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1. **Overview**

The Additional Learning Support team is part of a network of support services available to all students at Ashton Sixth Form College. We have experienced, professional staff dedicated to providing support for students with additional needs.

Support can range from giving specialist tuition for students who have specific learning difficulties, to making sure that learners who have mobility difficulties or medical conditions can get around college.

We work closely with schools, external agencies, college teachers and senior tutors to make sure that we offer a high level of support to meet individual needs.

The college has an information system in place called ProMonitor which all staff have access to. We use this to make sure that all staff know which students have support needs and how to meet those needs.

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1. **Supporting your learning**

At Ashton Sixth Form College, experienced, dedicated staff provide Additional Learning Support. We have three qualified teachers who work with learners on a one to one basis or to small groups in our quiet, welcoming support area in the Geoff Higgins building. Two of these staff are qualified dyslexia teachers and assessors. We also have qualified Learning Support Assistants who support students in their classes where it is needed.

We offer support for students with:

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| * Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia * Hearing and visual impairments | * Autistic spectrum disorders * Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) * Physical, medical and mental health conditions |

We work very closely with Tameside Sensory Support Services. They advise us on how to support learners who have hearing or sight problems. They guide us on how to adapt handouts for students who have poor eyesight, and they provide equipment for students who have hearing difficulties. They also train our staff so that they can support students who have hearing or sight problems.

We also work closely with the Communication, Language and Autistic Spectrum Support Service or CLASS to make sure that students who have autism or Asperger’s Syndrome get the right support.

In addition, we work with students who have no diagnosed conditions. We support with:

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| * Spelling * Writing * Reading | * Basic numeracy * Time management and organisation * Exam techniques |

We also offer:

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| * Assessments for dyslexia * Coloured overlay assessments for students who have difficulty reading black text on a white background * Help to apply for the Disabled Students’ Allowance for students going on to university | * Arrangements for personal care needs * Special exam arrangements including extra time, readers, use of a word processor, writer, rest breaks, enlarged papers |

We provide a range of equipment that we lend to students including:

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| * Laptops * Voice recorders | * Specialist software packages * Radio hearing aids |

We provide support for students when they go on college trips and visits. This may include accompanying students to conferences, open days, educational visits or trips in this country or overseas.

Teaching and support staff have an ongoing programme of training, provided by the Additional Learning Support team or outside agencies. This makes sure they are expert in working with students who have a wide range of learning difficulties, disabilities or conditions.

Ashton Sixth Form College is fully accessible to wheelchair users or those with restricted mobility. All buildings have lift and ramp access and there is ample parking reserved for disabled drivers.

All vocational students complete work experience placements as part of their course. We also support A level students who want to find work experience placements. Students who have learning difficulties or disabilities have the same opportunities as all other students for work experience placements.

Our Employment and Enterprise team liaises with students, their parents/carers, teachers and the Additional Learning Support team to ensure that the placement is appropriate for the student’s needs. We carry out risk assessments on all work placement providers and ensure that staff at the placement have training so that the student’s needs are met. We communicate to work placement employers any essential information about a student’s condition. This may be where they have medical needs or where adaptations are required. However, unless such communication is essential, we respect the student’s right to confidentiality.

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1. **Reviewing your support**

If a young person has an Education, Health and Care plan, the Additional Learning Support team will make sure that appropriate support is put in place so that the student is given every opportunity to reach their full potential. We will review this support informally on an ongoing basis, and **a formal review will take place at least once a year**. This review will include a discussion between the support worker in college, the student, their parents or carers, and where appropriate their senior tutor, teachers, and any relevant outside agencies including social services, healthcare providers, mental health teams, careers organisations and sensory support services.

In addition we will provide appropriate support for students who have a need but who do not have an Education, Health and Care plan. We will discuss with the young person, and if appropriate their parents or carers, how we will support them and we will agree an action plan. Support may only be needed for a few weeks, or it may last all the time the young person is at college. We will review this support at regular intervals as fitting and always at the end of the support. This review will normally include a discussion between the young person and the member of staff who provides support, but where appropriate we will include parents or carers and any relevant outside agencies.

All students at Ashton Sixth Form College have two progress reviews each year with all of their teachers to make sure they are given every opportunity to keep on track and fulfil their potential.

