

CATEGORY:	Additional Learning Support
TYPE:	Policy
TITLE:	Additional Learning Support and SEND
PERSON RESPONSIBLE:	Assistant Principal: Student Services & DSL
PURPOSE:	

Introduction

NSCG is committed to actively promoting equality of opportunity to ensure that all students reach their learning potential and achieve success on an appropriate course of study.

This policy formalises how NSCG College sites will maintain standards for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties as described in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2014:

Procedure

The purpose of the Additional Learning Support (ALS) policy is to ensure that NSCG:

- Outlines its full and continued commitment to students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.
- Clarifies the scope of the Additional Learning Support Service.
- Outlines the roles and responsibilities of all college staff with regard to students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, incorporating the college ethos that all teachers are teachers of SEND and that all college employees have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with SEND.
- Involves students in person centred planning and the review of their support at college.
- Provides appropriately trained and/or experienced staff to be able to respond to the diverse range of learning support needs. The college endeavours to grow the necessary talent within its workforce where possible, but may recruit specialist support in response to Education Health & Care Plans, Disabled Student Allowance (DSA).

- Develops and maintain systems that encourage students to disclose their disabilities and/or learning difficulties, preferably as part of the pre-entry admissions process.
- Improves outcomes for students with SEND in terms of retention, achievement and progression to further education, training and/or employment and access into or progression within HE.
- Promotes the independence of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, SEND and High Needs.
- Maximises the use and effectiveness of Additional Learning Support funding and other funding streams in supporting students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.
- Complies with the Disability Discrimination Act, the Equality Act, the Data Protection Act and Safeguarding legislation, the Children and Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice, with the college making all reasonable efforts to secure appropriate provision as described within an EHCP.
- Provides Additional Learning Support in a manner that maintains academic, professional and technical standards, to promote independent living/study skills to enable all young people to reach their full potential.
- Seeks ways to support students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties that promote their independence and prepare them for the world of work and/or further study.
- Meets the requirement of the relevant funding guidance/audit requirements.
- Enables students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties to have the same opportunities at college as students without those needs.

1. Legislative/Quality Framework

Details of any legislative and quality of funding agency requirement, that this policy links to are:

- The Disability Discrimination Act
- The Equality Act
- The Data Protection Act
- Safeguarding Legislation
- The Children and Families Act
- The SEND Code of Practice
- Funding bodies are the DfE and Local Authorities

2. Scope

This policy applies to everyone in our college including all students, staff, leaders and subcontractors and it should be read, understood and adhered to, alongside the following policies and procedures:-

- Support to Study Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Bullying & Harassment Procedure
- Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments
- SEND Policy?

The broad scope of Additional Learning Support (ALS) ensures that students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties have access to the full college experience and include:

- Reasonable adjustments made through high quality and personalised teaching (e.g. differentiation, providing copies of lesson notes, 1:1 teaching time, opportunities to attend enhancement services).
- Services delivered by the Additional Learning Support Team (e.g. Learning Support Assistants, Lead Support Tutors, Communication Support Workers, Specialist Teachers and Specific Learning Difficulty Tutors, specialist equipment), or provided by external specialist services to enable access to learning.
- Services linked to our Additional Learning Services team, e.g. Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officers, counselling, student mentors, Student Finance Advisors, Student Engagement team etc.
- Adaptation of all learning materials by the Curriculum teams and/or Support Teams, including access to all electronic media, e-learning resources and assistive technology provided by the Learning Support Team, or available in our Libraries.
- Exam Access Arrangements.
- Adjustments made by other support areas (e.g. IT Services/Estates).
- Support to access activities such as enrichment and work experience.
- Reviews of support plans and the setting of personalised targets to assist in preparation for adulthood, including further studies or employment.
- Ability to speak in confidence to staff about their support needs. This information will not be shared without their consent, unless there are safeguarding concerns.

3. Definitions

3.1 A student with additional learning needs is someone who requires reasonable adjustments to the support over and above that which is usually provided by the teacher. This may be due to a disability or difficulty.

