



**A Parent's Guide**  
*to*  
**The Learning Support  
Faculty**  
*at*  
**Okehampton College**  
**2019**



## **The Learning Support Faculty**

We deliver a personalised, inclusive education to enable all students to achieve their academic and social potential.

Dear Parents,

This handbook aims to introduce you to the Learning Support Faculty at the College.

If your child has additional learning needs, it is important that we work together from Year 6 so that your child can achieve his or her full potential. The SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of parents and the critical part they play in their child's education.

"All parents of children with special educational needs should feel they are treated as partners".

Our faculty is staffed by an enthusiastic and caring team of teachers, literacy tutors, Team Leader, Mathematics Specialist Teaching Assistant and numerous general Teaching Assistants including specialists in Autism, Downs Syndrome and Physical Difficulties. If you have any questions after reading this guide do not hesitate to contact any one of us.

Miss K Moore  
SENDCo

## **THE LEARNING SUPPORT TEAM**

The Learning Support team classrooms are to be found at the end of the English corridor and the Learning Support Base (with offices, access to a sensory room, an ICT suite and 3 teaching rooms) is to the side of the main school playground. If you wish to speak with a member of the team regarding your child's education then please contact us on (01837) 650910 Extension 228.

### ***THE TEAM***

*Karen Moore – SENDCo*

From Okehampton College Ofsted report– 2014:

“Students who are disabled, or who have special educational needs make excellent progress because of the high quality support they receive from additional staff.”

*Linda Harding*  
*(TA Team Leader)*  
*Frances Ashe*  
*Claire Denham*  
*Katy Speak*  
*Sian Davis*  
*Lucy Duffy*  
*Sue Hanson*  
*Tina Wooldridge*  
*David Dobby*  
*(ASC Specialist)*

*Sally Parkins*  
*Heather Richards*  
*Helen Fenner*  
*Mark Kerswell*  
*(Maths TA)*

**Literacy Tutors**  
*Julie James*  
*(HLTA)*  
*Caroline Arnett*  
*(Literacy Intervention Officer)*

**SEND Teacher**  
*Chris Bruce*

**Director of Inclusion and Safeguarding**  
*Charlotte Edwards*

### **Safeguarding Team**

*Sean Freeman – Tine Casbolt – Kelly Hoggins – Lee Easton – Nicki Offer*  
*Sue Simmons – Caleb Stevens – Jo Teixeira – Dawn Weir*

The College Educational Psychologist is *Amanda Tyler*. Our governor for SEND is *Mary Ellery*. The Educational Welfare Officer for the College is *Linda Page*.

Before your child joins the college your first point of contact should be *Carol Chapman and Berni Hachipuka*, *Transition Officers* who will have already met your son or daughter at their primary school.

## **AIMS**

Okehampton College believes that all students are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum. We seek to assist all students by taking into account their intellectual, behavioural, emotional or physical needs. The college aims to integrate students with SEND into both the academic and social life of the college and to enable each student to reach his or her full potential.

We aim to ensure that all students enjoy their time at the College and develop a positive attitude to all aspects of their education.

We do support individual needs on a personalised basis via a range of support that may include: guidance for teachers, support from Teaching Assistants, differentiated timetables, literacy extraction, social skills groups and behavioural support (in class, small groups and one-to-one).

## **IDENTIFICATION**

All children with Special Needs will have been met by Student Progress Leaders during their Year 6. Learning Support enhanced transition support is also available, upon parental request or school to school contact for pupils with Special Educational needs

Two day visits are arranged in June/July prior to September for Year 7. This gives students the opportunity to sample life at the college e.g. buying lunch in the canteen and finding their way around such a large site. (Some students may require more than two visits in order to give them greater confidence, and this can be arranged through contacting Learning Support). Additional transition arrangements are often extensively discussed during Year 6 Annual Reviews / Team Around the Child meetings for pupils with Education Health Care Plans (EHP) / and pupils on the SEN Register.

Information about SEND in relation to pupils is shared with all teaching staff, via the schools computer systems. All college staff are informed of the needs of individual SEND students and given guidance by the SENDCo to help anticipate some of the difficulties that students might encounter through college staff training days, which precede the start of the Autumn term each year.

For the first few weeks SEND students (with EHP's) are very closely supported with key Teaching Assistants to ensure that few, if any, problems arise. We encourage parents to also be proactive during this time and we appreciate calls from home to help us in refining our support and to overcome any issues that might have arisen.

