

Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Medical Conditions in College

Support Guide





The SEND Code of Practice

The **SEND** Code of Practice 2014 (paragraph 7.4) also states that colleges should offer an inclusive approach to learning and teaching, with high quality teaching which is differentiated for individuals and embedded in departments.

This means that all teachers are expected to demonstrate they are competent in delivering high quality teaching to meet the needs of students with Special Educational Needs.

Loreto College promotes educational opportunities, equality and knowledge to young people of different faiths whose beliefs are consonant with our key values of Freedom, Justice, Sincerity, Truth and Joy as a means whereby individual young people may shape a better future. It does this by providing accessible, high quality educational opportunities for young people regardless of their entry qualifications / disabilities or learning differences.

Loreto is committed to supporting all **SEND** learners achieve the best outcomes in mainstream programmes of learning and endeavour to meet the needs of all students through individualised support in discussion with students and parents.

The **SEND** Code of Practice (2014) defines a disability as "...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". Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for others of the same age. This means provision that goes beyond the differentiated approaches and learning arrangements normally provided as part of high quality, personalised teaching.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2014),

The Children and Families Act (2014)

The Equality Act (2010).

Dyslexia

Dyslexia

What is it?

Dyslexia means 'difficulty with words'. It affects the ability to read, spell and write. It can also affect the processing of information, motor skills, sequencing, short-term memory, left/right orientation and awareness of time. The Disability Discrimination Act acknowledges dyslexia as an example of a specific learning difficulty.

Implications for learning

Approach to learning Students with dyslexia are often holistic, 'whole picture' thinkers who take a qualitative rather than quantitative approach to learning. They need to know how their new learning will fit in with what they already know. They may like to attach information to images.

Learning styles

Students with dyslexia may spell the same word differently each time they use it, often taking a phonetic approach. Word retrieval can be a problem and similar words may be confused.

Understanding instructions

Complex instructions can be confusing and words may not be retained accurately. Students with dyslexia may have difficulty with integrating new information into existing information.

Reading

Reading can be slowed down because of the need to read material more than once. Students may lose their place when reading, miss a line out, miss out words altogether or misread words. Sequencing can also be difficult. This affects the ability to remember mathematical tables, alphabetical order, months of the year, days of the week, and left and right.

Writing and other motor skills

Students may have poor-quality or difficult to read handwriting, co-ordination problems and inconsistent handedness. Copying information from book or board is especially difficult, particularly if the words are in cursive (joined up) handwriting or small print. They also have difficulty with returning to the correct place.

Concentration

Dyslexia can lead to short concentration spans. Students may tire easily in a lesson that involves a lot of reading or writing. Organisational skills may be poor.

Implications for teaching

Use differentiated resources and a variety of learning styles. Build in the chance for discussion, a hands-on approach and group work as well as teacher-led and independent learning. Use a variety of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic resources and activities; for example, making tapes, discussion, practicals, making notes or highlighting in a visual and colourful form, studying photographs/images/video, and drama.

Equipment

Students benefit from having the following essential 'kit': a highlighter to highlight key points; post-it notes to mark pages; a small hole-puncher for handouts. Students should also be encouraged to date everything for easier retrieval.

Instructions

Instructions should be sequenced clearly. Do not give too many instructions at once. Avoid instructions while students are reading or copying. Break large tasks into smaller chunks and take in work in stages to help keep students on task. Give deadline reminders. Put new vocabulary on a wall chart. Direct students to key points and encourage them to highlight.

Marking

Use clear writing when marking. Avoid correcting spelling: target a few key words to be learned. Give these on a post-it note that can be attached to any relevant file or book for easy viewing.

Hand Outs/resources

Written resources should use a sans serif font such as Arial or Comic Sans with a minimum font size 12. They should contain a summary at the start and end. Introduce new vocabulary right at the beginning. Provide information visually or in diagrammatical form where possible. Number any paragraphs. If you are using PowerPoint make it clear which point you are talking to. When writing on white boards use lowercase print (not UPPER CASE). Use different colour pens on the board to make it easier for students to locate things. Provide writing frameworks as examples of the type and style of writing required for your subject. Ask students if they would prefer material on pastel-coloured rather than white paper.

Summarise the previous lesson at the beginning of the next. Remind students of key points at the end of each lesson. Check that learning is taking place.

Examinations

Students with dyslexia may be granted special examination provisions. These will be agreed by the examination boards depending on the circumstances. The special provisions may include extra time in exams, a reader, scribe, use of a word processor, or specially adapted papers.

Dyspraxia and Dysgraphia

What is it?

Dyspraxia is an impairment or immaturity of the organisation of movement and motor coordination. Dysgraphia is the term applied to those whose difficulties are confined to the fine motor skills required for handwriting. Those with dyspraxia are often described as clumsy. They may have little sense of direction. Dyspraxia can affect balance control. Poor visual-spatial skills can affect fine motor tasks, such as the way that letters are formed and writing is presented.

The broader implications for learning

- Gross motor skills.
- Students often have difficulty with balance and other gross motor skills such as throwing and catching. Students may drop objects when asked to hold them.
- Fine motor skills.
- These may be seriously impaired, affecting drawing, writing and related tasks.
- Students with dyspraxia will have difficulty using scissors, or pressing the keys on a small calculator.

Handwriting

Handwriting quality deteriorates rapidly during long handwritten tasks. Pen grip may be fierce and as a result the wrist soon aches. A student may not judge that a word will fit into the end of a line and will cram it in. He or she may not keep writing on the line, and letters may be poorly and unevenly formed. Students may have problems labelling small diagrams, writing in framed boxes, or writing numbers clearly. Shading in areas of a diagram can be difficult.

Implications of dyspraxia are that it affects self-organisation, time management and attention span. Dyspraxia can affect verbal skills as students search for the right word or sequence of words.

Problems with motor memory may cause the substitution of letters that have similar motor movements.

Holding small pieces of equipment steadily without dropping them can be difficult.

Poor fine motor skills can affect the turning of pages in a book. Learners may crumple page edges or turn over two or three pages at a time.

Poor organisational skills are common. Students may struggle to remember their timetable. There may be a tendency to borrow books and materials from the library and peers and mislay or forget to return them.

Dyspraxia and Dysgraphia

Implications for teaching

Use differentiated resources. Students may need any diagrams that require labelling to be enlarged. Extra time may be needed for drawing. Handwritten notes will probably be difficult to read, so students should be encouraged to use a word processor where possible. Access may be required to a fellow student's notes to supplement their own. They will benefit from additional handouts to supplement writing tasks. A list of key vocabulary will be helpful to support spelling. Ideally, students should have their own copy of texts, they should not be asked to share in class.

Reading

To make it easier for students to find their way around texts, the use of post-it notes for marking each chapter or section should be encouraged, so that pages can be found more easily.

Health and safety

Potential problems with using equipment or holding and pouring make it essential that health and safety requirements are met. On field trips students may get lost, and are more at risk of accidents if hurried. Ensure that suitable supervision is provided or that students remain within your view.

Instructions

Avoid putting students in situations, which may lead to difficulties (such as being asked to hand out a quantity of books). Set clear targets for activities. The student will benefit from being given a starting sentence in order to ensure the first step in producing work is a positive one.

Language

Students may be able to say something when not under pressure but be unable to repeat it when asked by a teacher. Use active questions. Questioning can help students find the right sequence of words.

Personal organization

To help students remember their timetable, a copy could be placed on the wall or behind a door so that both the teacher and the student can refer to it. Students may need frequent reminders about returning borrowed books or resources.

Examinations

Students with dyspraxia may be granted special examination provisions. These will be agreed by the examination boards depending on the circumstances. The special provisions may include extra time in exams, scribe, use of word processor, or specially adapted papers.

Autism

What is it?

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. Children and adults with autism have difficulty relating to others in a meaningful way. Their ability to develop friendships is generally limited as is their capacity to understand other people's emotional expression. People with autism can often have accompanying learning disabilities but everyone with the condition shares a difficulty in making sense of the world.

What are the characteristics of Autism?

People with autism generally experience three main areas of difficulty. These are known as the triad of impairments.

Social interaction, Social communication and Imagination. In addition to this triad, repetitive behaviour patterns and resistance to change in routine are often characteristic. Some of the typical problems experienced are:

- Difficulty with abstract concepts, self-evaluation and reflection.
- Impairments in social imagination.
- Difficulty with processing auditory information.
- Language is often taken literally.

These tendencies may result in behaviour that seems rude. Students with Autism may not understand the social and cultural rules that are taken for granted by others.