3.2 Disability is defined under the Equality Act 2010 as "a physical or mental impairment that has a "substantial" and "long term" negative effect on your ability to do normal every day activities, that have existed for 12 months or more, or likely to do so".

NSCG recognise that some additional learning needs may be temporary due to illness or injury. In this case where the effects of the additional need have a substantial effect on the students' ability to access learning at an appropriate level and make progress, additional learning support can still be provided.

3.3 ALS (Additional Learning Support) - The College defines this as the support that is provided to the students with SEND, to make reasonable adjustments.

3.4 SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) – The College defines students with SEND as those that the college has identified as needing additional learning support, or where the college is making reasonable adjustments to ensure that they are achieving in line with their peers. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (0-25 years) 2014 states that: "A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning disability or difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her". EHCP (Education Health and Care Plans) – An EHCP is a statutory document to support learners with SEND that are supported and monitored by the local Authority.

3.5 LST (Lead Support Tutor) – LSTs have an allocated case load of learners with SEND, and are responsible for identifying the individual support packages for learners, and for monitoring the learner journey to ensure that reasonable adjustments are identified.

3.6 LSA (Learning Support Assistant) – LSAs are supervised by and assigned to LSTs to support learners with SEND, and have identified strategies to work with learners that are a reasonable adjustment provided by the College.

3.7 A Support Plan is designed by the ALS Team to advise staff on the adjustments needed for students with disabilities and learning difficulties, SEND and includes bespoke documentation for those students classified as High Needs

4.0 Access Routes to Additional Learning Support

- 4.1 Additional Learning Support will be available to all students that declare that they have a need, a disability, learning difficulty or health requirement if they meet the entry requirements of their chosen course, and can access their chosen course with the help of “reasonable adjustments” by the College (subject to resources).
- 4.2 Assessments for students with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) or students with complex support needs, should be completed prior to enrolment to ensure that the college can meet their needs and that there is a smooth transition into education.
- 4.3 All students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties that disclose their needs will be offered an initial assessment of their learning support needs. Where appropriate and within funding rules they should be entitled to:
- A specialist Support Tutor/Practitioner to act as a key contact and oversee their support at College.
 - A support plan outlining the recommendations to Curriculum Teams on how best to support them, and what support will be available to them.
 - Their support plan being followed by curriculum and support staff.
 - Reviews of their support plan and the setting of personalised targets to assist in their preparation for adulthood.
 - Risk assessment being undertaken, where attendance on their chosen course may pose a risk to themselves or others.
 - Apply for exam access arrangements with support from Teachers, if appropriate evidence is available to fulfil examination board requirements, including a picture of how the student works in lessons.
 - Decline the support offered to them, unless there is a safeguarding risk.

The ALS Team does provide specialist support for medical needs and personal care. Where a learner needs to attend College with these needs, all reasonably practicable efforts will be taken to meet these needs.

4.4 Higher Education Programmes

Students requiring support will need to apply for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and should also be referred to Additional Learning Support Team.

DSAs are available to full-time or part-time HE students and provide funding for goods and services that may be needed to enable you to access your programme of study; for example learning support and a computer with specialist software if you are dyslexic or a communication support worker if you are deaf or hearing impaired. For further information see: <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>

You may be eligible for DSA if you have any of the following:

- Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia
- Developmental conditions such as Autism, ADHD
- Mental health difficulties Mobility difficulties
- Hearing impairments
- Visual impairments
- Other disabilities and long-term medical conditions
- Other medical and psychological conditions not mentioned on this list may be covered by DSA.

There is no age limit on getting a DSA.

It is the responsibility of the student to make an application to the DSA, although students can seek assistance from college staff. Students should apply for the DSA as soon as they can as the process can take up to 3 months. Once a DSA application has been concluded, students should share the report with their teachers so that they can work with the ALS Team to assess the reasonable adjustments that need to be put in place as a consequence.

Students that have an additional learning support need that does not require a DSA should be referred to Additional Learning Support to assess the reasonable adjustments that can be provided.

