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UNIQUE
EDUCATION
with the
BUSINESS SKILLS
and
CONNECTIONS
to
SUCCEED

HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS/CARERS
2018/19

CAREERS & CONNECTIONS

At West Suffolk College we place great importance on ensuring students have the qualities and skills to move successfully into a job or university course and we will support them throughout each step of their journey. The centrally dedicated team made up of Careers Advisors, Careers Coaches and Work Placement Officers will work alongside the course leaders to be a constant support ensuring informed decisions are made at the right time to create a brilliant future in the work place or studying at a higher level. This will include meaningful work experience opportunities, networking and connections with businesses and employers, gaining an understanding of the local market and giving student the skills that employers are looking for in the modern world. Students will be able to show employers that they have the strength of character to shine out above the rest, live as independent thinkers and be confident in their choices.

COLLEGE CHARACTER STRENGTHS

The College aims to support all students to develop the best possible skills, so that they can progress successfully into a job with prospects, university or further study. In addition to the academic qualifications, the College will work with students to develop their individual Character Strengths and provide students with the best possible starting point in their adult life. These are linked to the College's Values and the Values that many people believe contribute to a successful, modern, civilised society.

The Character Strengths are:

- Resilience
- Ownership
- Curiosity
- Optimism
- Ambition
- Self-control
- Respect
- Confidence

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HELLO AND WELCOME TO WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE

At West Suffolk College our mission is to put students and their success at the heart of everything we do and we recognise and value your role in supporting your son or daughter during their time at College. We believe that the link between the College and the parent/ carer is extremely important , with both parties being able to support the student with independent decision making skills. This guide will provide you with some of the key information you will need during the year. It is important that you have an understanding of their timetable and are aware of certain key dates as early as possible to fit them into your schedule. We have a very effective wrap around support service, which supports every student's programme of study.

All students at West Suffolk College will receive not just a qualification, but will gain real life industrial work experience and connections with business which will help them to gain a job with prospects. We also give them the character strengths they need to make a success of their career, whatever route they choose.

Each student is allocated a Personal Support Tutor who is responsible for monitoring their progress, attendance and behaviour, ensuring that each student is contributing to the best of their ability. As a parent/carer you will be kept informed of progress and we encourage you to contact the Personal Support Tutor if there are any issues you wish to discuss.

In addition we also advise you to use the Parent Portal which is a one stop resource for tracking your son/daughters

progress. We will also send you regular e-bulletins telling you the latest news about the College. A Parent Induction Event has been arranged for you. This evening is designed to enable you to meet the Personal Support Tutor and Programme Leader and find out more about the study programme. It can also be an opportunity for you to share information as well as to ask questions. Please bring this handbook as you may wish to complete/record some of the information given to you on the evening.

I hope you find this guide useful.

**Colin Shaw, Vice Principal Quality
and Student Experience**

tel 01284 716211

email colin.shaw@wsc.ac.uk



MATHS & ENGLISH

It is a government requirement that all students who do not achieve a good pass at Grade 4 or better – in maths and English GCSE by the time they finish secondary education must continue to study the subjects in post-16 education. As part of our mission to put students and their success at the heart of everything we do, we recognise the importance for all young people to achieve a good standard of maths and English. All full-time 16-19 students with prior attainment of grade 3 or below in English and/or maths, must work towards achieving GCSE grade 4 or above, or a stepping stone qualification.

We will assess the correct level when your son/daughter starts their course.

ATTENDANCE

All students at the College are expected to attend every class and all tutorials. They are also required to arrive at each session on time. Missing classes or tutorials inevitably leads to underperformance with coursework. Students must not arrange routine doctor's or dentist's appointments or driving lessons when they should be attending classes.

Holidays **must not** be taken in term time as this adversely affects work and progress. If holidays are planned for term times, the request must be made in writing to Colin Shaw, Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience. If a period of absence is unavoidable, we expect your son/daughter to contact the Personal Support Tutor team on 01284 716238, email absence@wsc.ac.uk or complete the absence form on the

home page of the website on the first day of absence before 9.00am or you can do it on their behalf if necessary.

We must stress that unauthorised absences can be very detrimental to a student's progress and can often have a negative effect on others on the same study programme. It is important that we deal with these absences promptly. The consequences of having a significant amount of unauthorised absences may result in:

- Financial assistance being withdrawn
- Students being subjected to our disciplinary procedures
- Students not being able to progress to the next level of study
- Students being withdrawn from the study programme

Further details relating to our attendance and absence policies will be given to you either on the Parent Induction Evening or via your son or daughter.

GCSE EXAM RESULTS RESULTS DAY 22 AUGUST 2019

It is important that no holiday is taken during term time, especially around the examination period. Students who fail to attend planned examinations without mitigating circumstances will be invoiced for the full exam fee.

PART-TIME JOBS

We encourage students to undertake paid or voluntary work as we believe it helps them develop transferable skills such as communication but recommend that it is not for more than 10 hours per week unless the role is directly connected to their course and will enhance their opportunities in the future. It is essential that College work should come first.

TIMETABLES

The College timetable spans Monday - Friday 9.15am-4.15pm. Most students will have around 22 hours of timetabled learning. This is supplemented by supervised independent study time, the use of Learning Zones and work placements. There may be days when classes start after 9.15am or finish after 4.15pm. Your son/daughter will be provided with an individual timetable for their course. To help you become familiar with the schedule of learning, a timetable is available within the Parent Portal.

CONTACTING YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER IN COLLEGE

In emergencies we will, of course, make every effort to locate your son or daughter. Contacting students can be difficult because students' timetables contain free periods as well as timetabled sessions. For routine arrangements, therefore, we ask parents and students to make their own plans for contact. In addition to any specific message you may wish to leave, please remember to include all the following points:

- Student's name, course and year if possible
- Personal Support Tutor name
- Your name
- Contact number, if you wish to be called

Students are expected not to make calls or answer their mobile phones whilst in the classroom or Learning Zones.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Most students appreciate an atmosphere which values them as mature individuals, imposes only the minimum rules, ensures mutual respect and consideration and helps them to meet the requirements of their chosen course. Students are encouraged to take increasing ownership for their own progress and behaviour in preparation for life after College. On joining the College, students are made aware of the disciplinary procedures as part of the Induction Programme. These procedures are detailed in the Course Handbook, see below.

COURSE HANDBOOKS

Every student will have access to a course handbook which contains the specific details for their course such as: qualifications, course content, assessment plans, costs, equipment, clothing, trips, visits, books and stationery requirements. You may wish to read this.

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS:

- 1 - CFC - CAUSE FOR CONCERN
- 2 - FORMAL ORAL WARNING
- 3 - FIRST WRITTEN WARNING
- 4 - FINAL WRITTEN WARNING

The College policy on alcohol and illegal substances and/or associated items is simple: these substances and related equipment must not, under any circumstances, be brought onto the College site. If such substances are found, the police will be called and all items seized. This is a non-smoking College, except in approved areas

outside the campus perimeter. Serious breaches of the College Rules and Regulations will result in a meeting and may result in temporary or permanent exclusion.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Safeguarding of our students is always a top priority. To help us to achieve this it is compulsory for all students, staff and visitors to wear a membership card whilst on the College premises. The card will be issued to each student during their induction period and they **must be displayed at all times**. If a student forgets to wear or loses their card, they will need to obtain a temporary or replacement card to enable them to continue using the College facilities. Replacement cards cost £1 from the library.

LEARNING SUPPORT

We recognise that some of our students will need additional support with their learning whilst on their course. All students are given a formal assessment at the start of the course which helps us to identify and plan any individual support needed.

We have a dedicated team of learning support staff who are available to support students either on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Students are assessed continuously during their course and additional support will be discussed and agreed if the need arises.

If you would like to discuss your son or daughter's additional support needs please contact their Personal Support Tutor.

STUDENT PROGRESS MONITORING

All students will have access to an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), this is used to help manage their learning progress. Personal Support Tutors will regularly update the plans by carrying out progress reviews with each student. The ILP can be accessed via the internet and will require a student log-in password.

PARENT LIAISON

We encourage parents/carers to contact us if they have any concerns or queries and we also contact parents/carers if we have any concerns about a student. We have planned a formal programme of progress feedback events to ensure that you are aware of your son or daughter's progress. Where a student is under 18 at the start of the course you will continue to receive reports until the end of their course. West Suffolk College's official means of communication with parents/carers is by email, so please ensure that we have an email address for you that is up to date and that you access regularly. If you do not have access to email, please let us know and we will make alternative arrangements.

We also want you to know how your child is doing. As previously mentioned Parent Portal is an online space where you can track progress, register for events and stay in touch throughout their time here. You can even download our App!

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS

Individual Student Progress reports are generated by the Course Team and will be distributed to parents at key times in the academic year.

PARENT FEEDBACK

Key members of the course team will be available to give feedback on individual students' progress and also to give you the opportunity to discuss any issues on how you may be able to help with your son or daughter's progress.

In some cases we may identify students which are underperforming and feel it would be beneficial to meet with you to discuss the issues and agree an appropriate action plan. Obviously we would seek to address these issues via informal communications with you in the first instance.

PROGRESSION EVENTS

Each year we organise internal and external events where parents and students are invited to hear about careers and progression opportunities, other College courses, other training options, university courses, and employment.

As part of your son/daughters education we are keen for them to develop independence in a way befitting transition from school to College. However we still very much want parents to engage with us and ask that you get involved when asked.

CLASS TRIPS AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Students at West Suffolk College will from time to time take part in trips both within the UK and abroad. In addition, the College sometimes takes or commissions photographs or videos of students to record events, visits or teaching activities etc. Such materials are used by the College and may be shared with partner institutions. Occasionally the images may appear in newsletters or other publications, on the College website or other online technology. Parents/carers of students under 18 at the start of the course may refuse permission for any of the above in writing. Students over 19 at the start of the course who wish to refuse permission should also notify us in writing.

