

MEETING LEARNERS' SUPPORT NEEDS POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT:

EKC Group has a commitment to provide all learners, with fair and equal opportunities to support their educational aspirations. EKC promotes learner independence and preparation for adulthood and employment in all aspects of learning by supporting learners to take responsibility for using the learning resources available. EKC is committed to providing learning programmes that are designed to meet the needs and aspirations of all learners.

Specific conditions and the support available are detailed within the EKC Group Accessibility Statement. External professionals provide advice, training and individual therapy programmes where required.

This policy details:

- Learners that the policy relates to
- Legal definitions of special needs and disability
- Documents associated with the policy
- learners that the policy relates to
- The Three Tiers of teaching and Support
- Identifying learners who require learning support
- Applicants with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Evaluation and effectiveness of the provision
- Assessing and reviewing progress
- Teaching learners with support needs
- Adapting the curriculum and learning environment
- Resources to support learners
- Staff with responsibility to support learners
- Staff qualifications
- Funding to support learners with needs
- Enabling learners with needs to engage in wider college activities
- Welfare support for learners
- Dealing with concerns

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SEN/SEND and Disability refers to the published definitions used in the Children's and Families Act and the SEN Code of Practice

Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

A child or learner has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a learner has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- (a) Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than many others of the same age; or
- (b) Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions SEN Code of Practice (2014, p4).

Definition of disability

Many children and learners who have SEN may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is 'a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial' SEN Code of Practice (2014, p5).

This policy relates to learners within its Junior Colleges, learners aged 16 to 19 years, adult learners, Supported Interns and Apprentices, looked after young people, carers who are learners and those for whom education is a second language.

- Who may have experienced barriers to learning and challenges within school and life
- Who had SEN Support Needs and received support in school and may have a diagnosis of a specific condition
- Who have an EHCP which details their condition and statutory expectations to meet their needs

Conditions may include Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder, Downs syndrome, cognitive Learning difficulties, speech, language and communication needs, sensory, physical, medical needs

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This policy is complemented by associated documents:

- Admissions policy
- Accessibility Statement
- Safeguarding policy
- Individual Support Plan Procedure
- Administration of Medication Policy and Procedure
- Personal Needs Plan Procedure
- Managing Education Health Care Plan Procedure
- Personal and Health Care Manual and associated Procedures
- Positive Management of support for Behaviours that Challenge Policy and Procedure
- Kent County Council's 'local offer' is published on the KELSI website

EKC provides three tiers of teaching and support:

1. **Universal Level:** it is expected that, all teachers are teachers of SEND and lecturers will plan and teach to meet the needs of all learners within their programmes. Inclusive Learning staff provide information on the learner's needs and support lecturers to understand and adapt teaching to meet learners needs.
2. **Targeted Level:** It is recognised that some learners will require short term interventions from lecturers, learning coaches or support staff that will enable them to practice, learn new skills and concepts through small group or individual activities.
3. **Specialist Level:** learning for life and work readiness programmes are provided for learners with cognitive learning needs from pre-entry to entry 3. Learners with an elevated level of need on vocational programmes will attend personal social achievement classes in addition to their vocational programme. These classes are focussed on learners achieving targets to meet outcomes within their EHCP, with interventions and strategies This time is focused on developing EHCP outcomes. with interventions and strategies delivered by lecturers, specialist tutors, and speech therapists who are trained to meet learner's specific needs.

Most learners on vocational programmes across colleges and EKC Training will have their needs met through universally embedded support, access the Universal Level of support with some targeted provision provided by Learning Coaches, Specialist Tutors for Dyslexia, Autism and SEMH. Learners with an elevated level of need on Vocational

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and Inclusive Learning Programmes will receive the specialist level of teaching and support in small groups with lecturers skilled to teach learners with cognitive learning needs from pre-entry to Entry 3.

Identifying learners who require learning support

All learners including those with an EHCP, who apply for a programme of study at an EKC Group college or EKC Training are asked to identify a support need on the online application form. This alerts Inclusive learning staff of the need for a support meeting. A member of staff from the team will meet with the applicant to identify the support required and strategies to meet needs. Curriculum staff may give a conditional programme offer which is dependent on exam results, EKC being able to meet needs within the EHCP and any safeguarding concerns being followed up.

Teaching and support staff are responsible for putting in place any reasonable adjustments should this be a prerequisite to a learner's start at college.

Reasonable adjustments may include; adaptations to a room, equipment, presentation of learning materials prior to class, BSL signer, teacher of the deaf, in class support specific methods of teaching, and supporting learners with cognitive and neurodiverse learning needs.

Inclusive Learning staff will write an Individual Support Plan for a learner with an elevated level of need who requires support and interventions beyond the universal level of teaching and support provided. Evidence must be sourced to support the requirement for an Individual Support Plan.

Applicants with an Education Health Care Plan

Whilst learners with an EHCP should apply for a college programme (as for all other learners), decisions on the education placement of learners with an EHCP are made through the statutory consultation process, which is managed by the local authority. This process commences in the autumn prior to the learner leaving school.

Pupils should apply for a college and programme of their choice through the Kent Choices website. Following application and invitation for a college assessment day the pupil will be invited for interview. They will either be met with college staff on the day for a support meeting or receive a separate support meeting date.

Inclusive Learning Support staff work with schools and where possible attend year 10 annual review meetings where the EHCP and transition opportunities are discussed.

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Early meetings with schools are held to identify the learners who are planning to progress to college.

Following this, activities will be organised to help the learner to transition into college.

EKC may decline a consultation when it considers that it is unable to meet the learner's needs and outcomes. This may be due to the suitability of the environment, significant health, or safeguarding concerns that impact on the learner, other learners, and staff. In all instances the college will first consider any "reasonable adjustments" that can be made to enable the learner to attend and achieve.

When consulted Inclusive Learning staff will contact the school and other services to obtain additional information and request that the learner attend college to discuss their support needs.

For learners who have an EHCP parents have a statutory right to appeal against a Local Authority's decision to name an education placement that they consider does not meet their child's needs. Any appeal against a local authority decision must be made directly to the local authority following their appeals process.

Evaluation and effectiveness of the provision for learners with Learning Support Needs

Judgements on the quality and effectiveness of provision are made by Ofsted within the Ofsted cycle of inspections. Annually, all areas within the EKC Group self-assess the effectiveness of provision for which the Governors are notified of the outcomes.

Termly subject pathway walks and Progress Reviews contribute to the assessment of the effectiveness of a programme of learning, teaching, support, and performance against inclusive standards

Assessing and reviewing the progress of learners with support needs

All Learners' academic progress is continually monitored and reviewed by lecturers, and learners informed of their attainment and any actions required. Parents/carers are invited to meet with curriculum staff to discuss learner's progress. Learners with an EHCP have an annual review for which the learner is prepared and able to contribute to any changes. Parents, carers, and professionals are invited to Annual Reviews. Some learners with a higher level of learning need may require parent/carer support with their decision making.

The purpose of the annual review is to discuss progress, attainment in subject and learner EHCP outcomes. A record will be made of changes to needs and preparation for transition to next steps. Where appropriate the meeting will include the continuing need for an EHCP. At any stage, learners support needs will be reviewed, and support adapted accordingly to the learner's progression. Changes to provision will be recorded, which may include a reduced level of interventions e.g. speech therapy, support in class.

At a parent, / carer's request an early EHCP Annual Review may be called to discuss the learners changing needs, suitability of placement and if necessary, a request to the LA for a change of placement Justification for change may include low or nonattendance, not progressing, aspects of behaviour. Details of the annual review outcome are documented and shared with all attendees as a draft and sent to the local authority for approval to any changes made.

College staff will respond to the local authority when asked to complete an Appendix 2 when a learner and parents seek an assessment for an EHCP.

Parents/ Carers are encouraged to engage with the learner's learning through the 'Parent Portal.'

If at any stage a learner is not progressing or engaging with learning, a meeting will be held with the learner, parent/carer to address the points of concern and adjustments put in place.

EKC Group's disciplinary policy will be followed for all learners should the need arise and with evidence of reasonable adjustments having been made. The local authority will be informed of any concerns related to the suitability of the placement and changing needs.