Higher Education students are responsible for being pro-active and timely in responding to the requests from the ALS Team and applying for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and the Technical Needs Assessment (TNA) with ALS support and guidance.

Students who have commissioned their support through external agencies such as Randstad should notify their teachers.

If a student wishes to have their support delivered at the college site, they should notify the Head of Additional Learning Support as soon as possible and at least one week prior to appointment. The Head of Additional Learning Support will communicate whether the college can accommodate. The visiting external support agency worker will need to go through safeguarding and visitor processes and must report to reception on arrival of any of the college sites.

Where external agencies provide support, it is not the responsibility of NSCG to ensure that the support is correct.

On receipt of the DSA report the Head of Additional Learning Support will action any outcomes as per the recommendations. Where additional support has been granted by the DSA the funding will be credited directly to the supplier, for example, for equipment this will be purchased directly from the course, for 1:1 support provided by a third party or for travel, such as taxis, this will be paid directly to the taxi company.

If you are unsure if you are eligible to apply for a DSA, or have any queries about the application process, speak to a member of the Additional Learning Support team or email spldqueries@nscg.ac.uk

4.5 Apprenticeships

Students requiring learning support on Apprenticeships should be referred into the ALS Team (Lead Support Tutor for apprenticeships) in the usual way for assessment prior to starting their learning programme.

The Additional Learning Support Team will assess students and allocate support levels as appropriate.

Students that do not declare disability and/or learning difficulty at application stage, or do declare but do not engage with assessment prior to entry, should be referred to the ALS Team by Tutor/Assessors if the student is experiencing difficulties at any point of their learning.

4.6 Subcontracted Provision

In subcontracted provision, partners must ensure that mechanisms are in place that capture the additional needs of students at both their starting points and on programme. Where appropriate subcontractors should provide a range of support interventions that ensures students are not disadvantaged and can continue to learn and achieve at the same rate as their peers. In instances where the subcontracted provider cannot provide the support by students, or they are delivering on either of the main college sites, students should be referred to the Additional Learning Support Team via the usual referral process.

At any time during the subcontracted arrangement, the College will expect to receive a full understanding of the progress and achievement of learners in receipt of support in order to understand impact; this will be addressed as part of regular quality and due diligence meetings held throughout the academic year. The quality of additional learning support may also be considered in line with quality assurance measures agreed as part of due diligence.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Assessors

All College employees have a duty to support students with SEND requirements, making reasonable adjustments where required.

5.1 Curriculum Teams:

Ensure that Additional Learning Support is not considered as a resource used to compensate for a lack of entry requirements for courses as published, nor learning support needs considered as a factor to withhold a place where the student has necessary entry requirements as published on the website and in the prospectus. If there are concerns that the place at college would not be suitable for their age, ability, aptitude or SEND, or that to accept them would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources or the efficient education of others, the interviewer(s) should hold a place and refer the applicant to the Additional Learning Support Manager.

Must make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, seeking advice from the ALS Team where necessary;

Must collaborate with the Additional Learning Support Team to set SMART targets for learners with EHCP's to measure progress towards EHCP Outcomes (including English and maths)

Must consider the targets of EHCP students and embed these into their planning.

Refer students to the Additional Learning Support Team where the student is experiencing difficulties

Familiarise themselves with their student's needs, through use of information available to them on the student's Promonitor and available from the student's Lead Support Tutor, to inform how they liaise with and direct in-class support effectively

Must use the strategies provide to make reasonable adjustment for students with SEND.

Ensure that the Lead Support Tutor is invited to all meetings including disciplinary or Support to Study meetings with students who have SEND, to ensure that reasonable adjustments are in place and reviewed.

Where appropriate complete exam access arrangements referrals with the student following college guidelines, seeking assistance from the Head of Additional Learning Support and Exams Teams where necessary.

Collate and provide evidence to support applications for exam access arrangements

Liaise with any Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) allocated to their lessons promptly to ensure quality support for their students, providing them with course materials and making their role in lessons clear to them.

Where possible, provide students and allocated LSAs advance notice of timetable changes, so as to be able to prepare their students for change and ensure resources remain efficient.