COLLEGE SHOP

The College Shop is open Monday – Friday. The shop carries a range of stock items which include stationery, art and photography materials, newspapers, books, mobile phone top-ups, text books, phone cards and much more.

College Shop Opening Hours

Mon –Fri 08.45am – 2.30pm

COLLEGE LIBRARY

The College Library contains a central collection of resources to help your son or daughter achieve their full potential. As well as a large number of computers for ‘drop-in’ use, there are many other resources including textbooks which may be borrowed (free of charge) and staff who can help students find information for their course work.

The College has a system for ensuring that students return any books or other resources which they have borrowed. We would appreciate your support in ensuring that, before the end of the course, your son or daughter returns any borrowed items. The College may withhold certification if books or library fines have not been settled by the end of the course.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND WELFARE

The College has a Student Welfare team, who are available to offer advice and support on a wide range of issues, other than academic matters, that can affect life at College. The range of advice and information available includes:

- Personal Finance, including bursary applications
- Housing
- Counselling
- Personal Issues
- Transport
- Sexual Health

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

If you are concerned that money will be a problem and might stop your son or daughter from undertaking a course at College, then help may be available. Generally, if your household income is less than £19,000 per year, funding is available to help with the cost of transport, books, equipment, uniform and childcare. Funding may also be available towards the cost of course fees.

All students can apply for help with the cost of transport, uniform, books and equipment.

However, students aged 20 or over may also be able to apply for help with the cost of childcare. In certain circumstances funding may be available even if your household income exceeds the threshold. This will usually depend on the number of dependent children living within the house. You can apply for Financial Support online at www.westsuffolk.ac.uk under the Student Welfare section. If you require help with your application please contact the Bursary Administrator on 01284 716232.

EXAM FEES

Students under 19 on 31 August 2018 do not have to pay exam fees if the exams are an integral part of the curriculum. Students who re-take GCSEs will need to pay the exam fee. Students who fail to attend an examination, without a letter of mitigating circumstances, will be invoiced for the full exam fee.

GET INVOLVED

This will focus on opportunities to volunteer at the College. Say something about the College being a great place to work and we welcome people who would like to give something back to the community. For further information please contact Cathy Durrant on 01284 716557 or cathy.durrant@wsc.ac.uk.

PAMPER YOURSELF

The following areas offer you a way to experience the College firsthand.

EDMUNDS RESTAURANT

The College runs a commercial restaurant as a training facility for our students who are looking to enter the hospitality and catering industry. Edmunds is available to cater for private parties, business lunches, corporate hospitality and themed evening events.

Open during term times.

Weekdays lunch 12.15pm – 1.30pm

Wednesday evening 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Thursday evening 6.30pm – 7.15pm

Find out more at wscedmunds.co.uk or call 01284 716259 to book a table.



CONSERVATOIRE EAST

Conservatoire EAST offers theatre, dance, comedy, musicals and film in an exciting programme of events called The Season. The Season is open to students and members of the public and can be booked through The Theatre Royal Box Office unless otherwise stated.

For booking through The Theatre Royal Box Office call 01284 769505 or book online theatreroyal.org

IN VOGUE SALON

In Vogue Salon at the College has been specifically developed to provide the very best in training for the Hair and Beauty industries. We are able to offer a service to the public by providing specialist Hair, Beauty and Holistic Therapy treatments. We are also able to offer advice and guidance on a number of professional Hair, Beauty and Holistic products, which can be purchased from the Salon Reception.

Open during term times

Tuesday – Thursday 9.30am – 9.00pm

Friday 9.30am – 4.00pm

To book an appointment please call 01284 716233

* Opening times may vary depending on availability of students.



KEY INFORMATION

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN:

Please contact your Personal Support Tutor (PST). In the unlikely event that you are not satisfied with the PST's response your issues will be escalated to the Head of Pastoral Support and/or Colin Shaw, Vice Principal, Quality and Student Experience.

TERM DATES

FULL-TIME COURSES 2018/19

Autumn Term:

Term starts Tue 4 Sep 2018
Study Week 22-26 Oct 2018
Term ends Wed 19 Dec 2017

Spring Term:

Term starts Mon 7 Jan 2019
Study Week 18-22 Feb 2019
Term ends Fri 5 Apr 2019

Summer Term:

Term starts Wed 24 Apr 2019
Study Week 27-31 May 2019
Term ends Thu 27 Jun 2019

KEY CONTACTS

tel 01284 701301
email info@wsc.ac.uk
web wsc.ac.uk

FILL IN THIS KEY INFO AND KEEP IT HANDY!

Your Child's Course Information:

School/Curriculum Area:
Course Title:
Level:
Finish Date:

Your Child's Personal Support Tutor:

Name:
Telephone:
Email:

Your Child's Programme Leader:

Name:
Telephone:
Email:

To report an absence:
call **01284 716238**
email absence@wsc.ac.uk
or go to wsc.ac.uk

AMBITION

Success

Achievement

FULFILMENT