

## Local Offer

Our provision for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities



## **Local Offer for Young People with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities**

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We welcome learners with learning difficulties or disabilities and provide support to make sure you're successful in your learning.

There are three main pathways for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities:

1. **Mainstream courses** with learner support
2. **Skills for Working Life** for students with a moderate learning disability
3. **The Aurora Centre** for students with autistic spectrum disorder and complex needs

### **Support for your success on mainstream courses**

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#### **How can I get support?**

You can tell us when you apply for your course – there's an area on the course application form for this. After you have let us know you need support, you'll be invited to meet with a specialist in either:

- a) physical/medical conditions, mental health or sensory support
- b) learning difficulties or disabilities.

The specialist will work with you to assess your needs. We may also ask for your permission to contact other relevant professionals.

With your consent, we'll then send an agreed support plan to your tutor and other relevant staff. This will outline the support they need to give you.

#### **What support is available?**

After your assessment, your support package may include some of the following:

- Language, literacy and numeracy support and/or a learning mentor
- A specialist teaching group outside your normal class
- A reading group
- Specialist software or adapted equipment such as JAWS screen reader, literacy software Text Help and Read&Write, and magnifiers
- Mentoring
- Speech and language therapy
- A learner support worker
- A social skills group
- A British Sign Language communicator and/or note taker
- Personal care
- Access arrangements for exams such as a reader, scribe or extra time.

If you have a medical condition or physical disability you may also receive a health and safety plan.

You may be invited to meet your learner support worker and look around the campus before the start of term.

## **Skills for Working Life**

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This course can help you if you're aged 16 to 25 with moderate learning difficulties and disabilities. The Skills for Working Life programme can be studied at Entry Level 1, 2, 3 or Levels 1 and 2.

You'll develop skills for personal and working life including practical skills like travel training, how to use an ATM, and cooking. You can study the different areas at different levels. There are nine groups of 10 students who learn in a self-contained study area within the College.

### **What support is available?**

Your support may include:

- One-to-one support
- Sensory support
- Speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, or physical therapy
- A social skills group
- British Sign Language communicator and/or note-taker
- Personal care
- A health and safety plan

### **What can I study?**

The programme is tailored around your needs. You'll be in a learning group with others with similar abilities. You'll study:

- The ASDAN Personal and Social Development qualification which includes setting goals for yourself, managing relationships, working with others, healthy living, budgeting, and employability skills
- Edexcel Functional Skills qualifications in maths, English and ICT
- Enrichment which includes cooking, art, drama, woodwork etc.

You'll also participate in supervised work experience. The amount of time and the kind of placement will be tailored to you.

### **How long will my course last?**

Courses run four days a week from 9am-3pm. Your course could last up to three years, depending on your progress. If you have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, you might need extra provision on top of your course. Please contact your local authority about this. When you've finished the programme we encourage you to move onto a mainstream course, training, an apprenticeship or employment.

### **What is the student to staff ratio?**

Each class has 10 students with one teacher and one support worker. You may get additional support in a small group or one-to-one session.

## **What can I do next?**

Once you complete the course you could progress to a Level 1 vocational programme, an apprenticeship or employment. You could also choose to study on the Skills for Working Life course at a higher level.

## **How do I apply?**

Most of our students are referred by their local authority. You can also apply using the application form in the college prospectus. This can be any time in the year before you want to enrol. Places fill up quickly so it's best to get in touch early.

If you get in touch with us to ask for a place, we'll ask you come in for an assessment. You'll meet a teacher and discuss your plans for the future.

If we think Skills for Working Life is right for you, we'll make you an offer within ten days of your visit.

## **The Aurora Centre**

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The Aurora Centre is our specialist, non-residential centre for young adults with autistic spectrum disorder and complex needs. You'll need to be aged 16-24 and have a statement of special educational needs (SEN statement) or EHC plan. The Centre is separate from the rest of the College and has its own entrance, a garden, music room, kitchen, laundry facilities, a greenhouse and more.

The curriculum is practical and tailored to your needs. It focuses on three areas: living, work and community. You'll also be able to take part in supervised work experience.

## **What support is available?**

Your support may include:

- One-to-one support
- Sensory support
- Speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, or physical therapy
- A social skills group
- British Sign Language communicator and/or note-taker
- Personal care
- A health and safety plan.

## **What can I study?**

The programme is tailored to your needs and is likely to include:

- Communication and numeracy
- Social and behavioural development
- Citizenship
- Life skills such as travel training, shopping and meal preparation
- Expressive arts
- Employability skills and volunteering opportunities
- Health and wellbeing.

There are opportunities to use the main College facilities or enrol on other courses.

### **How long will my course last?**

Courses run for four days a week from 9am- 3pm. Your course could last up to five years depending on your progress. If you have an EHC plan, you might need extra provision on top of your course. Please contact your local authority about this.

### **What is the student to staff ratio?**

Each group has six to eight students with one specialist teacher and some additional support staff depending on the needs of the group and the individual learners. You may need one-to-one support initially.

