

# Learning Support Policy

**Learning together for success and progression**

*Approved by Academy Trust Board: December 2018*



# Learning Support Policy

Trustee Committee Responsible:	Curriculum and Quality Committee
Trustee Lead	Link Trustee - Safeguarding
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	Assistant Principal for Student and Staff Development
Status and Review Cycle:	3 years
Current Review:	December 2018
Next Review Date:	December 2021

## 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 he/ she can become an effective learner, able to achieve his/her/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, etc..

The College seeks to identify students with SEND as early as possible in order to provide appropriate learning support.

## 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.
- Students have the right to confidentiality; written agreement is required before passing on any information regarding SEND or Learning Support.
- 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.
- During their induction at Godalming College, all new students are screened for literacy needs. In addition, those students who have declared learning support needs / SEND are encouraged to meet with the Learning Support team at enrolment, or indeed at any time throughout their studies.
- 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 approach at Godalming College is designed to enable students to perform to their full potential and be as independent as is practicable. The Learning Support Drop-In areas, where one-to-one and small group timetabled lessons take place is also available for students to use and access study

skill support. 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).

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.

Students with an EHCP are prioritised for support.

All members of the Learning Support team are available to help and advise. The team is made up of the following roles: Learning Support Manager, Specialist Teachers, Mentor, Learning Facilitators.

### General Learning Support

General Learning Support may include the following:

Small group work, individual tuition, study skills, essay writing, ESOL support, dyslexia support, time management & organisational support, adaptation of materials, support facilities.

Wherever possible assistive technology such as laptops, portable note-takers, dictaphones and voice recognition software will be encouraged.

### 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 Godalming 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 its '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."

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

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

### Exam Access Arrangements

The department, together with the College Exams Department, is involved with special exam arrangements including extra time, readers and scribes; we follow and comply with all JCQ requirements.

All such arrangements for summer exams have to be applied for by the College deadline date and need to be granted by the examination board. It is now incumbent upon Colleges to demonstrate a student's need for such an arrangement. This includes proof of normal way of working, proof that a student has trialled and benefitted from such a proposed arrangement and possession of the relevant documentation.

**The Learning Support department make every effort to gather information from new students about previous exam access arrangements. However, if a student fails to engage with this process and does not disclose previous arrangements it should be recognised that it is unlikely to be possible to organise the arrangement at short notice.**

### Use of computers or laptops in exams

In their annually updated rulebook on reasonable adjustments and exam access arrangements, JCQ regulations<sup>2</sup> state the following:

*“a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.”*

If a student clearly has a difficulty with producing legible handwriting or has a significantly below average handwriting speed, it may be possible to demonstrate an initial need on those grounds.

If a student has an injury which prevents them handwriting then the College would agree to their use of a computer.

### Educational Psychologist reports

JCQ rules<sup>1</sup> state that a college is under no obligation to accept a privately commissioned report if there is no ongoing established connection with the report writer. It should be noted that such reports will not be sufficient evidence on their own to qualify for exam access arrangements: application for such arrangements need to have up to date proof of need and normal way of working.

Even for those reports we could accept, the College is required to have established the student's history of need and normal way of working.

### 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 induction or at any stage of their course. The approach is flexible and allows individual requirements to be met.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/access-arrangements-and-reasonable-adjustments-booklet>

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

- Declaring on the College application form
- During the year 11 pre-enrolment interview (parent or student)
- During enrolment
- During induction screening

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.

### [Assistance with medication](#)

The College has a first aid area and first aid facilities but is not able to offer suitable assistance for students who require ongoing medical supervision. 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

Progression Policy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy