



## **Questions to consider asking a sixth form or college** **(Mainstream or Special)**

These questions are provided as a guide to parent carers to find out more about the support and provision available in local schools and colleges for young people with special educational needs or disability. It is advisable to speak to the specific subject tutors about the suitability of the courses they offer and to the college's Special Needs Co-ordinator to discuss support and access issues.

### **Education**

Do you provide a course that includes the subject areas(s) my young person is interested in, at the appropriate level for them to learn?

How many days per week is the course?

How many hours per day?

Can my young person change courses if found to be unsuitable or the work too easy or difficult?

When and how would progress in their chosen course be reviewed?

When and how would progress towards the outcomes in their Education Health & Care Plan be monitored?

Are the reviews of Education Health & Care plans carried out using a person-centred approach?

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

What equipment and/or software is available for students to use for example laptop, and how do they access this?

Can you put a reader and scribe in place if needed?

Can exam concessions be arranged, for example extra time or a quiet space to sit exams?

Is support available, if needed, for the non-teaching hours during the day?

Would an assessment be required prior to the start of the course?

Is there a suitably trained teaching assistant or support worker for support?

## **Transport/Travel Training**

Does the college run its own transport?

Is travel training offered as part of sixth form/college course?

Do you offer a “travel buddy” scheme?

Is there public transport available to the site?

Are there disabled parking spaces available for students?

## **Planning the move**

Do you offer taster days or sessions?

What do you offer to help the young person get familiar with the changes between school to sixth form or college?

What visits are available to sixth form/college prior to joining in September?

Do you offer opportunities for young people to begin their transition before finishing their current learning provision?

Will you visit my young person at their current school?

When and how do you start planning for moving on from sixth form or college for example progression into employment or further learning?

## **Mobility and Access**

Is there easy, safe wheelchair access to all facilities at all times i.e. avoiding crowded corridors?

Is extra time allowed for travel between classrooms for students with mobility issues or anxiety?

Are there suitable handrails on stairways?

Is a lift available?

Is there full wheelchair access throughout the college? Particularly, library/learning resource centre, sports Facilities, leisure Facilities, dining room, toilets.

## Support Services

Are the doors, corridors, and rooms accessible without assistance?

Are there height adjustable tables and/or practical equipment, such as cookers?

Are there adapted materials and equipment for practical subjects for example, photography, science etc.?

Is there transport for college outings or social events that is easily accessible?

Are staff trained in moving and handling?

Can a wheelchair fit under the tables in the dining area?

Will assistance be available to help with getting food?

Is there any special equipment in the dining area for example cups, plates and utensils?

If no to question above, can personal equipment be stored in the dining area?

Are there accessible toilets on every floor or wing of the college?

## Pastoral/non-teaching time support

Do students have access to a qualified Career Guidance Practitioner on site?

Is there staff support for arrival and departure for example meet, greet, escort?

Are support workers available at break and lunch times and during non-teaching time?

Will there be a gradual withdrawal of support to increase independence?

Does the sixth form/college have a "buddy scheme" in place?

Does every student have a Personal Tutor with whom they can discuss any concerns?

Do students have access to a trained Counsellor on site?

Do you have a "quiet" room that can be accessed at any time during the day?

Will a distressed student have rapid access to an appropriately trained tutor/LSA/mental health first-aider?

## Profound & Complex Needs

Do you have trained and experienced staff to support young people with profound and complex needs?

Are you able to work with students who use Augmentative & Alternative communication (AAC)?

What symbols and/or signing support is used for example, Makaton, Sign-along PECS etc?

## Hearing Impairment

Do you have tutors and learning support assistants trained and experienced re HI?

Do you have quiet classrooms for use of hearing aids?

Do you have well-lit rooms for lip reading?

Do you have rooms with a loop hearing system set up?

Do you have access to a British Sign Language communicator?

Do you have access to a BSL interpreter?

## Visual Impairment

Do you have tutors and learning support assistants trained and experienced re VI?

Is the colour scheme of the college used to help a VI person navigate?

Are there Braille or similar textured signs to aid navigation?

Does the college have special VI packages in their IT suites or available for students to download?

Is CCTV equipment available for use to support VI?

Can texts be copied to large format and/or Braille?

Can the texts be provided prior to or at the start of each lesson?

## Autism Spectrum Condition

How are the staff team trained and supported in working with autistic people?

Do you have a separate area for autistic students, with no access for unauthorised people?

Can autistic students arrive/depart at a different time for quiet access?

Does the sixth form/college have a multi-sensory room?

Is there a separate quiet/withdrawal room accessible at any time for a stressed young person?