Notify the Additional Learning Support Manager for advice and guidance when a student with disabilities and/or learning difficulties or if they have an EHCP, is at risk of not completing or is facing any disciplinary action.

5.2 Lead Support Tutors have the responsibility to:

Complete a robust initial assessment of support to ensure that students need can be met.

Set targets for learners with EHCPs, that enable them to become as independent as possible and prepare them for next stage of study or employment. Reviewing and recording progress towards targets on a termly basis.

Own and monitor the support of students within their caseload, notifying the ALS Manager if there are any issues with LSAs working with these students in collaboration with the class teachers

Ensure that the provision for students with EHCPs is in place as stated in their EHCP and where the plan needs amending, hold an early review to ensure that provision or new outcomes are reflected in the plan.

Ensure the eligibility of students in receipt of additional learning support, and ensure levels of support being recommended can be funded prior to any verbal agreement with students

Record the support delivered and other appropriate information onto the student's Promonitor to inform the curriculum areas

Meet with Curriculum Tutors and share strategies and support needs of the students on case load.

Seek ways to support students that encourage their independence, and adjust levels of support appropriately.

Encourage the use of assistive technology support, and review the success of this resource before recommending human assistance.

Advise staff and managers on appropriate strategies in making "reasonable adjustments", to support young people with SEND, prior to submitting a recommendation for human assistance unless stated within their EHCP.

5.3 Learning Support Assistants have the responsibility to:

Liaise and collaborate with curriculum staff and Lead Support Tutor to ensure the effectiveness of the support they are providing.

Ensure they are familiar with the content of support plans, High Needs support plans, and EHCPs where applicable, and record the support they deliver to students onto the relevant college systems.

Monitor and record the progress of supported students towards their targets.

Refer any students to the associated Lead Support Tutor that they identify in class, as having a potential need or experiencing difficulties

Refer any students to the associated Safeguarding and Wellbeing officer where safeguarding concerns are identified.

Support students in a manner that reinforces the rules of the classroom, under the direction and in line with the teacher to consistently have high expectations of students and encourage independence.

Comply with college policy and procedure.

5.4 The Additional Learning Support Management Team have the responsibility to:

Ensure that students applying to college that have an EHCP are assessed to ensure that the college can meet their needs

Ensure the college allocates resources efficiently and effectively in response to current priorities and the requirements of those students with EHCPs

Alert the Continuous Professional Development Team of the need for specific continuing professional development (CPD) events for college staff.

Ensure confidentiality of record keeping and compliance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

Ensure that additional learning support is being managed in a consistent, fair and transparent way.

Promote College awareness of the Special Educational Needs (SEND) Code of Practice and other relevant legislation

Collaborate with the Local Authority positively so as to make its best endeavours to ensure all students receive the support required in their preparation for adulthood

Collect and record evidence of learning support that complies with the requirements of funding bodies.

Ensure that they have due regard to the SEND Code of Practice.

Admit a student to the College if the institution is named on the EHCP

Review the Local Offer annually and collaborate with the Local Authority

Providing training to ensure that high quality teaching is available to all learners.

Ensure that appropriate resource is available to meet the needs of all students with SEND.

6.0 Our Commitment to Students and Parents

NSCG is committed to a policy of equality, inclusion and accessibility in the delivery of services. NSCG has an open and welcoming policy towards applicants who may have a physical or learning disability or mental health issues and recognises the rights of all students to be treated equally regardless of disability. All reasonable adjustments to provision will be made to ensure that disabled students and other disabled people are not disadvantaged. Our effectiveness NSCG was praised by Ofsted for providing “outstanding support and care for learners”. In 2024 Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG) has achieved the top grades in every area of Ofsted’s Inspection Framework (EIF). Overall, NSCG is rated as 'Outstanding'!

NSCG has regard to the Equality Act (2010) through the commitments set out in the Equality Scheme 2022- 2024 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and the Code of Practice (0-25 years) 2014 when carrying out duties towards SEND Students.

7.0 Frequently asked questions

How does the College know if young people need extra help and what should I do if I think I/my child may have special educational needs?