- Students may exhibit articulate and verbose language skills. However, they find it difficult to make small talk, and may talk at people rather than to them. They can be unaware of the need to take turns when talking.
- Difficulty with interpreting body language, facial expressions, gestures and vocal volume and tend to avoid eye contact.
- Failure to appreciate others' thoughts and feelings.
- An unusual or non-existent sense of humour.
- Obsessive tidiness.
- Idiosyncratic interests.
- Low self esteem.
- Other difficulties such as dyslexia or epilepsy may be present.

Implications for learning

Students with Autism have a weakness in processing information through hearing (auditory processing) and need to write down instructions (visual processing). They tend to rote learn and this means that each piece of information remains disconnected. Individual assignments are preferred to pair or group work. Sometimes there may be a tendency to take control of group situations according to their own understanding of social rules.

Students tend to be more able in areas of right and wrong answers are clear cut and effects predictable. They may have extraordinarily good memory, often excel with facts and figures, pay precise attention to detail and are independent.

Classroom behaviours

Students may keep repeating the same question until they have understood the answer. They often rely on strict routines and do not adapt to change easily. They may become anxious when the situation is not predictable or clear.

Students may have trouble interpreting analogies or transferring knowledge from one context to another. They may have difficulty in retelling stories or events in a cohesive and sequential manner, and significant events may be recalled alongside the insignificant. Students may develop areas of intense interest that are not directly related to their study.

Implications for teaching

- Consistency of approach is essential.
- Unusual behaviour should not detract from recognition of the student's abilities. Instructions and responses. Do not assume a shared understanding of meanings.
- Setting a written question which instructs students to 'discuss' a subject could result in conversation rather than writing.
- Give clear, concise instructions using active verbs and precise language (for example, read page eleven (active) rather than we will be reading page eleven (passive)).
- Use reminders to prevent students getting fixed on one task and not moving on.
- Don't ignore students because inappropriate behaviour may be purposeful or manipulative.
- Be aware of the student's strengths.

Classroom management

- Establish ground rules with the student. Agree a place for them to sit and a place for them to go if they need their own space.
- Provide structure and organisation in a well-ordered environment.
- Give prior warning of any changes.
- People with Autism are sensitive to sensory stimulation.

Feedback/review

Check the student's understanding regularly to ensure that learning has taken place. Mark work clearly, concisely and make sure the criteria are understood. Avoid closed questions or phrases, which could be misconstrued.

Examinations/assessment

Students may be granted special examination provisions. These will be agreed by the examinations boards depending on the circumstances.

Autism

Attention deficit hyperactive (or hyperactivity) disorder (ADHD)

What is it?

Attention deficit hyperactive (or hyperactivity) disorder (ADHD) is a term applied to people whose behaviour is persistently impulsive, inattentive and often overactive in comparison to others of the same mental age.

Attention deficit disorder (ADD) is the condition without the hyperactive element. ADHD/ADD is a developmental disability with neurobiological causes. The term is associated with specific behaviours, for example a difficulty in sustaining attention, listening, following instructions and organising. Those with ADHD/ADD are forgetful and easily distracted; they may blurt out answers, make inappropriate comments and interrupt. The hyperactive element of the disorder can result in fidgeting, leaving their seat, talking incessantly and generally wanting to be 'on the go'. These behaviours present themselves in a wide range of ways according to age, environment, intelligence and personality. ADHD/ADD often occurs alongside other disorders such as anxiety and depression and can influence a variety of learning difficulties.

Implications for learning

Attention span Students with ADHD/ADD usually experience severe difficulty in focusing and maintaining attention. They will fidget and possibly leave their seat at the slightest chance, or swing on chairs and fiddle with books, shoes laces or pens. Some will be able to sit still but be unable to get focused.

As a result such students tend to miss important points, lose things, and fail to pay close attention to details. They may distract others by talking at times when they should be listening to instructions. Working Students with ADHD/ADD have difficulty in organising thoughts sequentially. They tend to experience problems in starting tasks, completing assignments on time and planning. They often have poor handwriting and spelling. Such students often have a 'best time' for working.

Implications for teaching

Behaviour/attention

Ask the student to sit near the front of the class. Explain to them how this can aid concentration. Maintain eye contact when giving instructions. Repeat important instructions. Use target setting or negotiated agreements to modify disruptive behaviours. Praise and thanks are important whenever the target set is achieved, allowing a student to doodle or highlight whilst listening.

Personal organization

In order to compensate for gaps in listening, summarise the lesson at the start and end. Remind students of homework by writing it on a post-it note to stick in their diary. Have spare pens/equipment available as these may be forgotten.