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1. **Keeping you safe**

Where a student has a significant support need, such as a severe mobility problem, visual impairment or other condition which means they cannot move around college independently, a member of staff will meet them at reception at the start of the day and assist them in making their way to all their classes. At Ashton Sixth Form College we encourage students to be independent where possible, and to interact with their classmates and peers. However, if it is needed, staff will be available to support the learner in their class. At the end of the day we will bring them back to reception so they can be collected and taken home. There are reserved parking spaces close to reception and ramp access onto the college site.

The Additional Learning Support department has a small suite of quiet, welcoming rooms which we encourage vulnerable learners to use at breaks or lunchtime. Learners may use these rooms to eat their lunch, access the internet or interact with their classmates or peers.

The college Health, Safety and Welfare Manager has an overarching responsibility for health and safety within college. However, every member of staff has a responsibility to maintain the wellbeing of students. Ashton Sixth Form College has a robust **health and safety policy** to ensure that all students are kept safe while on college premises and when taking part in official activities outside college. Each activity and every area of college is risk assessed by trained, competent, qualified personnel. All sports and PE instructors complete risk assessments for sporting activities. They are sports first aid trained, and the college has a team of qualified first aiders on site. Staff organising any trips or visits complete a robust risk assessment and where there are any specific support needs they liaise with the Additional Learning Support department and Health, Safety and Welfare Manager to ensure those support needs are met.

The college has a robust **Fire Safety and Emergency Policy** to make sure that students who have restricted mobility can evacuate the college in case of emergency. As soon as the college becomes aware that a student has a mobility issue, a member of the Additional Learning Support team, and the Health, Safety and Welfare Manager meet with the student, their parents/carers and any other relevant personnel to find out the nature of their mobility needs and to draw up a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). The college Inclusive Learning Manager and the Health, Safety and Welfare Manager keep a copy of each plan and are responsible for informing, through ProMonitor, the student’s teachers, senior tutor and other relevant staff of the procedure to follow in an emergency.

Ashton Sixth Form College is committed to being an environment which is free from abuse, bullying and harassment and we do everything possible to make sure that staff and students respect and are tolerant of each other and that there is a strong sense of co-operation. Our aim is to make sure that students will feel comfortable and confident in reporting abuse, bullying and harassment of any kind.

Examples of behaviour which we will not tolerate include:

* Sarcasm and ‘put downs’
* Offensive or demeaning use of language or gestures
* Any physical or verbal assault

The college knows that cyber based bullying and abuse has become more common in modern society. The college will take any instances of such bullying/abuse very seriously and will take appropriate action in line with the **College’s Student Behaviour Policy**, or the **Disciplinary Policy** where we suspect staff are involved.

We communicate the college’s zero-tolerance stance on bullying and harassment to students in their induction and through tutorials on an ongoing basis.

We deal with bullying and harassment which relates to a disability, or which is of a sexist, racist, homophobic, ageist or religious nature as an Equality and Diversity matter.

Further information on bullying can be found in the college **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** and there is further information in our **Equality and Diversity Policy**.

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1. **Meeting your health needs**

As soon as the college becomes aware that a student has a medical issue, a member of the Additional Learning Support team, and the Health, Safety and Welfare Manager meet with the student, their parents/carers and any other relevant personnel to find out the nature of their condition and to draw up a Care Plan. The college Inclusive Learning Manager and the Health, Safety and Welfare Manager keep a copy of each plan. They are responsible for informing staff through ProMonitor of any medical issues. They provide training for the student’s teachers and other relevant staff of what to do should there be a medical emergency. We carry out training in liaison with the student, their parents/carers, and any other relevant expert personnel. First aid trained staff will only issue medication if it is specifically identified in the individual care plan.

The college has a team of trained first aiders who will provide immediate response to any medical incident. If necessary, they will follow the guidance included in the student’s care plan. Where appropriate they will provide treatment and if necessary will ensure the emergency services are called promptly.

Full information on how the college meets students’ health and safety needs is contained in the **Health and Safety Policy** and the college **First Aid Policy.**

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1. **Keeping in touch**

Each summer term the college invites Year 10 pupils to an Open Evening so that they can begin planning their next steps on leaving school. In the autumn term we invite Year 11 pupils to further Open Evenings to help them to refine their plans. Staff are available to help young people, their parents and carers to fill in the college applications form. In the spring term we invite parents of prospective students to an information evening where parents and carers can learn more about studying at Ashton Sixth Form College including the support systems which are in place.

