



Richmond upon
Thames College

Policy Name: Learning Support & Disability Policy

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Policy Responsibility: SENCo

Approved By: SLT

For Information to: Students, staff, parents/carers

Version Control:

Introduction

1. Ethos

“Disability” for the purpose of this statement is defined according to the Equality Act 2010.

The College is committed to making every effort to promote equality of opportunity and ensure inclusion in all aspects of college life for students with disabilities and/or learning differences so that they are valued, and that barriers are understood and overcome. Every student is seen as an individual and every effort will be made to make sure students are treated fairly and not discriminated, harassed or victimised against directly or indirectly.

2. Admission Arrangements

Students applying to the college have the opportunity to disclose their support needs on the online application form. Opportunities are also available for students to disclose at enrolment, induction and whilst on a college programme. All disclosures are subject to confidentiality in negotiation with the student except in circumstances where safeguarding concerns are relevant. In such cases, the relevant safeguarding procedures are enacted. Support needs and reasonable adjustments can be discussed during the interview and enrolment process, however, if an applicant/parent/guardian wishes to discuss this further, they will be contacted by a member Inclusive Learning Support (ILS).

The health and safety of students, whether applicants or enrolled students, is of paramount importance to the college, and in some instances a health and safety risk assessment might be required in order to make sure the appropriate reasonable adjustments are considered in advance. This is aimed at anticipating support needs and ensuring that students are treated on an equal basis taking into account their disability/learning difference.

ILS staff are available at Open Events to discuss support needs with students and their parents/guardians. Any applicant with a learning difference/or disability is encouraged to meet with a member of the ILS team to discuss their needs and the support available at the college.

Students with Education, Health and Care plans on Mainstream Provision

The college works closely with Local Authorities (LA) to plan provision effectively and meet the needs of the applicant in line with the recommendations in the Education Health & Care plan (EHCP). There are a number of opportunities to disclose that an applicant/student has an EHCP e.g., on the application form, at enrolment, on the Additional Support Needs form (completed by all students at the start of term) and directly to their personal tutor/teacher/member of the support staff; disclosure is always actively encouraged.

ILS staff are available at Open Events to discuss the EHCP process and it is also possible for applicants to arrange a visit to the college to discuss the recommendations, outcomes and support required. If the support is agreed, the student will have to notify the local authority that the college is their preferred choice. The local authority then sends the college the EHCP for a formal ‘consultation’ in which the college has 15 days to respond and address any further queries from the plan, before giving a final decision.

It is important that the ‘consultation’ occurs as early as possible it allows the college to assess a student’s needs, make suitable recommendations regarding the reasonable adjustments and consider/arrange the level of support required in order to try to ensure this is in place at the start of a programme.

Advice regarding the EHCP process is also provided on the college website, the ‘local offer’ and in the initial correspondence with the Admissions Team as the process is extremely important and can be quite confusing

for applicants/parents/guardians. Further, more detailed guidance on the process can be found on Gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/education-health-and-care-plans-england-2021>

In the event that a student enrolls without disclosing possession of an EHC plan, the college cannot ensure that the appropriate support will be provided.

3. Educational Facilities and Support

i. Specialist Courses

There are discrete courses for students with learning difficulties. These are

- a. School leavers with mild and moderate learning difficulties
- b. Students who have found it difficult to attend school regularly
- c. School leavers with severe learning difficulties
- d. Adults (25+) with severe learning difficulties

Students on these courses are taught in small groups and are fully supported by Student Support Assistants.

Please contact the SENCO for Supported Learning for further details.

ii. Inclusive Learning Support on mainstream programmes

The college has a team of specialist staff who are experienced in working with students with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Autism, Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder, Sensory, Medical and Physical needs and Moderate Learning Difficulties.

The college has an ILS referral system in place, whereby any staff member or the student themselves can refer to discuss their needs and difficulties to the ILS team to see how the college can best provide support to meet their needs. We are able to make a recommendation of support, which could include accessing a one-to-one specialist teacher, in-class support, exam access arrangements, differentiated teaching, assistive technology or equipment.