Instructions

Break large tasks into smaller time-budgeted chunks, for example taking in a longer essay at each stage of development will allow smaller pieces of work to be produced. Encourage students to make colourful and visually interesting notes as this can aid memory and concentration. Make the student aware of the lesson plan.

Use of language

The way we talk is important in assisting concentration. Give written and verbal information in plain English. Use clear, concise language for instructions. Follow the guidelines on readability (to ensure that text is accessible). The student will not have the patience to 'dig out' information embedded within unnecessarily long sentences.

Engage the student in the learning situation by using active rather than passive verbs. Teaching and learning styles

Incorporate a variety of teaching and learning styles into the lesson, allowing the opportunity for movement, discussion, group work and 'hands-on' learning.

Examinations

Students with ADHD/ADD may be granted special examination provisions. These will be agreed by the examination boards depending on circumstances. The special provisions may include extra time in exams, a reader, amanuensis (scribe), or use of a word processor.

Attention deficit hyperactive
(or hyperactivity) disorder (ADHD)

Epilepsy

What is it?

Epilepsy is the most common serious neurological condition. It is the tendency to have repeated seizures and blackouts. A sudden, temporary interruption or disturbance in some or all of the nerve cells on the brain (neurones) results in a seizure. A seizure can also be caused by a temporary lack of oxygen or glucose although this is rarer.

A single seizure does not mean that someone has epilepsy. We all have the capacity to experience a seizure under certain conditions as part of our genetic makeup, and we all have a level of resistance to seizures. Family tendency to seizures plays an important part. However, a severe injury due to, for example, a traumatic birth or a road accident may cause epilepsy to develop.

Seizures are sometimes attributed to stress but this is not the underlying cause of epilepsy. Epilepsy is not determined by race or social class. About one in 200 children and adults have epilepsy in the UK. Those with epilepsy may experience blackouts or periods of confused memory, episodes of staring, and unexplained periods of unresponsiveness, involuntary movements of arms and legs, or fainting spells with incontinence.

Excessive fatigue may follow a seizure. Students with epilepsy often have poor self-confidence and low self-esteem. Epilepsy is covered by the Disability Discrimination Act because it is a physical impairment which for many students has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. If you have an epileptic student who is photosensitive then the following may trigger a seizure: - Flashing or flickering lights - Video games and computer graphics - Certain geometric shapes or patterns - Strong changes in light e.g. from darkness to bright light If this is the case then it may be necessary to minimise the exposure to the above.

What to do if a major seizure occurs

1. Make sure that the person that is having the seizure is out of harm's way. Move any chairs, electrical wires or cables etc. to make the area safe. Make sure there is nothing in their mouth which could slip down their throat. Be very sensitive and careful. Send for first aider.
2. Cushion the head with something soft, such as a pillow or jacket.
3. Loosen any tight clothing from around the neck. Care must be taken because this could frighten someone who is semi-conscious.
4. Once the convulsions have ceased, turn them onto their side, into the recovery position.
5. Somebody should stay with the person until consciousness is regained.
6. If the student recovers well and is confident that they are okay, resume activities.
7. If you are unsure that the person has hurt himself or herself, call a first aider who will decide whether medical attention is required.

Epilepsy

What not to do

1. Never try to restrain the convulsive movements.
2. Never put anything between their teeth.
3. Don't give them anything to drink as this could cause them to choke, vomit or swallow the fluid into their lungs.
4. Do not send for an ambulance or doctor, unless the seizure continues or a series of seizures occur without them properly regaining consciousness in-between.

At the end of the seizure

1. Stay with them, talking quietly to reassure them, until you are certain that they are able to look after themselves.
2. Don't rush their recovery, it may take time.
3. Don't give them anything to drink, until you are sure that they are fully recovered.
4. Some people need to go home, or lie down for a while, check with the person.

Implications for Learning

Students with epilepsy may experience difficulty in sustaining attention. Short-term memory may be impaired. Concentration and attention levels may be poor. Students may be distracted by background noise in the classroom. They may also experience difficulties with problem solving, decision-making, and language skills. Hand/eye coordination may be poor and reaction times slow. Such students will need time to think about and answer a question.

Auditory memory may be poor due to mental breaks. The student may need visual materials to supplement gaps in learning.

