which the qualification can be completed where appropriate.
- Differentiated learning.
- Flexible units to allow students to work at their own level and pace.
- Appropriate teaching methods matched to individual learning styles e.g. symbols.

What is the colleges approach to differentiation?

Differentiation is embedded in all classes. Support staff have a remit to create differentiated materials. Differentiation forms part of the college focus in scheme of work and lesson planning as well as being a focus of the observation process.

How will both the college and parent know how a student is progressing?

The student's progress is reviewed regularly. Targets are set and reviewed termly and 'soft' targets are set and reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Information is shared with parents at twice yearly parent evenings which take place in October and March.

How will the college support parents to help with their child's learning?

Parents evenings keep parents/carers informed regarding the progress of their child. Any concerns regarding attendance, punctuality and/or performance are raised directly with parents of students aged 16-18. Regular liaison with external agencies is also provided.

When will parents be able to discuss their child's progress with the college?

There are two parents' evenings each year in October and March. Parents can also speak directly with the Disability Support Manager, the Head of Foundation Learning and/or support staff at any time.

What support will there be for a student's overall well-being including pastoral, medical and social support both in and out of college?

The college has a specialist safeguarding staff team as well as a counsellor who is available to all students. Supported students are assigned a key support worker as well as having a Student Learning Advisor. Both these members of staff have oversight of a student's wellbeing.

There are a number of members of staff, both support staff and curriculum staff, who have specific medical training including on the use of epi pens and epilepsy medication. First aiders are available across the college.

The college periodically offers short courses/sessions on issues such as self-esteem and stress reduction etc.

The tutorial programme run by the college comprehensively addresses all aspects of personal and social development.

What specialist services and expertise are available or accessed by the college?

Specialist services are accessed on a need basis and include Educational Psychologists, British Sign Language interpreters, Communication Support Workers, Speech and Language Therapists, specialist note takers, Irlen screening.

Within the college, there are specialist dyslexia staff, specialist support staff, a counsellor, mentors and medically trained support workers.

What training will the staff supporting young people with special education needs have had or will receive?

Staff working with special educational needs students have a large range of training between them in many different areas including autism, AD(H)D, mental health, dyslexia, dyspraxia, specific learning difficulties, supporting students in Literacy and numeracy within sessions, embedded Literacy and numeracy, manual handling, physical interventions etc. Further training is identified and offered as part of the overall policy on Core Professional Development.

How will students be included in activities outside the classroom including educational trips?

All planning for external activities takes into account the range of needs and transport is provided where necessary. Buddies are assigned if appropriate and support/first aid staff are available to accompany students if required.

How accessible is the college environment?

Very. The college is all very new and compliant with building regulations around disabled access. Where problems occur e.g. a lift breakdown, classes are relocated to ground floor or accessible areas.

How will the college prepare and support a student to join the college?

All applicants are invited pre entry to come and discuss needs and negotiate support packages. Supported interviews are offered. Acclimatisation visits are held during the quiet summer period as well as taster sessions for some courses. Support during the induction period is historically very high to allow for a settling in period.

Transition meetings are common practice and college staff meet with previous or future settings on a regular basis. External agencies involved with the student will also contribute to this process. Records and background information are regularly exchanged (subject to consents).

How are college's resources allocated and matched to student's special educational needs?

Support software is available college wide. A range of specialist furniture and equipment is available and allocated according to needs identified at interview/assessment. There is a dedicated equipment budget which is used to both anticipate and cater for students with additional needs.

How is the decision made about the type and amount of support a student will receive?

All previous information available is collated and considered along with a comprehensive interview and assessment which involves external agencies, partners, parents/guardians and the student. Agreement will be reached during this process but all support packages are flexible and regularly reviewed.

How are parents involved in the college, and how can they become involved?

Parents are invited to initial interviews and assessments. There are also opportunities to join college groups and attend coffee mornings for parents/carers.

Who can parents contact for further information or to raise concerns?

Parents can contact the Disability Support Manager, Head of Foundation Learning, Student Learning Advisor or Head of Department who will address concerns in the first instance.

How does the college listen to students views?

Supported students complete their Personal Social Development review which gives a picture of the student's own view of their strengths and weaknesses. There are three reviews of support throughout the year, two of which are completed by the student. Each year students have the opportunity to complete the college wide student survey.

How do the college Governors monitor attainment and progress of students with special educational needs ensuring that their needs are met by the college?

All this information is collated in the Self Assessment Report and this is presented to governors annually. All information is analysed closely, including by department, ethnicity, disability, gender etc. and any and all gaps are addressed.

How do students gain admission to specialist units/provision on the college site?

This is all done by application or by referral from schools, local authorities, social services or other educational establishments.

Hounslow Local Offer

Follow this [link](#) to see how the London Borough of Hounslow are supporting young people with special educational needs and disabilities.