### **How do I apply?**

You should visit us to talk to our staff to check that this is right for you. Places fill up quickly so when you know you want to apply:

1. You complete the application form at least one year before your planned enrolment.
2. Our staff may visit you in school to assess your needs. We carry out full assessments for all prospective students in September and October the year before you enrol.
3. Offer letters are sent out in December or January for places the following September. The College and your local authority agree funding. Your local authority will issue a new EHC plan by March 31.
4. If we can we'll attend your final annual review at school and talk to any relevant professionals involved in your care.
5. We'll invite you to attend transition days once a week during the last half of the summer term before you start.

## **General Information**

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### **When can I visit the College?**

We have open events and activities throughout the year. You can find out details and register on our [open days and events page](#). Our learner support staff at these events can help explain the support available on mainstream courses.

If you would like to arrange a separate visit to find out more about Skills for Working for Life or the Aurora Centre, please contact them on 020 8408 6536 (Aurora) or 020 8408 6536 (Skills for Working Life),

### **How do I tell you I need support?**

You can tell us when you apply for your course – there's an area on the course application form for this. You, your school or local authority need to send us your EHC plan, SEN statement and any other documents explaining the support you currently receive.

If you prefer, you can discuss your needs with one of our learner support officers.

If you are on a mainstream course, you may need support after you start your course. In this case, you can fill in a support referral form and take an assessment.

### **Is there financial help available?**

You could qualify for a grant under the Government's 16-19 bursary scheme. Read our [financial support page](#) for more information.

If you've been accepted on a higher education course and you have a disability, learning difficulty or medical condition that affects your learning, you could be eligible for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). For details on eligibility and how to apply, read our [DSA information booklet](#). You should apply for DSA as soon as possible and we can help you with this.

If you are aged 16-25 and have an EHC plan or SEN statement you could get free college meals. This is a daily allowance of £2.41 which is automatically uploaded to your college ID card to spend in college canteens.

To receive this, you or your parents or carers must be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided there is no entitlement to Working Tax Credit and the household annual gross income is no more than £16,190)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Pick up a Learner Support Fund application form from the Advice Centre or Student Services. You can apply at the start of your course and will need to provide evidence of your household income. You'll be told if you are eligible when you submit your form. After your application has been handed in, you'll receive an email to your college email address to let you know when your first payment will be put on your student ID card.

### **What if I don't have English or maths?**

If you don't have GCSE maths or English you'll need to do an online assessment when you enrol. Please let your assessor know if you need a paper copy, large print, coloured paper or any other format.

### **How can I or my parents/carers follow my progress?**

You can track your grades with a system called ProPortal. You can use this to see your success, attainment levels and progress on your course. You can get onto ProPortal outside of college.

If you have a personal tutor they will monitor your progress and review your social, emotional and educational needs.

#### **Parents and Carers**

- ✓ are encouraged to have an ongoing dialogue with tutors
- ✓ can phone us directly
- ✓ are sent written reports
- ✓ can attend parents' evenings twice a year
- ✓ can read student communication books
- ✓ can attend annual reviews for learners with SEN statements or EHC plans.

## **How does the College protect my personal information?**

You or your parent or carer has to give written permission before we receive or share your information with local authorities or other agencies. This includes information about your learning difficulties or disabilities.

For more information, read our [data protection policy](#).

## **How are college staff trained to teach and help learners with learning difficulties or disabilities?**

All staff are trained in disability awareness, health and safety, equality and diversity, and safeguarding.

Many staff are also trained to work with people who have a range of learning needs such as autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia and dyspraxia.

Staff supporting higher needs students have training in other specialist areas. These include Makaton and continence management.

Our staff have an annual observation and appraisals to identify additional training needs.

## **Can I take part in traineeships, apprenticeships or supported internships?**

We have recruitment and business teams to help you progress into apprenticeships or traineeships by matching you with placements and helping you with your application. For more information visit the [apprenticeships page](#) on our website.

## **What extra-curricular activities are available to me?**

Our communal areas can be used by all students. These include libraries, a gym and a social room with computers, a pool table, Wii, PS3 and Xbox. In these areas you can get support such as extended book loans, ergonomic equipment, adjustable tables, and stations with accessible software and enlargement apparatus. If you need additional support to help you use these facilities, we will work with you to provide this.

## **Can I get career advice?**

You'll receive career advice when you are approaching the end of your course.

If you have an EHC plan or SEN statement, we will talk to you about your aspirations during each annual review. This will include careers advice and planning for adulthood.

Throughout your course you'll work on employability, interview practice, CV writing and workplace skills.

## **What should I do if I'm not happy with my support or course?**

If you're unhappy with any aspect of the College, you can speak to your tutor or the head or the school or service concerned. If this hasn't resolved the issue, you can read our [complaints policy and procedure](#) and fill in the [complaints form](#) online. This can be provided in an alternative format of your choice.

## Contact

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### **Learner support for mainstream courses**

(Voice) 020 8918 7486

(Minicom) 020 8918 7969

[learner.support@south-thames.ac.uk](mailto:learner.support@south-thames.ac.uk)

### **The Aurora Centre**

020 8408 6536

### **Skills for Working Life**

020 8408 6536