Implications for Teaching

The teacher should repeat key points and summarise at the start and end of each lesson. Students may need support to help them keep up to date with work. Be vigilant around Health and safety.

Examinations

Students with epilepsy may be granted special examination provisions. These will be agreed by the examination boards according to circumstances. The special provisions may include extra time in exams, provision for rest breaks, use of prompt, and provision for sitting the exam in a small room.

Hearing impairment

What is it?

Hearing impairment is the partial absence of hearing, including profound deafness, partial deafness and distorted hearing. The impairment may have been present from birth or more recently acquired. Hearing loss or impairment occurs when there is a problem with one or more parts of the ear. A student with hearing loss or hearing impairment may be able to hear some sounds or none at all. People also use the words 'deaf', 'deafness', or 'hard of hearing' when they are talking about hearing loss/impairment. Some students with hearing impairment use British Sign Language. Some will depend on lip-reading. Others use standard hearing aids or radio hearing aids. These are improving but remain imperfect solutions. The self-esteem of those with hearing impairment may be low. They may have been subjected to ridicule and bullying in the past. This means that it is important to try to create a positive learning environment. The Disability Discrimination Act applies to hearing impairment, as it is a physical impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a student's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Implications for learning

Learning styles

Students with hearing impairment are likely to depend a great deal on visual learning. For example they will need to supplement verbal with written information. They may also need to make extra notes. Use of IT in lessons benefits many students.

Listening

The needs of students with hearing impairment vary widely. Some will need note takers in preparing notes for British Sign Language users. Some will depend on lip-reading; however, only 25% of words can be lip-read. Hearing aids may be used but they do not give perfect hearing as they amplify all sounds including background noise. A radio hearing aid may be used. This requires the teacher to wear a transmitter and microphone whilst the student wears a receiver linked by a loop. This cuts down background interference but can pick up other interference from computers and neon lights for example. It can also cut out other students' voices.

Reading/vocabulary

Students with impaired hearing will generally take longer to read. There may be significant gaps in understanding vocabulary, and students may misunderstand words with more than one meaning. The use of a spell checker, computer-based dictionary and a thesaurus may be necessary to support written work.

Speaking

Students who have had hearing in the past will usually have clear speech. Those who lip-read will usually have less clear speech. They do not have speech impediment, they simply do not pick up all sounds, especially word endings.

Implications for teaching

Classroom management - Ask the student what enables them to learn and what excludes them from learning. Ensure that they have clear view of your face. The arrangement of classroom furniture can help. For example a horseshoe shape allows visual contact with all students. Indicate when another student is speaking. Make sure you have attention before you speak. Avoid standing with a window or light behind you, covering your mouth whilst talking and talking while you bend down to pick something up or write on the board. Stand still when giving instructions. Be clear and precise when referring students to a page or a chapter in a book. Keep background noise down and make sure that only one person talks at a time. Check that understanding has taken place.

Differentiation

Make handouts available in advance. Provide written transcripts of video and audio-tapes. Use note-takers and microphones/transmitters (for radio hearing aids) when appropriate. Instructions Establish the topic you are talking

about and introduce new vocabulary on the board at the start of the lesson. Clearly sequence your instructions. Use plain English for instructions and keep sentences short and simple. Avoid exaggerated mouth patterns and shouting. Use clear, suitable paced speech using natural rhythm with gestures where appropriate. If you need to repeat something, indicate that it is a repetition.

Readability

Ensure that the visual appearance of hand outs/text is appropriate, as this is an important aid to understanding.

Examinations/assessment

Students with hearing impairment may be granted special examination provisions. These will be agreed by the examination boards according to the circumstances. Depending on the exam/assessment, hearing-impaired learners may need especially prepared examination papers, extra time, a room on their own, use of a reader or scribe, or other provision.

Hearing impairment

Visual Impairment

What is it?

People with low vision do not have the same characteristics as totally blind people, nor do they have the same visual abilities as those with normal vision. Low vision does not mean no vision at all. It includes people with some light perception as well as those who can read books and newspapers without using any aid or device. A fully sighted person gets 80% of his/her information about the world visually.

A visual impairment may affect their ability to see detail, the width of their visual field, their sensitivity to contrast and glare, their ability to see moving images and changing focus, their colour vision, and their response to changing light levels.