Pupils who experience particular difficulties with literacy will be taught English in small groups by a member of the Learning Support Team. This provision is called Extra English lessons (replacing French 3 hours / week) with Learning Support Literacy Intervention Officers, delivering a range of literacy intervention strategies to small groups of around 6 -14 pupils, whose literacy falls significantly below age expected norms. During Key Stage 3, small classes also exist in mainstream Maths, English, Science and PE to help support pupils with additional learning needs. In many mainstream lessons, across a range of academic ability levels, SEND students are supported by our excellent team of Teaching Assistants (TAs).

Students with EHCP's and pupils with Special Educational needs identified as being at SEND Support level, will have an Individual Plan (IP) which will have SMART targets appropriate to the child's needs. These targets are supported by close TA monitoring of a child's progress and collaboration with teachers, parents and the child to anticipate strategies needed to overcome learning issues. It is essential that parents familiarise themselves with these targets and support them at home. They are reviewed termly, through communication with parents, teachers and the child, as part of the school response to the SEND Code of practice and the `Graduated Approach`. Pupils will be constantly monitored to identify progress made and the `narrowing of the gap` between them and their `mainstream peer group`. If progress is sustained, pupils and parents will be informed and the pupil may be removed from the SEND register.

### **SEND School Support**

The trigger for additional intervention will be one of the following: -

- they are making little or no progress even when teaching strategies are targeted at an identified area of weakness.
- they present emotional or behavioural difficulties which are not solved by the behaviour management techniques used in the College.
- they have sensory or physical problems.
- they have communication and/or interaction difficulties.

When the school feels the pupil is making insufficient progress despite significant support, occasionally, we may seek further advice from outside professionals to support the pupils, such as occupational or speech therapists. In addition, if Devon Early Help has not previously been instigated, we might explore this provision with the pupil and their family, possibly leading to engagement or enhancement of the provisions within Early Help.

## **EHCP**

In a small number of cases parents, social workers, health care professionals or schools, who recognise that a child has significant Special Educational Needs may commence the Early Help Assessment in the first instance. If a child continues to experience significant educational issues, perhaps with the child's educational attainment not progressing, parents or schools can apply to the Local Authority for RSA (Requesting Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs). Parents can receive impartial advice from the Devon Independent Advice Service- <http://www.devonias.org.uk/> with regard to all aspects of Special Educational Needs provision in Devon.

## **SUPPORT METHODS**

### **Teaching via Learning Support Faculty**

#### **Key Stage 3 - Years 7-9**

**English** – Specialist SEND teachers teach those students with the weakest literacy levels – usually those with little or no independent reading or writing skills, poor comprehension, or those whose literacy is significantly impeded by a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia. These pupils are often at or below age appropriate norms / expected standard upon entry to Year 7. Schemes of Work focus on reinforcement of key aspects of literacy but attempt to mirror some aspects of the ‘mainstream’ age appropriate scheme of work. Students will work on their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening and they will be assessed annually in all 3 areas. Group sizes are kept to a maximum of 14.

**Extra English** – Literacy Intervention Officers (including our dyslexia specialist) teach basic and functional skill focused literacy for 3 hours a week. This is done in small groups using a range of recognised literacy intervention strategies, such as “I Can Read, phonics phase,” “Trugs” and “Box Fonts”. There is a heavy focus on reading (with students encouraged to read either individually, in pairs or to a member of staff for at least half an hour each week) and spelling (with weekly spellings set for Home Learning).

#### **BREAKTIME & LUNCHTIME SUPPORT**

Outdoor playground supervision by Teaching Assistants occurs every day at break & lunch. There are also rooms supervised by TA’s where students, who find this time difficult, may come and play board games, watch a video, do ‘crafts’ together and socialise. Within the Learning Support block our ICT suite is also supervised and available for pupils to access at break and lunch times. In addition there is a quiet room, monitored by Teaching Assistants, for pupils who like to be indoors but don’t like noise or activity. The clubs have proved invaluable in successfully integrating students into the College. For some students Breakfast Club runs in the College Canteen from 8.00 – 8.40 a.m. staffed by Learning Support TA’s daily, with the opportunity to access adult support to help with any Home Learning issues as well as to develop positive pastoral relationships with adults.

#### **HOMEWORK / HOME LEARNING SUPPORT**

Homework / Home Learning support is available in the Learning Support area at lunchtimes, tutor times and after school (Tuesdays and Thursdays 3.20-4.30). Help is always available, please ask. Homework support is also available in the Breakfast Club.

## **Key Stage 4 - Years 10-11**

During Year 9 students will be given advice about the most suitable courses for them. In all cases, our aim is not to exclude students from certain courses but to enable them to achieve their fullest potential by taking courses appropriate to their skills, knowledge and preferred learning and assessment styles.

English – we teach small GCSE English groups in Years 10 and 11. The focus is on achievement, at a pace that is appropriate to the students' needs.

