



Policy approved & adopted by	Head of College
Date	01/09/2020
Review cycle	Annual
Next Review	01/09/2024

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

### Philosophy and Purpose

This policy reflects the college values and philosophy in relation to Special Educational Needs. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate and gives guidance on practice within college

### Provision

Valley College is on the edge of open countryside in the Rossendale Valley and is on the fringe of other Local Authorities (LAs) including Rochdale and Bury. We provide continuing education, independence skill development and work-related training for young adults aged 18 – 25 with special educational needs. Valley College also has a satellite provision based at the Oracle, Blackpool catering for learners in the Blackpool authority area. The provision is designed to meet the needs of adult learners with severe or moderate to severe learning difficulties who are not able to access local colleges because of either the severity of their learning needs or other social and emotional factors.

The ambition of Valley College is to offer local provision where young people can access knowledge and skills in preparation to live as independently as possible in their local community.

It is the policy of this college to fulfil all that is required under the statutory instrument: This policy and information report is based on the statutory [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#) and pays due regard to the principles of the following legislation:

[Part 3 of the Learnerren and Families Act 2014](#), which sets out colleges' responsibilities for learners with SEN and disabilities

[The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#), which set out colleges' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the SEN information report

and to be guided by the advice and guidelines published by the Lancashire Education Authority and any subsequent changes to the statute or advice.

## **Definitions**

A learner has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. They have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or

A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream colleges

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other learners or young people of the same age by mainstream colleges.

## **Aims of the College**

The directors and staff of Valley College aim to provide equal opportunities for all through:

- An inclusive ethos of respect, tolerance, and understanding of others' needs developing and valuing learners' self-discipline, independence and autonomy.
- A safe supportive, caring and dynamic college environment, extending into the wider Community where all are valued as educators and partners in college improvement.
- Access to provision and curriculum designed around the concept of PACE: Preparation for Adulthood, Citizenship and Employment with bespoke solutions, responsive to learner needs, with opportunities to develop sustainable independence and employability.
- An environment where creativity is nurtured.
- The celebration of success and positive outcomes for all.

We aim to:

- Develop a nurturing culture of lifelong learning for staff and learners;
- Promote intellect, physical, social, aesthetic, spiritual and moral development of learners;
- Inspire communication and independence skills;
- Prepare learners to control their own lives;
- Help and encourage learners to become valued employers, employees and members of social groups and communities;
- Promote a healthy lifestyle and a sense of self-worth;
- Develop inquiring, creative minds;
- Ensure that creative and inspirational teaching leads to exciting, enjoyable and inspired learning.

- Maintain the highest personal expectation of each learner, recognising and developing strengths and talents;
- Engage learners in meaningful work related learning, developing ambition and enterprise skills and securing best possible post college outcomes;
- Have a wider local, regional and national influence to ensure learners access best practice.

## **Facilities**

The college is situated in Haslingden at the Ewood Campus and at the Oracle Blackpool and caters for learners with EHC plans in the surrounding areas. Arrangements for the transport of learners to and from college are made by the respective local authority special education transport departments. Learners at Ewood campus have access to a dedicated training room and a business enterprise room, a resource area, a meeting room and office space. In addition, the site has a fully equipped independence flat with a through lounge diner, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, and a multi-sensory environment (currently under refurbishment). Also available on site are:

- A learner run café, open to the public. The toilet areas are fully adapted for wheel chair users. (The Garage Café)
- A dedicated college minibus, with a lift and provision for wheelchairs, is available for transporting learners on educational visits.
- Fully equipped catering training kitchen
- Horticulture provision

Learners at Valley College, Blackpool have access to a dedicated training room, office space and meeting room. In addition, the college has access to:

- a fully functioning accessible gym,
- café area and
- dance/theatre space.

## **Admissions**

Applications for admission to the college for learner placements will be negotiated between Valley College and the Local Authority Transitions Team. The learners at Valley College will require an EHC Plan.

## **Resources**

The main resource of the college is the staff and the learner-staff ratio is set at a high level to ensure full access to educational provision and care of the highest order. Each class has a tutor and at least three PACE Support staff with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This team plans and works together to meet the individual learning, care and behavioural needs of all the learners. Where needs arise, following appropriate assessment and review, learners are able to benefit

from enhanced staffing levels to cater for particular educational or care needs. This may be funded through LEA support.

High staff commitment to the College's philosophy and ethos is expected and staffing appointments are made with this as an essential criterion.

The college has access to a variety of resources and provides unique opportunities for learners to benefit from appropriate equipment and facilities which allow access to learning activities which further enhance their opportunities for development. For example differentiating the curriculum to ensure all learner's needs are met and using recommended aids (eg larger fonts, visual timetables).

The college accommodation provides and maintains a barrier free policy for all learners. All teaching and recreation areas should be fully accessible to all learners regardless of physical difficulty, including wheelchair users. Toilets and changing facilities should be readily available to all in each area. Lifting equipment, hoists, and other specialist equipment, should be available as required.

The curriculum is resourced and funded through budget allocations and priorities for funding are identified in the College Improvement Plan.

Where a learner's EHC Plan indicates the need for a particular resource the college will take every step to secure that provision as soon as is practicably possible. In addition, resources requested by those concerned for the education and care of a learner will be given careful consideration and acquired as soon as is practicably possible. College staff may identify the need for specialised seating, equipment and mobility/ communication aids and will then liaise with advocates and relevant agencies. The college and therapeutic services then work collaboratively to provide the appropriate item of equipment.

Access to support professionals (see Support Staff section below) will be negotiated and agreed with those professionals and relate to the learner's EHC Plan and need prioritised throughout the college. College liaises routinely with these professionals through Annual Review meetings and other multi-disciplinary meetings as required and in response to individual needs as they may arise.

In addition, the college will maintain and develop links with relevant Social Service Departments in relation to individual needs and generic issues effecting groups of young people or whole college issues.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development opportunities are available for all staff relating to their specific subject areas or other identified areas of personal and professional development. All staff, as appropriate to their role, have specific training in safe Moving and Handling, and First Aid. Some staff have completed a course of instruction on the safe driving of the minibuss - MIDAS. Staff are encouraged to gain additional qualifications wherever possible.

## **Support Staff**

The college seeks to ensure appropriate involvement from colleagues in relation to the provision on each learner's EHC plan. The following professionals support the college:

- Social Workers
- Area Special Educational Needs Officer
- General and Specialist Advisers and Advisory Teachers

The college has established good links with other schools/colleges, mainstream and special, and local industries, businesses and organisations.

## **Advocate Involvement and Support**

It is the policy of the college to work closely with advocates encouraging and respecting their input into the educational provision of their learner and also the life of the college in general. Advocates are encouraged to be closely involved with all aspects of the education of their learner. Advocates are welcome to visit the college although telephoning beforehand to make an appointment is very helpful and much appreciated.

Input from advocates will take many forms:

- Annual Review Meetings with resulting recommendations.
- Annual Stakeholder Audit.
- Interim meetings held at the request of advocates or college staff as required.
- Set up of specialist provision / equipment.

Wherever there is a need to support advocates in the area of language, literacy or mobility, steps will be taken to provide practical support. The college will provide access to translation (written or verbal).

## **Evaluation of effectiveness**

- We evaluate the effectiveness of provision by:
- Reviewing learner's' individual progress each term
- Holding annual reviews
- Monitoring and evaluation of the educational provision by the Directors who regularly visit college and act as critical friends to review the College Improvement Plan with staff. Directors are informed of developments in curriculum planning and college policies are discussed and agreed by Directors as they are reviewed and revised.

