Provision of Learning Support Policy
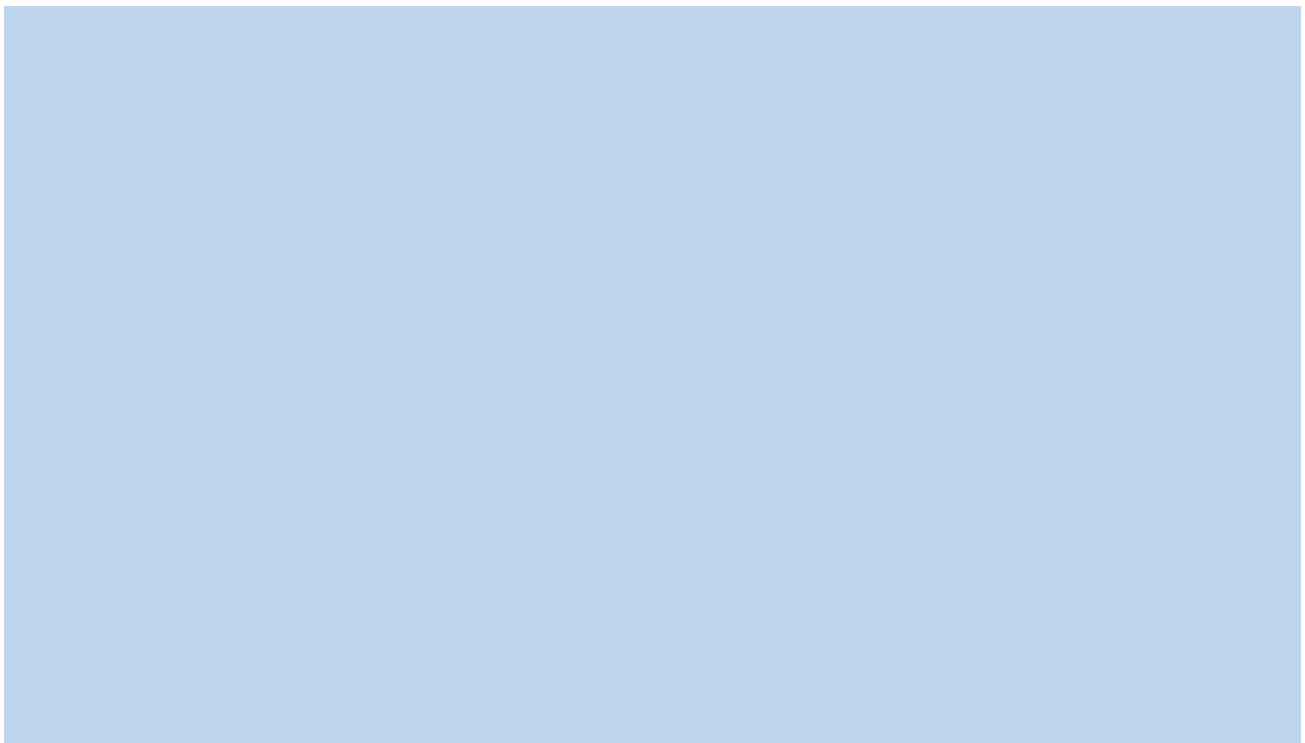
Learning support provision for students with disabilities and/or learning difficuties

Bradford College

Document change control

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Revision history

Version	Type (e.g. replacement, revision etc…)	Date	History (reason for changes)
2.0	Revision	Sept 2017	Major Revision due to new legislation
2.1	Revision	Jan 2020	Updates to common terminology internally and externally to the college

Monitoring and review

• This policy will be reviewed by the College Senior Leadership Team at least every 2 years.

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

1.1 Bradford College has well-developed Learning Support provision;

1.2 The Equality Act (2010) and increased public awareness of disability rights have placed more demands on educational establishments;

1.3 This policy sets out how the College will aim to continue to maintain our standards for learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties at a time of both increasing demand and probable funding cuts in both the FE and HE sectors.