No matter what level a student is working at, they will be given a challenging target to aim for in Year 10 and 11, which with hard work they should achieve or even surpass.

## **SUPPORT IN EXAMINATIONS**

For certain students we are able to ask the various examination boards for concessions (known as Access Arrangements) during their GCSEs and other public examinations. These concessions may include extra time, larger print papers etc. Mrs Osbourne (Exams Officer) and Learning Support staff will liaise with parents during the Summer of Year 9 about these arrangements. Please note that students with identified dyslexia **no longer** get automatic exam concessions.

We are proud of the achievements in public examinations of our students. It is pleasing to see how students develop over the years both in confidence and academic ability. Achievement for all students, at a level appropriate to the individual student, is an important part of every student's experience at College.

## **Additional Support via the Learning Support Faculty**

Below are some of the support mechanisms available. We attempt to personalise the support of each individual rather than making students fit prescribed support.

**Social Mental and Emotional Health Needs** – are supported via social skills groups which are run by specialist Teaching Assistants / Mill Leat Inclusion Officers and include access to qualified Counsellors if required.

**Autism** – we have a lot of experience supporting a huge range of needs within the autistic spectrum, including pupils with PDA. We have key mentors for some of our autistic students whilst others progress through college with very little accommodation of their needs required. We support Autistic pupils social and communication needs via small groups or one-to-one support, which is always communicated for information and further discussion with parents. We liaise closely with CAMHS (Child and adolescent Mental Health Service) and the Devon Communication and Interaction Team (CIT), Speech Language and Communication (SLCN) specialists ( Longcause and Southbrook special schools, on occasions) to modify and review our support of ASC pupils.

**Cognition and Learning Difficulties** – we support students with a range of learning difficulties from moderate to severe, including pupils with Downs Syndrome and Global Developmental delay. All of our Teaching Assistants have good knowledge of supporting pupils with cognition and processing issues. Teaching Assistants and staff undergo additional SEND training annually as part of their professional development. Teaching Assistants and Teachers use a range of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic techniques to support students in 'mainstream lessons' and smaller SEND classes. A number of pupils have Specific Learning Difficulties, such as dyslexia. We have a Dyslexia Literacy Intervention officer who is experienced in supporting students with dyslexia. We also have the IDL computer software programme which has had very good results in supporting the needs of pupils experiencing literacy issues and improving their age related reading and spelling scores.

### **Physical and Sensory Needs**

We have had experience of including pupils with the following needs: Physical Difficulties, Visual and Hearing Impediments, severe Dyspraxia and Downs Syndrome.

To find out more about what support is available for students with other needs, please contact the Learning Support Faculty directly.

## **The Mill Leat Centre**

The Mill Leat Centre supports students with behavioural, social, mental health and emotional needs. The focus is on enabling students by building on their areas of weakness rather than merely on punishment. The Mill Leat work closely with teaching colleagues throughout the school (and primary colleagues during the Year 6 to 7 transition) and of course, parents.

The support offered includes classroom observations, one-to-one support, group social skills support, 'anger busters' and mentoring.

The centre is staffed by experienced and well trained inclusion staff:

Kelly Hoggins - Inclusion Manager  
Sue Simmons - Inclusion Officer

Education is **not** something that is 'done to' students. To achieve their potential students must take an active part in their education.

The first steps to taking an active role in their own education are vitally important – they include:-

**Good Attendance** – the target for all students at Okehampton College is to achieve at least 95% attendance in any academic year. While we appreciate that everyone gets ill from time to time, and no student should be sent to school if they are infectious, it is important to minimise non-essential absence.

**Uniform** – Okehampton College has a school uniform. Respecting this uniform demonstrates a commitment to being part of the Okehampton College Community.

**Equipment** – Lack of equipment disrupts the start of every lesson for that student and the others in their class so it is essential that all students come to school every day with the following:-

Pencil case to include the minimum of:

2 x black or blue pens

1 x pencil

1 x rubber

1 x ruler

1 x sharpener

Optional – colouring pencils or pens.

PE Kit – on days when student is timetabled for PE

Cookery ingredients – on days when student is timetabled for a practical food technology or catering lesson.

**For many students with additional needs, organisation can be a challenge.** You can help your child with improving their organisational skills (which are important life skills), by including them into your daily routine. Encourage your child to check their timetable every evening and double check that they have everything they need. Additional techniques for organisation include having a tick list for students to tick off all of their equipment needs on different days of the week. Also using colour coded folders for exercise books and homework can be useful for students struggling with organisation.

## WE WANT YOU TO HELP

If your child is new to the college they will need a lot of support from you as well as the Learning Support Team.