Do you have classrooms set up for the TEACCH\* approach; if not, what teaching approach is used?

## Medical/Personal Care

Do you have first aiders on site? How do students know who they are and how they can be contacted?

Are staff trained to deal with: -

- epilepsy
- asthma
- diabetes
- anaphylaxis (staff trained in using an EpiPen/Anapen/Emerade injectors)

My young person has specific medical needs: do you have staff trained to deal with these needs?

Do you work healthcare professionals to plan medical/health support?

Do you have medical facilities other than a first aid station?

Do you have a nurse on site?

Are there hoists and staff or trained carers able to use them to assist with personal care if needed

## Therapy

Is there a Speech and Language Therapist available to maintain and improve communication skills?

Is professional advice available from an Occupational Therapist?

Is there help and training from Occupational Therapists for accessing the community and trained staff available to facilitate social contact?

Is there a physiotherapist available for regular intervention to maintain current level of functional ability?

If yes to question above, is there sufficient physiotherapy equipment on site for use during physiotherapy sessions?

Is there access to a hydrotherapy pool and staff trained to use this facility?

## Behaviour Support

How are the staff trained to work with behaviours that may challenge for example verbal and/or physical aggression, damage to college property etc?

Is the college able to offer support for emotional regulation?

What physical intervention training have staff undertaken?

Are staff trained to work with students who display inappropriate sexualised behaviour?

**Any extra questions you may want to ask**

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\*TEACCH ([www.autism.org.uk/teacch](http://www.autism.org.uk/teacch))

**Teaching** – sharing autism knowledge and increasing the skill level of professionals and practitioners.

**Expanding** – increasing own knowledge to provide high-quality services to people on the autism spectrum and their families.

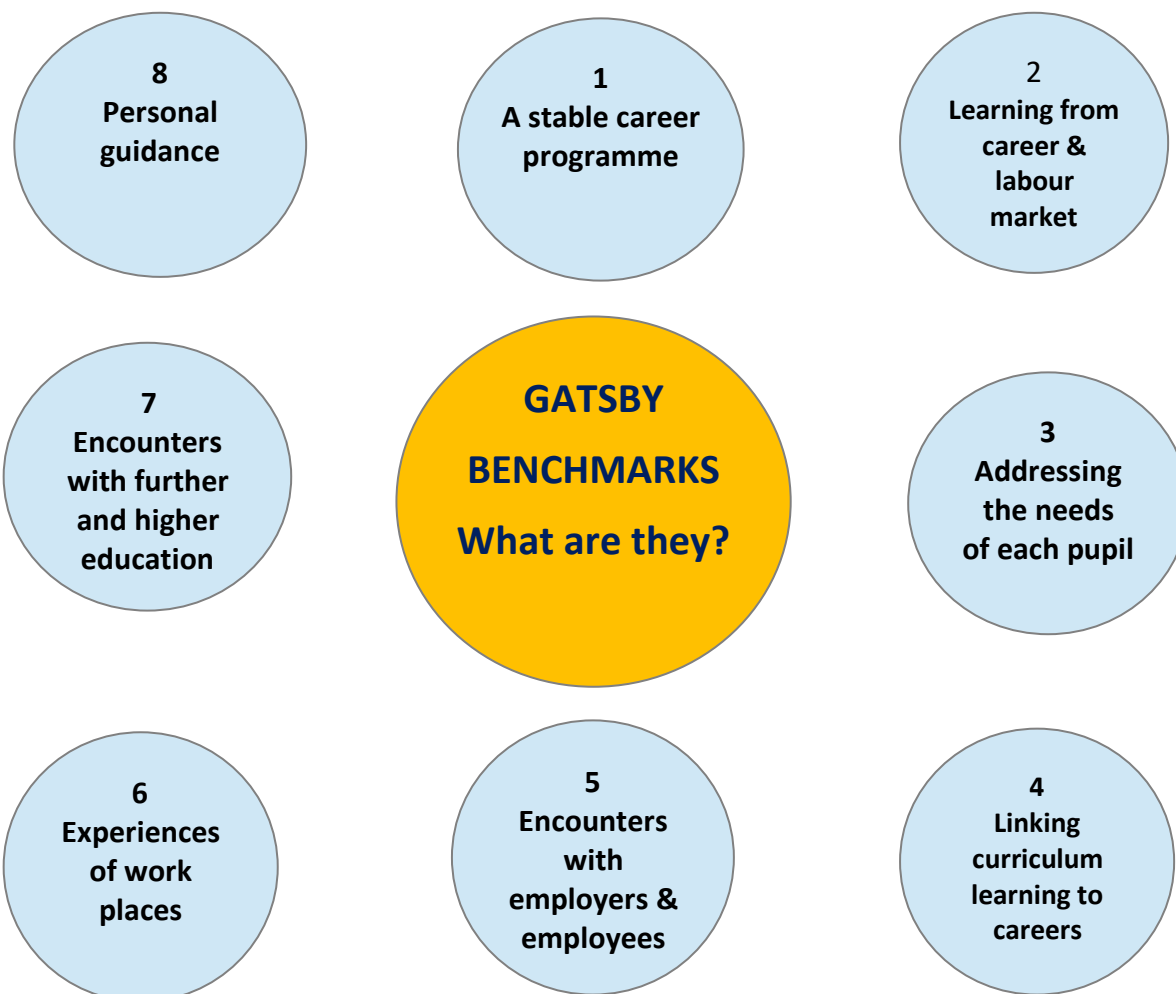
**Appreciating** – appreciating the strengths and uniqueness of autistic culture.