Implications for learning

For some students with visual impairment, visual learning may be appropriate if the right resources and equipment are available to enhance their vision. However, many visually impaired learners will learn best when visual learning is replaced by or augmented with other styles of learning. To maximise the use of vision, students may need:

- Other sensory input (such as speech to supplement computer technology Enlarged print Magnifiers or telescope aids Screen-enlarging software Some enhanced form of marking/labelling for practical activities.
- Hand outs in the student's preferred print size and font.
- Suitable lighting and arrangement of classroom furniture.

Implications for teaching

Reading and texts

Students with low vision will usually require extra time for reading tasks. Do not expect the learner to skim and scan for the points you wish to focus on, you should direct them. Make hand outs available before each lesson in a suitable font and size. Check all photocopies for clarity before giving them out. Avoid double-sided photocopies, as this can reduce readability.

Students will also need their own copy of information written on the board or on overhead transparencies. Draw attention to the location of any important notices (for example whether they are on the board or notice board Support Set up a circle of friends or a 'study buddy' system to support the student as needs arise.

Giving instructions

Avoid standing with your back to the window/light when talking. Get the student's attention by using his/her name at the start of your sentence. Introduce the students to each other to familiarise them with names.

Examinations

Students with low vision may be granted special examination provisions. These will be agreed by the examination boards depending on circumstances. The special provisions may include extra time in exams, a reader, use of a word processor, or specially adapted papers.

Visual Impairment

Mental Health

What is it?

Mental health is the way you feel in your mind. It is about the state that your feelings are in. Mental health problems may be long term and enduring or relate to short periods of distress. Mental health problems are not the same as learning difficulties, although study skills may be affected. The stigma, which often accompanies mental health problems, can be more difficult to deal with than the symptoms themselves.

There are many different types of mental health problem. These include obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, depression, phobias, psychosis, panic attacks, fear of attention, anti-social behaviour, developmental disorders such as speech delay and social ability deficits, attachment disorders such as abnormal sleeping patterns or tics, post-traumatic stress syndrome, somatic disorders such as chronic fatigue syndrome, psychotic disorders such as bi-polar affective disorder (manic depression), schizophrenia and drug induced psychosis/paranoia. It is when the problems are particularly severe or persistent and are interfering with the student's normal everyday life that they can be said to have a mental health disorder.

Mental health difficulties are a major cause of ill health. Between one in four and one in six people will experience some kind of mental health problem. An estimated one in fifty people will experience serious mental health difficulties. Mental health difficulties can affect anyone regardless of culture, class or education. The way that mental health problems manifest themselves is unique to the individual. Those with mental health difficulties may also have other non-related disabilities such as dyslexia or epilepsy. Those with mental health difficulties are rarely violent towards others. However some do harm themselves when anxious and feeling out of control. Stress has a significant influence on mental health. Students with mental health disorders will come under the definition of a disabled person within the Disability Discrimination Act if their condition can be regarded as an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Implications for learning

Mental health difficulties may affect the ability to learn, the methods of learning, communication, socialising, ability to cope, friendships and relationships. Learners experiencing mental health issues often prefer to be passive learners. Such students will be encouraged to join in and be active, as they do not wish to attract attention. They may need pastoral as well as academic support.

The different types of mental health problem can affect learning in different ways. Advice should be sought from professionals such as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCo) or the Mental Health Lead for College.

Support

Support is the responsibility of the whole organisation. All teachers must be involved. If a learner has disclosed a mental health difficulty it is important to ask them how the difficulty affects the learning process within your subject. It is also important to anticipate and plan for the fact that you could have a learner who experiences mental health issues in your class even if you do not have one at the moment. Make sure the learner is aware of all the support that is available. Be aware and make your students aware that there are a range of 'Self Help Guides'. These guides are to help students understand different psychological conditions and human behaviours and how to manage them better. The guides also provide other points of reference for support should they need any. As well as these guides there are a full range of pastoral, welfare, counselling and learning support systems and people in College to help students.

Managing behaviour

Make ground rules and make clear your expectations of behaviour. You will need to anticipate some behaviour, such as reactions to stress arising from group work. Troubleshoot by encouraging learners to seek help before problems get to big. Allow the student to indicate bad times when they need to be left alone.

- Do not put them in a confrontational situation such as the student becoming argumentative.
- Observe Watch how learning is taking place and record the information.
- Share your observations with others involved in the welfare of the learner.
- Encouragement and social support.
- Ensure that students recognise their achievements and praise success.
- Encourage self-assessment. Do not wait for the learner to contact you.
- Peer support and mentoring will help the student feel valued.