In addition to your child's pupil timetable, we can send home a copy of their timetable for you to put it in a key place ... the kitchen is a good idea. Each evening help your son or daughter to organise their bag for the next day. Check that they have:

- pen
- pencil
- P.E. kit
- cookery equipment
- etc.

At the end of each college day talk to your child about their day at college ... the good bits as well as any difficulties they may have had.

Try and help with homework ... make sure that they have a quiet area to work.

If your child has a reading problem -

- H** - **hear** your child read every day for at least 5 minutes
- E** - **encourage** your child to read as much as possible - try road signs, TV Times, food wrappers, etc.
- L** - **listen** and talk to your child about books and magazines
- P** - **praise** your child's efforts as much as possible

## HELPING WITH READING

### **DO** .....

Look at the book together and talk about the story and any pictures.

Let the child read to you ... no matter how few words

Take it in turns to read.

Praise your child for getting word right and for trying to read words

Involve other members of the family

### **DON'T** .....

Get cross - making mistakes is part of the reading and learning process.

Make the sessions too long ... you and your child will enjoy reading together if the session is kept short, about 10 - 15 minutes is about right

## MORE ABOUT READING

### WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD .....

Hesitates	give him/her a few seconds to work it out
Doesn't know the word	say the word and ask your child to read the sentence again
Says the word wrong	give them time to correct the word and if it is still wrong say the word to your child
Adds or misses a word	point to the word and say the word

## HOW ELSE TO HELP .....

### DO .....

- sit close next to your child
- make sure there is good light
- find a quiet place with no distractions
- find 10 - 15 minutes each day to work with your child
- give lots of praise and encouragement
- choose a good time for the sessions

### DON'T

- be anxious, worried or angry if your child has difficulty with reading
- threaten to 'tell the teacher' or any other punishment
- choose a book or magazine which is too hard .... it's always best to let your child choose the book

## SPELLING

If your child has a spelling problem, don't worry,  
*they will be one of a great number of people!*

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

<i>LOOK</i>	ask your child to look at the complete word so that an overall picture can be seen
<i>SAY</i>	ask your child to say the word slowly break it into small chunks ask your child if any sounds can be heard
<i>LOOK AGAIN</i>	whilst looking at the word ask your child to say the word slowly break the word into chunks look at the shape of word ask your child to try to photograph the word into your mind ask your child if there is anything unusual about the word that will help them remember it
<i>COVER</i>	ask your child to cover the word with their hand
<i>WRITE</i>	ask your child to try and write the word from memory
<i>CHECK</i>	uncover the word and if the word is incorrect start again

**There are lots of ways to help with spelling.**

**Keep trying and look for different ways if these do not work for you and your child.**

Finally -

***Please remember:***

We have a much better chance of helping your child to make the best of the opportunities provided here

***IF WE WORK TOGETHER.***

Keep in touch with their work by talking to them.

Keep in touch with us - you will get plenty of opportunities to do so through parents evenings and open afternoons.

REMEMBER

We are the Learning Support Team and you are a member of that team.

Telephone the college if you have any concerns on (01837) 650910

If we are not immediately available, leave your number and we will return your call as soon as possible.

The Learning Support building can be found on the bottom playground

We use our email daily so feel free to email us:-

Karen (SENDCo)

[kmoore@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk](mailto:kmoore@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk)

## **Glossary of Abbreviations**

<b>ASC</b>	Autistic Spectrum Condition (including Aspergers)
<b>CIDS</b>	Communication and Interaction Difficulties
<b>CofP</b>	Code of Practice
<b>DIW</b>	Deaf Inclusion Worker
<b>EHCP</b>	Education Health Care Plan
<b>EP Service</b>	Educational Psychologist Service
<b>EWO</b>	Education Welfare Officer
<b>HI</b>	Hearing impaired
<b>HLTA</b>	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
<b>IP</b>	Individual Plan (supporting SEND Support / EHCP / pupils)
<b>IHCP</b>	Individual Health Care Plan
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>MLD</b>	Moderate learning difficulty
<b>PDA</b>	Pathological Demand Avoidance (Autistic Spectrum Condition)
<b>PD</b>	Physical difficulty
<b>SMEH</b>	Social Mental Emotional Health
<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
<b>SENDCo</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator
<b>SLCN</b>	Speech Language & Communication Needs
<b>SpLD</b>	Specific learning difficulty (including Dyslexia)
<b>TA</b>	Teaching Assistant
<b>VI</b>	Visually impaired

### **Devon Information, Advice and Support service (DIAS)**

This services offers confidential and impartial information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with special educational needs:

<http://www.devonias.org.uk/about-us/>