NSCG has excellent links with local schools and provides transition support to parents/guardians. If you/your child meets the necessary entry requirements for our wide range of courses, then we can work with you to eliminate any barriers to joining that course. For example, we can support students who have:

- Autism
- Asperger’s Syndrome
- Dyscalculia
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Emotional or behavioural difficulties
- Learning disabilities
- Mental health difficulties
- Other medical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes and asthma
- Physical Disabilities
- Sensory impairments (vision and hearing)
- Speech and communication difficulties

How will College staff support my child/young person?

Before you/ your child enrolls on a course we can:

- Arrange for you/your child to visit the college to see our outstanding facilities and meet the teaching and support staff to discuss your/your child's needs.
- Involve your school's Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), parents, guardians, carers or anyone else necessary to make sure that you have the right amount of support.
- Arrange for a taster on the chosen programme to help with the decision making.

At college you/your child will be assigned a named person who will work with you and your family to ensure that your needs are being met. We also work with other agencies and specialists when necessary. Understanding that each student is different, we tailor our support to the individual and review throughout the year to ensure the right level of support continues and is adapted to their changing needs.

What transition support is available once my child has completed their course?

During your/your child's final year on the course we will arrange an exit review to help you plan the next stage, providing individual advice and guidance on progression routes for further study, careers, employment or other options. We will also assess the quality of the support you have received.

If you are progressing to higher education, such as HNC/HND, Foundation Degree or Degree at college or university, then we can help with the transition and ensure you have access to any available funding. We offer Interviews with a member of the Additional Learning Support Team to discuss what you would like to do next and arrange appointments with Entrust Careers Service. Referrals to Social Services with regard to day services provision, sheltered employment and housing needs. Information and advice about supported and open employment opportunities.

How will the curriculum be matched to my/my child's needs?

We offer a full range of courses to suit the learner's goals, whether that's to live independently, progress to university or gain employment. That means we offer Entry Level 1 to Level 4 Higher Education and work with you to eliminate any barriers. For example, the student can mix their studies with personal development and life skills such as cooking and budget planning. We can provide support for enrichment activities including college trips, sports and clubs.

How will parents know how their child is doing and how will the College help support their child's learning?

At NSCG, we understand the challenges facing young people and aim to provide parents with as much information as possible. We feel that as parents and guardians, it is vital that you are kept informed of learner progress. There will also be two parents' evenings during the year where you will have the opportunity to discuss individual learners' progress with staff teams.

What support will be there for my/my child's overall well-being?

Support depends on individual needs. The support ratio can be from 1:1 to 1:9 in a classroom depending on the young person's individual needs. We can provide:

- Small class sizes (around 8-10 learners per class) with a learning support assistant and tutor to make sure the appropriate support is provided.
- An exciting enrichment programme that includes a range of physical and creative activities. Support will be provided to ensure that the learner is able to take part fully. Help with assessment papers.
- Support with personal care needs.
- Support during lunch and break times.
- Help to improve community awareness and social skills.
- Travel training to and from work experience placements.
- Voluntary work placements to help develop work related skills.
- A personal tutor who will help you/your child set targets and monitor progress. Support from outside agencies such as psychologists, community nurses and advocacy services if required.

What specialist services and expertise are available at College?

All our staff are appropriately qualified and are observed as part of our quality review system, to ensure their skills are current and effective. They can provide specialist equipment, facilities and access including:

- Dictaphones and electronic voice recorders.
- Hearing induction loops embedded in key areas throughout the college.
- A portable loop system communicator is also available.
- Laptop computers
- Radio aids
- Software to support students with dyslexia – Read Write is accessible on all student computers.
- Super Nova Software for visually impaired learners.
- Text in different formats such as Braille, large text or on tape or disk.

How accessible is the college environment?

The following are available:

- Accessible shower facilities.
- Accessible toilet facilities
- Fire evacuation equipment.
- Fire evacuation refuge points on all staircases
- Passenger lifts at convenient points throughout the main building designed to avoid steps and ramps
- Wide corridors suitable for wheelchair access.