Teaching and learning styles

Ask students how their learning is progressing and how they best learn. Use a variety of teaching styles. Check that learning is taking place. Break down large tasks and set achievable targets. Provide summary handouts. Keep a record of lessons and activities so that it easy to cater for missed lessons and concentration problems. Teach by giving examples where possible. Handwriting frameworks may be useful in getting students started on written work.

Examinations

Students with mental health disorders may be granted special examination provisions. These will be agreed by the examination boards according to circumstances. They could include students working in a room on their own or in small numbers, provision of rest breaks or use of a prompt. Extra time may be granted for coursework.

Mental Health

Other medical conditions

What are they?

There are numerous medical conditions with implications for teaching and learning, some of which are outlined below. Some of these are stable conditions, others are variable or progressive. In progressive conditions it is important to undertake regular assessments of the learning and teaching implications; low attendance may be due to illness, fatigue or medical appointments.

Diabetes

There are two distinct conditions: Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 diabetes.

People with Type 1 do not produce enough insulin to control their blood sugar level, which becomes too high. The condition is treated by giving additional insulin. Students may need a special diet and often require injections. They need access to sugar free drinks as they can become very thirsty. They should be allowed to go to the toilet when they need to.

Type 2 is less common among young people and occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin or the insulin it does produce is not working properly. Students with diabetes may behave erratically, become lethargic, sleepy or confused and suffer double vision. They can also cause fluctuating visual acuity (sharpness of vision), distortion of vision and possible impairment of visual field.

ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis – also known as chronic fatigue syndrome)

Symptoms include persistent fatigue, muscle pain, difficulties with temperature control, problems with vision and hearing, and poor concentration and memory. The onset of ME may follow an ordinary viral condition from which the person fails to make a full recovery. Generally, the person with ME is seen only when they feel well enough to get out, as a result of which the worst of the stress and fatigue is not always seen.

Asthma

The term 'asthma' derives from the Greek meaning 'to breathe hard'. Medical terminology defines the condition as Reversible Obstructive Airways Disease. Symptoms include difficulty in breathing, which can be extremely distressing and sometimes life-threatening.

Attacks vary in their severity and are sometimes relatively mild but without the right conditions and treatment could spiral out of control. Air pollution and other factors associated with 21st Century lifestyles have resulted in an escalation of diagnosed cases. Teachers need to be mindful of likely causes and triggers for asthma attacks, such as exposure paint fumes, pollen, or cold air, and food allergies. Those with asthma may need to take medication in class.

Anaemia

Anaemia occurs when one of three things occur: red blood cell production decreases; red blood cell production decreases; red blood cell destruction increases; or there is significant bleeding. Blood loss may occur as a result of trauma, menstruation, inherited blood cell defects (such as sickle cell anaemia), dietary problems, kidney disease and treatments for cancer or HIV/AIDS. People with anaemia experience a general tiredness, often feeling weak and lethargic. They frequently suffer from depression.

Heart conditions

Many students with heart conditions are managing their condition very well. However they may tire easily and have to take medication that has side effects. Make allowances for the effects of fatigue and allow them to leave for rest breaks or medication if necessary.

Implications for learning and teaching

Students with such medical conditions may benefit from some or all of the following:

Attendance concessions

- A note taker or facilities to tape lectures/lessons
- A reduction in the number of subjects studied to have long tasks broken down into smaller chunks.
- Clearly dated summary hand outs for missed lessons.
- Information sent home for independent study.
- Repetition of important information and instructions.

Staff who recognise that the learner may feel isolated due to absences which will affect self-esteem. Teachers should try to:

- Avoid putting students 'on the spot' when they return from absences.
- Recognise good and bad days.
- Recognise the effects of fatigue, stress, and depression, including poor concentration.
- Avoid over-reaction (many students will be managing their condition very well).
- Have high expectations.
- Be flexible, and prepared to make and modify agreed plans of action.
- Consider setting up a 'study buddy' or 'circle of friends' system for copying missed notes, finding out about any programme changes and supporting on field trips.
- Check on changes in conditions. Be prepared to reassess the implications for teaching.

Examinations

Students with medical conditions may be granted special examination provisions. These will be agreed by the examination boards according to circumstances. The provisions may include extra time in exams, a reader, rest breaks, scribe, or use of a word processor.

Should you require support with ensuring that a young person with Special Educational Needs is making expected progress, please contact:

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