2. **DEFINITIONS:**

2.1 The term **"Learning Support"** as used in this policy describes a broad range of support on offer to students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties at Bradford College. This includes, but is not limited to:

(i) the range of adjustments to be made by teaching staff (e.g. providing copies of PowerPoint notes before a lesson, ensuring resources are up to date, of the appropriate standard, and in an accessible format);

(ii) the adapting of materials into Braille, enlarged text or modified English by the Learning Support Team;

(iii) the assistive technology provided by the SEND and Additional Learning Support Team, or available in the College Library;

(iv) access arrangements in examinations (extra time, technology, scribe, reader etc.);

(v) the reduction of class sizes (e.g. in the case of the discrete courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities);

(vi) support on visits, work placements or residentials;

(vii) the provision of in-class or out-of-class support by a member of the SEND and Additional Learning Support Team (e.g. Learning Assistant, Communication Support Worker, Mentor);

(viii) the interpretation and implementation of a range of support strategies to ensure the needs and outcomes of young people with Education Health and Care (EHC) Plans are met, in line with local authority contracting;

(ix) the adjustments to be made by staff in central service areas (e.g. Libraries, IT Services) and ensuring access to all electronic media and learning resources;

2.2   In addition please note the following definitions of jargon or key words and abbreviations used in this policy:

Jargon / Key Word / Abbreviation	Definition
"Students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties"	The term used to describe students who need adjustments making for them at College due to a disability or learning difficulty.
"Learning Support Team" or "Learning Support Professional"	The term used for the SEND and Additional Learning Support Team. It includes all staff that work within that team.
"High Needs"	A student with high needs is defined as a young person aged 16 to 18 who requires additional support costing over £6,000 and any young person aged 19 to 24 subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan, who requires additional support costing over £6,000. In all cases this has been agreed with the young person's home local authority.
"SEN" or "SEND"	The abbreviation for Special Educational Needs or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
"EHC Plan"	The abbreviation for an Education, Health and Care Plan.
"ESFA"	The abbreviation used for the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
"CPD"	The abbreviation used for Continuing Professional Development.
"Learning Support Agreement"	The document drawn up between staff in the ALS Team and individual students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. It can advise teaching staff on the adjustments needed for students in the classroom.
"Disability Friendly Checklist"	A document that enables teaching staff to self-assess their own practice in providing a disability friendly teaching environment.
"Mainstreaming"	The term used to describe an inclusive and anticipatory approach to disability equality where disability practice is embedded and not just an add-on for individual learners.
"Disabled Students' Allowance" or "DSA"	This refers to the primary source available for students with disabilities and some medical conditions on HE programmes to access specialist learning support.

3. PURPOSE

3.1   In presenting this Policy, the College seeks to:

(i)   express its full commitment to students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties;

(ii)   clarify the scope of the Learning Support available to students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties;

(iii)   outline the roles and responsibilities of staff with regard to students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties;

(iv)   demonstrate its commitment to involving students in the planning of the support they will need at college;

(v)   provide appropriately trained and qualified staff to support a range of disabilities and learning difficulties within the curriculum. Only College approved staff deliver learning support;

(vi)   develop and maintain systems that encourage students to disclose their disabilities and/or learning difficulties as part of the admissions process and preferably before starting College;

(vii)   improve outcomes for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties in terms of retention, achievement and progression to training and employment and access into or progression within HE;

(viii) continue to develop a culture of mainstreaming disability practice and express its commitment to an inclusive learning environment.

3.2   The implementation of the Learning Support Policy aims to ensure that the college:

(i)   maximises the use of a range of funding streams in supporting students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties;

(ii)   complies with the Equality Act, the SEN Code of Practice, GDPR Regulations and legislation relevant to children and vulnerable adults;

(iii)   provides learning support in a manner that continues to maintain academic standards (e.g. not doing coursework for the student but supporting the student to do it);

(iv)   seeks ways to support students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties that promote their independence and prepare them for the world of work and further study;

(v)   meets the requirement of the ESFA funding guidance/audit as well as DSA funding;

(vi)   enables students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties to have the same opportunities at College as students without those needs.