In addition to these events, at the end of the GCSEs we invite all prospective students to a taster day so that they can gain an understanding of what it is like to be a student at Ashton Sixth Form College. The Additional Learning Support team works closely with teachers to make sure that students with learning difficulties or disabilities get the support they need at these events.

In May the Additional Learning Support department hold an Open Evening where we invite all pupils who have told us they have a support need, along with their parents/carers. At this event, pupils can learn about the support which is available, meet the Additional Learning Support team and speak to students who already have support.

Once they have started at college, all students have a senior tutor who is the first person that parents/carers can contact if they have any worries. Parents/carers can contact the young person’s senior tutor at any time to discuss progress or any concerns. In addition senior tutors call parents/carers on an ongoing basis if they need to discuss a student’s progress. At the start of each college year, we hold a welcome evening for parents of new students, where there is the opportunity to meet the student’s senior tutor.

Twice each year parents/carers receive a report on their child’s progress. Parents/carers can also access information on the student’s attendance and progress on the Parent Portal which is available on the **college website**. Furthermore, on the **college website** we have a “Contact the Tutor” link where we encourage parents/carers to get in touch if they have any questions or concerns about their child’s progress.

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1. **Working together**

We encourage parents/carers to give feedback to the college as it helps us to constantly improve the service that we provide for young people. Each year we issue an online survey, which parents/carers can access on the **college website**. We also issue exit surveys at all of our events throughout the year which give parents/carers the opportunity to express their views. Furthermore we encourage feedback through the **Contact a Tutor** link and through telephone calls or e-mails if parents/carers prefer.

We are also keen to learn students’ views on college, the support services and their course. Each year learners complete an online student survey in which they can give us their feedback. In addition, students are invited to focus groups where they can express their opinions on all aspects of the college. As well as this, the Additional Learning Support department issues an evaluation questionnaire, and we hold our own focus groups where we encourage learners who have had support to inform us of our strengths and areas we may need to improve.

The college has a Student Council which is elected each year. Their role is to represent the student voice throughout college and to make sure that students’ view are heard and acted upon.

Throughout the college application process, young people and their parents/carers can access comprehensive information, advice and guidance. In the summer term we hold an event called “Imagine Your Future” which is aimed at Year 8, 9 and 10 pupils and where we have staff from the college and a wide range of employment and education sectors. The purpose of this event is to provide young people with information, advice and guidance on the opportunities available once they have left school, and the best way of making the most of those opportunities.

At our Year 10 Open Evenings in the summer term we encourage parents/carers and young people to register an interest in Ashton Sixth Form College. At our Year 11 Evenings we have staff available to help parents/carers and young people to complete the college application form.

Once a young person has applied to come to Ashton Sixth Form College, we invite them to a guidance interview where we discuss their choice career plans and ensure that their choice of course is appropriate for their ambitions and abilities. If a student has told us they have a support need, a member of the Additional Learning Support team will be present at their interview to help answer any questions and to ensure that we give any support is needed. We encourage young people and their parents and carers to make use of the Admissions Helpline at any time once they have applied.

When the young person has received their GCSE results, further advice and guidance is available to ensure that they enrol on a course which will help them to achieve their aspirations.

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1. **Moving on from school to college to adulthood**

Each student who applies to Ashton Sixth Form College attends a guidance interview with an experienced member of staff to make sure they enrol on the most appropriate course for their ability and aspirations. Where a student discloses a support need a member of the Additional Learning Support team holds this interview to learn more about these needs and to ensure support is put in place.

All students are invited to a Taster Day at the end of the summer term so that they can find out what it is like to be a student at Ashton Sixth Form College. If a student has a particular need we invite them to attend individual visits to help with the move from school to college.

The Additional Learning Support team have close links with the secondary schools within the area. Each year, a member of the team meets the school SENCO or Head of Year 11 to identify students who may have support needs and to find out the best way to support these learners. If it is needed each of these students is contacted and invited to an individual guidance visit where they can meet their new teachers and learn all about the college environment.

We invite all students who have told us that they have a support need, along with their parents or carers, to our Additional Learning Support Open Evening where they can learn about the support which we provide, visit the Additional Learning Support area, and meet staff and current students who receive support.