We can also offer specialist screening assessments for exam access arrangements, such as extra time, reader, scribe, prompt, separate room, use of a laptop, reading pen and rest breaks. We are able to refer students to outside agencies for specialist assessments where needed, such as referrals to Surrey Physical and Sensory Support Service, who are able to provide physical, sensory and mobility assessments.

We can provide in-class Learning Assistants, for students with learning needs which are assessed as “high” and can provide one-to-one support, including dyslexia (Specific Learning Differences) support, by specialist tutors. We can provide practical support for students with sensory, health and physical needs and can arrange a risk assessments and Personal Evacuation Plans. We actively promote the use of Assistive Technology – such as a computer reader software, electronic reading pens and can provide support in using this. We can also provide enlarged texts (especially for Exams if approved by JCQ) and can arrange communication support workers/signers. The college also has recently developed its support services for students with mental health needs, and one-one support is now accessible to students with emotional, mental health or anxiety needs.

We offer all students with learning needs and disabilities a supportive discrete environment, a learning space for vulnerable learners in G32, which is also used as one-to-one and small group teaching and learning space. Students can also access all other student spaces.

If you have an Education, Health and Care plan, which has been agreed that we can provide the provision you need, we will ensure that you are effectively supported to work towards your outcomes. We can offer in-class support from a learning assistant on a one to one or small group basis. The college will not provide transport from home to college and such arrangements need to be arranged in advance of the start of the academic year.

3. Access Arrangements for Examinations

Any student who requires exam access arrangements should discuss this with their lecturers for a referral. The lecturers will need to complete an ILS referral form and provide evidence of the student's work showing their difficulties. If students have been entered for an early exam e.g. November resits, lecturers and students must contact the ILS department or the Exams Team, as soon as possible at the start of the course.

When a need is disclosed and a referral is made, the ILS Team will offer a screening for exam access arrangements. An exam access report (or Form 8) will be provided as evidence of a need for access arrangement. The report contains details about student's history of need and provision, normal ways of working and the access arrangements recommended. Education, Health and Care plans can also be used as evidence of need for access arrangements in exams and assessments. Examples of exam arrangements available are extra time, a reader, an electronic reader, a scribe, a personal assistant, a separate room, rest breaks, and/or use of a laptop computer and software.

When a student declares they had received exam access arrangements, it is their responsibility to provide the college with the appropriate evidence, e.g., Form 8 from their previous school/college. Once we receive this, the learner will be invited to be assessed.

5. Other Support

Student Services offers a wide range of support including a counselling service, welfare and wellbeing service, careers service and advice on financial support. We have links with a range of local organisations and voluntary bodies who also provide support.

6. Physical Accommodation and Access

Students and staff with disabilities who need car parking facilities can be offered these if we have been notified in advance. Spaces are limited.

The entrance doors to the college have door assistors or electronic actuators. A risk assessment or a personal emergency evacuation plan may be required for staff and students with mobility requirements. A Deaf Alert Pager System is linked to the Fire Alarm.

The ground floor of the main college buildings is accessible to those using a wheelchair and accessible toilet facilities are available. Access to the upper floors is via a lift where there are also accessible toilets on these floors. We have evacuation chairs that can be used to descend stairs and exit the building in an emergency.

The Harrop building (Q block) has a lift and accessible toilets on both first and second floors, enabling access to Technology, Computing and Maths.

There is a personal care area on the 1st floor with a shower and an accessible changing area.

7. Complaints and Appeals Procedure

If students feel the college's policy has misled them and that they were led to believe that there would be support and facilities that are not in place, then they have a right to complain. They can report a complaint to either the SENCO, Head of Student Experience or the Head of Estates.

Any student requiring help in order to make the complaint will be given that support.

Key Contacts:

Job Title	Name	Email address
Head of School	Toni Whitehouse	toni.whitehouse@rutc.ac.uk
SENCO	Rekha Patel	rekha.patel@rutc.ac.uk
Head of Estates	Mark Brough	mark.brough@rutc.ac.uk
Head of Student Experience	Rachel Scarborough	rachel.scarborough@rutc.ac.uk
General Enquires - regarding support or to make a referral to learning support		ils.referrals@rutc.ac.uk