3.3   This will be achieved through:

(i)   ensuring those in receipt of support from the Learning Support Team are eligible to receive that support;

(ii)   the sharing of support staff between students, where possible, when support has been allocated in class;

(iii)   the use of assistive technology, adjustments by subject tutors or out of class support by Learning Support staff, where appropriate, to enable student independence and make economical use of resources;

(iv)   providing information to all staff in College regarding their responsibilities under the Equality Act;

(v)   the development of resources to assist curriculum teams to understand the needs of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties;

(vi)   alerting all staff to sources of advice on disability issues;

(vii)   taking into account the needs of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties when planning work placements, visits and residentials;

(viii) the continued development and implementation of systems that encourage disclosure of disabilities and/or learning difficulties before the student starts College;

(ix)   the promotion of support as early as possible in the student's programme of study;

(x)   the promotion of the services offered by the Learning Support Team;

(xi)   supporting curriculum areas to undertake risk assessments where there is a potential risk to students or staff due to the nature of the students' learning support need;

4.   ENTITLEMENT AND RIGHTS TO LEARNING SUPPORT

4.1   Learning Support will be available to all students with a disclosed disability, or learning difficulty, provided 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   In order to ensure the service is transparent and that students in receipt of Learning Support are eligible to receive such support, a formal diagnosis, or evidence of a disability, learning difficulty or medical condition will be required before Learning Support is made available.

4.3   The college is committed to taking a proactive approach in liaising with the relevant local authority to ensure that students with EHC Plans have the needs and outcomes identified on such Plans monitored and reviewed at least annually.

4.4   All students[1] with disabilities and/or learning difficulties meeting the requirements set out in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 above are entitled to:

(i)   A Learning Support Agreement outlining the support agreed between the student and the identified Learning Support Professional;

(ii)   their Learning Support Agreement being followed by teaching and support staff they are in contact with, who may need to make adjustments;

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[1] *exception being discrete entry level courses specifically for young people with SEND and undiagnosed declarations of dyslexia/disabilities/learning difficulties*

(iii)   be able to speak in confidence to staff about their support needs. This information will not be passed on to other staff or external bodies without their signed consent, unless there is a risk to their safety or that of other students and staff;

(iv)   a risk assessment being undertaken by the relevant curriculum team, where attendance on their chosen course may pose a risk to themselves or others;

(v)   access arrangements in exams, and during entry tests, if appropriate evidence is produced in advance of the exam or test to enable these arrangements to be provided;

(vi)   a Learning Support Professional from the Learning Support Team to oversee and review their support at College and whom they can contact if difficulties arise.

(vii)   decline the support offered to them, unless there is a risk to their safety or that of other students and staff;

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1   **Teaching staff, Course Leaders** and **other Curriculum staff** have the responsibility to:

(i)   make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties;

(ii)   as far as possible ensure that the learning support agreement is fulfilled;

(iii)   pro-actively liaise with and direct in-class support staff to ensure effective implementation of the Learning Support Agreement; (in the absence of the Support Agreement, due to late referral, follow 'disability friendly practice' as outlined in the guidelines on the Learning Support Intranet pages);

(iv)   provide progress updates as requested by the Learning Support Team for students who have an EHC Plan;

(v)   build comments about Learning Support into student individual progress checks, and raise causes for concern or celebration with the Learning Support Team in a timely manner;

(vi)   use strategies in making adjustments that encourage student independence and employability;

(vii)   seek advice (from staff within the Learning Support Team) when they need to develop their skills and knowledge in making adjustments;

(viii) contact the Learning Support Team to request access arrangements (If there is no Learning Support Agreement) as soon as the need is identified, highlighting the student's normal way of working within the classroom;

(ix)   make a referral (with student consent) to the Learning Support Team for students identified as needing support;

(x)   respect the student's confidentiality (unless they are a risk to themselves or others) in only passing on information to others where the student has given their permission, (usually via a signature on the Learning Support Agreement) and where it will be of benefit to them;