The college has a Peer Mentoring scheme. Under this scheme, second year students are encouraged to apply to take on a role as mentor for new students who may be feeling alone or isolated. They will help new students to become integrated into college, make friends and take an active part in college life. The college Chaplaincy offers a quiet place for anyone who may be overwhelmed by the new experience of being in college.

As part of the college tutorial programme, we provide advice and guidance on preparing to leave college. We help students who want to go on to further study to select the right course and university. We also provide comprehensive support with applying for places. The tutorial programme also offers guidance on how to apply for student loans and other sources of finance. Where a student has a learning difficulty or disability, the Additional Learning Support team helps with the application for the Disabled Students’ Allowance, which pays for any support they may need at university.

The college has a Careers team made up of professional, dedicated careers professionals, who offer guidance on apprenticeship and careers opportunities and advise students on how to apply for these. Throughout the year the team arranges outside speakers from universities and employers to advise and guide students on the next steps towards progression. We hold a Progression Month each June where the focus of tutorials is on helping learners to prepare for the next stage in their lives.

Throughout the year the Careers team are available for one to one appointments with students to make sure they are aware of their career opportunities. They also provide guidance on completing job applications, CV writing and preparing for interviews. A member of Positive Steps, an external careers service, spends one day a week in college also preparing students for the move from college into work.

Our Employment and Enterprise team also provide guidance on employability skills to help ensure a young person is fully prepared to move on from college.

Furthermore, for those learners who are hoping to go to university, we have a **Raising Aspirations programme**. We have links with a wide range of universities, giving guidance on a variety of courses. This is designed to give students an insight into student life and help them to make informed decisions regarding university and courses.

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**9. Enriching your life**

Ashton Sixth Form College aim to enrich students’ studies with extra-curricular activities because being a student is much more than just sitting in lessons and studying. Our dedicated enrichment programme is designed to extend students’ interests in a range of activities. This can include joining one of our sports teams, representing the college as a student ambassador or peer mentor, joining the college choir or learning a new skill such as mountain biking, Japanese, archery.

All students, regardless of learning difficulty or disability, have the same opportunity to participate in our enrichment activities. Where necessary, the activity organiser will liaise with the Additional Learning Support team and the Health, Safety and Welfare Manager to ensure that students are fully supported so that they can enjoy and fully benefit from the activity.

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**10. Some case studies**

All of these case studies show the support we have provided for students from Ashton Sixth Form College. They are real students who are still at the college or who have left recently. For this reason, to protect confidentiality, we have changed their names.

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| **Visual impairment**  **Dyslexia**  **Medical**  **Mental health** | **Hearing impairment**  **Dyspraxia**  **Mobility**  **Asperger’s syndrome** |

**Visual Impairment**

**Nafisa**

During Year 10 Nafisa lost most of her eyesight. When she applied to Ashton Sixth Form College the Additional Learning Support team worked closely with Tameside Sensory Support Services to plan the best course for her and to make sure she got the support she needed.

She enrolled on a Level 2 vocational Health and Social Care course and before she started we provided training for all staff who would be working with her to make sure they knew how to support her in class. We lent her a laptop to do all her work on, and made sure all her materials were enlarged and printed on purple paper so she could read them. She had support in all her classes which was provided by Tameside Sensory Support Services learning support assistants.

While she was at college, Nafisa passed Level 2 qualifications in Maths and English, and in her first year achieved a Merit in her Health and Social Care course. This meant she could progress to Level 3, and two years later she achieved a Merit on this course as well.

Nafisa now works full time in a Primary School, supporting young children with their learning. This was what she wanted to do, even before her eyesight started to fail.

**Dyslexia**

**Todd**

Todd was diagnosed with very serious dyslexia when he was at primary school. Despite this, he did well at high school, which meant he was able to enrol on a Level 3 vocational Forensic Science course as well as resitting English.

Before he started college, we provided training on working with students who have dyslexia, for staff who would be working with Todd. We agreed with his teachers that he would have learning support assistants to support him in most of his classes. We also arranged for him to have a reader, a writer and extra time for his exams, and for the exams to be printed on lilac coloured paper. By the end of his first year he had achieved his Level 1 qualification in Functional Skills in English.

Because of his successes in the first year, and to promote his independence, we reduced his support so that learning support assistants only went into a third of his lessons. Out of class we provided guidance on applying to university and on getting the Disabled Students’ Allowance.