Storage of Information

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All information disclosed for the purpose of providing learning support will be stored electronically in the learner's on-line folder in accordance EKC Policy and national Data Protection legislation.

Teaching learners with support needs

Inclusive Learning staff are available to support lecturers and support staff on adapting resources and planning teaching to meet learners needs. The partnership of learning support with the curriculum contributes to the quality of teaching and learning. All learner support documents are held on the EKC Group, information system and are available for staff to view. This identifies the support strategies to enable the lecturer to meet learner needs. Learners with an Education Health Care Plan and SEN Support needs will be supported to build on their personal skills through personal and social achievement activities where the plan identifies a need. EKC supports learners to increase their independence and to reduce the reliance on support from staff. Learners will be taught to become proficient in the use of assistive technology when entitled to exam access arrangements and to develop skills for employment.

Adapting the curriculum and learning environment

Adaptations can be made to enable learners to access the curriculum e.g., producing work in Braille, use of coloured overlays. Where feasible, adaptations can be made to the facilities to enable safe access for learners with sensory and or physical needs.

In addition, an Inclusive Learning curriculum is available for learners with cognitive and complex learning needs at Broadstairs, Folkestone and Canterbury Colleges. All college have a hub for learners who experience a prominent level of anxiety and/or sensory needs and for learners with language and communication needs. All colleges have support for learners with social, emotional, and mental health needs.

Resources to support learners

Details on the equipment and support available can be found in the EKC Accessibility Statement.

For highly specialised communication equipment the EKC Group will seek the advice of the local authority communication and Assistive Technology team and other external agencies.

EKC has a sensory room at Canterbury and Folkestone Colleges.

Staffing

Where the need is identified:

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Speech and Language Therapists and communication learning support Practitioners provide language therapy.

Clinical Practitioner advises on learner's medical need and health related resources.

Learning Support Practitioners provide in and out of class support, personal and complex care.

Specialist tutors for dyslexia, autism, and SEMH.

Qualifications required and training related to support roles

All teaching and support staff are qualified to meet the expectations of their role and annually undertake training.

Working with external agencies

External professionals are engaged to advise on adaptations to equipment or facilities and to provide specific interventions:

- STLS Sensory: supporting teaching and learning support service
- Qualified Teacher for the Visually Impaired, Teacher for the Deaf,
- Kent Communication Assistive Technology Team (CAT)
- NHS Occupational Therapists/Physiotherapists
- Kent Association for the Blind (KAB)
- Hi Kent
- IASK (independent advice service for parents/carers and learners)
- CAMHS
- NHS Continuing Health Care

Funding support for learners with a higher level of need

The local authority has responsibility to ensure that where required, high needs Funding is allocated to meet the needs of learners requiring a high level of support, (aged 0 – 25 years, who are in receipt of an Education Health Care Plan), and other learners to 19 years who have a clearly identified high level of need.

Enabling learners with learning needs to engage in work experience and extra-curricular activities

EKC will endeavour to support all learners to access work experience which is integral to their programme of study and other educational extra-curricular activities, here

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there is evidence of need the college will provide staff support to enable safe participation in the activity.

Welfare Support for all learners

All learners are allocated a mentor who has responsibility for learner welfare. The mentor, with the learner's permission, will liaise directly with parents /carers. A college counsellor can be available, with support from the well-being centre. A referral can be made to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Early Intervention and Psychosis Team, with access to the safeguarding team if required. EKC Clinical Practitioner advises and trains staff in specific personal health care related needs. Learners can contact Support Services regarding funding welfare support: including bursary, travel costs, support with paying for consumables relating to their course and childcare. Prior to starting college, parents /carers of learners with an elevated level of need contact the local authority travel department to discuss support with travel.

Dealing with Concerns

We value contributions and work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure learners fulfil their potential. Staff make parents/carers aware of the staff member and communication channels to use when there is a problem, in line with EKC [Parent Charter](#). This is usually the Head of Department. If matters are not resolved after working directly with the department, they can be escalated to a formal complaint using our published [Complaints Policy](#).