**Collaborating and Cooperating** with colleagues, other professionals, people on the autism spectrum and their families.

**Holistic** – adopting a holistic approach, looking at the person, their family and community.

### The Gatsby Benchmarks

Most\* schools and colleges have an obligation to meet the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks.



<https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/careers-guidance-and-access-education-and-training-providers-published-july-2021>

Careers guidance and access for education and training providers: published July 2021/CEC Resource Directory - **The Careers and Enterprise Company.**

The range of measures to boost skills and level up opportunities include up-dated careers statutory guidance, careers guidance and access for education and training providers. For the first time we have integrated all of the guidance for schools and colleges into a single document.

**\*Current statutory guidance applies to**

- maintained schools, academies, free schools (including alternative provision academies and free schools) and colleges (that provide secondary education and post-16 education)
- local authorities that maintain pupil referral units that provide secondary education and post-16 education.

**Careers guidance for students with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)**

The overwhelming majority of students with SEND, including those with high levels of needs, can access fulfilling jobs and careers with the right preparation and support. They should all be supported with a careers programme that follows the Gatsby Benchmarks. We recognise that some of the benchmarks need different interpretation in Special Schools and for some SEND students in mainstream schools and colleges. Vocational profiling will help to identify the young persons' interests, skills and talents and it is a way of opening doors to what is possible.

The Careers & Enterprise Company has published a range of free resources for schools and colleges working with students with SEND which includes a Gatsby Benchmark toolkit for SEND, teacher guides and practical advice for schools and colleges on how their careers programme can support children and students with SEND.

**Send Gateway have published a resource pack to support Key Stage 4 students with SEND to secure good transitions.**

The Careers Leader should work closely with the relevant teachers and professionals in their school or college, including the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and inclusion teams, and the careers adviser, to identify the guidance needs of all students with SEND and put in place personalised support and a transition plan. This may include helping students with SEND and their families to understand the full range of relevant education, training and employment opportunities, such as traineeships and apprenticeships, supported internships (for students with education, health and care plans) or routes into higher education.

The transition plan should be well informed about ways in which adults with SEN or disabilities can be supported in the workplace (e.g. disability rights, supported employment, ways in which jobs can be "carved" to fit a person's abilities, job coaching, reasonable adjustments for disabled people in the workplace and Access to Work (DWP support)). Advice on self-employment (e.g. microenterprise) can also be especially relevant for some students with SEND.



Encounters with employers can be transformational for students with SEND, particularly hands on experience in the workplace, and schools and colleges should facilitate this where possible. It can be especially powerful to hear from adults with disabilities who have succeeded in their careers. The opportunity to experience lots of different work sectors can be particularly helpful. Schools and colleges should prepare students well for these experiences, so they know what to expect and what is expected of them, match them carefully to each employer and provide any special support the student may need to benefit fully from the experience.

**Schools should make use of the SEND local offer published by the local authority.**

Where students have education, health and care plans, their annual reviews must, from year 9 at the latest, include a focus on adulthood, including employment. Schools should ensure these reviews are informed by good careers guidance, including impartial personal guidance provided by a qualified careers adviser.

The Career Development Institute provides accredited training for qualified careers advisers who work with students who have SEN or disabilities.

Schools must co-operate with local authorities, who have an important role to play through their responsibilities for SEND support services, education, health and care plans and the promotion of participation in education and training.

Statutory guidance on the SEND duties is provided in the 0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice.

*We hope this information goes some way to helping you and your young person find the best place to continue their education or training when they leave full time education at age 16.*

*Best Wishes*

**Dorset Parent Carer Council**