Todd is now predicted to gain Merits and Passes on his Forensic Science course and is hoping to gain his Level 2 in Functional Skills in English. He plans to study Forensic Chemistry at university in Manchester.

**Hearing Impairment**

**Stacey**

Stacey was born with a moderate hearing impairment and has used hearing aids for most of her life. When she enrolled on the Level 3 vocational Health and Social Care course we arranged training from Tameside Sensory Support Services for all staff who would be working with her. We also leased a radio hearing aid so that she could hear what the teachers were saying in class.

Stacey was a very independent student, and needed no extra support from the Additional Learning Support team. She was extremely successful on her course and achieved a Merit. She is now coming to the end of her course at university where she is studying to become a midwife.

**Asperger’s Syndrome**

**Adam**

Adam finds it very difficult to speak with people and feels very uncomfortable in crowds. He also struggles to organise his time as he likes to concentrate on his passion for art which meant that his other subjects could suffer.

Adam enrolled on an A level programme and before he started we arranged with the Communication, Language and Autistic Spectrum Support Service for him to visit the college. He met his future teachers, found his way around, and saw the Additional Learning Support rooms and met the staff.

Once he started college, Adam spent a lot of his time working independently in the Additional Learning Support department. He also received one to one support with time management and he was encouraged to meet with a small group of student to improve his social skills. In his exams he had 50% extra time, a prompter to ensure he did not spend too much time on any one question, and a separate room.

In his exams he gained grade B in two of his subjects and D in the other. He was also won two awards at the college prize giving evening. He is now at the Manchester College studying a Foundation Degree in Art.

**Mobility**

**Lee**

Lee has Duchene Muscular Dystrophy. This is a muscle wasting condition which means that Lee has to use an electronic wheelchair. His limbs are very weak and he gets tired very easily.

Before he came to Ashton Sixth Form College we visited him at school to find out how they supported him, and he came into college to meet his teachers and to make sure he could get around. Because of his condition it was impossible for him to get round college, so at the start of his course we made sure he had a support worker who would meet him at the start of the day, and take him to each of his classes. Once he had started to make friends, we reduced support as much as possible, so that his classmates could help him get to his lessons.

We lent Lee a college laptop, and arranged 100% extra time, use of a writer or word processor, and rest breaks for all his exams. We also helped him with his application for university, arranged for him to visit the university of his choice and made sure he got the Disabled Students’ Allowance.

In his exams Lee got grade C in two of his subjects and grade E in the other and he is now at university studying English Language.

**Mental Health**

**Aaron**

Aaron has serious mental health issues including depression and anxiety which meant that on two occasions he was unable to complete his sixth form studies at school. When he came to Ashton Sixth Form College we spent a lot of time with him ensuring he was on the right course, and introducing him to his teachers so that he would feel more comfortable once his course started.

During his time at college Aaron has had regular sessions with the college counsellor and has attended weekly support with the Additional Learning Support team. We advised teachers to allow him to leave classes whenever he became anxious which greatly reassured him.

For his exams, Aaron is allowed to use a separate room and he also has rest breaks. In his first year exams he gained grade A in all of his subjects and is now planning to move away from home and go to university in the autumn.

**Medical**

**Anna**

Anna has M.E. or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome which means she has very little energy. She was unable to attend school because of this and for this reason her GCSE results did not reflect her ability. She enrolled on a Level 2 vocational ICT course on which she gained a merit, and GCSE Science resit on which she got two 2A\*s. She then progressed to A levels and left college with grade A in one of her subjects and C in the other two.

During her time at college, she was allowed to take time out of her classes, and she worked in the Additional Learning Support area when she felt tired. She was also allowed extra time and rest breaks for her exams.

When she left college she gained a place at university studying Mathematics.

**Dyspraxia**

**Simon**

Simon was diagnosed with dyspraxia when he was at Primary School. This meant that he finds organisation very hard and he struggles to manage his time. He also has great difficulty writing legibly.

He enrolled on A levels and during his time at college he attended weekly support sessions to ensure his work was kept in good order and to help him timetable his independent study time.

For his exams he used a word processor and had extra time. He gained grade C in each of his A levels and went on to work full time as a teaching assistant, working with young children who have learning difficulties. Since taking up employment he has also completed a Foundation Degree in Education at Ashton Sixth Form College. While studying on this course he received out of class study sessions which were funded by the Disabled Students’ Allowance.