5.2 **Learning Support Lead Practitioners, Advisors, Specialist Assessors and Line Managers** in the Learning Support Team have the responsibility to:

(i) ensure that eligible students have a Learning Support Agreement that recommends individual teaching and learning strategies for students within their caseload;

(ii) monitor the support of students within their caseload;

(iii) ensure the eligibility of students in receipt of Learning Support;

(iv) liaise with other Learning Support staff to ensure reviews of Learning Support are undertaken at least once a term/ semester for students within their caseload;

(v) ensure Learning Support Agreements (and revisions) are shared with cross college staff as appropriate by following the departmental procedures in place, in a timely manner;

(vi) ensure the student's file is maintained by regularly updating the contents, including maintaining accurate records of support provided to students within their caseload;

(vii) collate evidence to support applications for access arrangements and provide this to the relevant person within the MIS/Student Records Team;

(viii) seek ways to support students that encourage their independence;

(ix) seek out cost effective ways of providing support to students.

5.3 **All Learning Support staff** have the responsibility to:

(i) work effectively with teaching staff to ensure effective implementation of the Learning Support Agreement;

(ii) liaise with teaching staff on issues that arise that affect the student they are supporting;

(iii) alert the relevant Learning Support Professional of any concerns/issues that occur affecting their student;

(iv) maintain timely records of support provided, particularly focussing on effective strategies employed and progress of students against needs and outcomes contained in Learning Support Agreements and/or EHC Plans;

(v) minimise disruption to classes in the course of supporting their students;

(vi) support students in a manner that ensures maintenance of academic standards and encourages independence.

5.4 **Curriculum Heads of Department, Curriculum Area Managers and Team Leaders** have the responsibility to:

(i) work with the Learning Support Team in making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties;

(ii) share the contents of the student's Learning Support Agreement (and any updates) with all teaching staff in contact with the student, including functional skills / GCSE tutors and part time staff;

(iii) provide advance notice of timetable changes so that support staff can be deployed efficiently and students can be prepared for those changes;

(iv) ensure that the entry requirements for their courses are explicit and appropriate and include a requirement for literacy and numeracy levels;

(v) change classrooms for a course, where the elected classroom is inaccessible for a student with disabilities and/or learning difficulties and the curriculum can be delivered in the changed setting;

(vi) timetable students with a need for in-class support collectively, where possible, so that support staff can be deployed effectively;

(vii) monitor the retention, achievement, success and progression of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, through the self-assessment process.

5.6 **The Head of SEND and Additional Learning Support** has the responsibility to:

(i) ensure senior managers in both FE and HE are kept up to date with changes to the local and national landscape in relation to provision of Learning Support to students with SEND;

(ii) act as the main contact with all relevant local authorities to ensure that early identification of students with high needs and those with EHC Plans can take place and appropriate transition arrangements can be put in place;

(iii) advise staff and managers on appropriate strategies in making "reasonable adjustments";

(iv) promote fair distribution across College of Learning Support resources;

(v) utilise the resources available for Learning Support effectively and appropriately;

(vi) alert the Staff Development Team of the need for specific CPD events that meet the needs of staff groups and the disabled student profile;

(vii) ensure confidentiality of record keeping and compliance with the Data Protection Act;

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1 The provision of Learning Support will be monitored and evaluated via the College's self-assessment process in order to:

(i) make continuous improvements to the quality of Learning Support provided;

(ii) improve the procedures by which Learning Support is organised;

(iii) ensure the effective use of resources allocated to the Learning Support Team;

(iv) measure the retention, achievement, success and progression rates of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties;

(v) identify achievement gaps and take action to address;

6.2   The eligibility of those in receipt of support and the production of Learning Support Agreements for and with students will be monitored via the College's internal audit processes.

7. COMMUNICATION

7.1   The Learning Support Policy will be communicated to staff via: SLT and the wider CMT, the central college Induction, the FE Tutor Handbook, the ALS Team Handbook, the Equality and Diversity Committee, and the Staff Intranet.

RELATED POLICIES:

Disclosure and Confidentiality Policy (Students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties only)