



The Aquinas Pathways Programme - Local Offer

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The Pathways department at Aquinas College offers a two year programme providing specialist educational opportunities for students working towards Entry level and Level 1 qualifications.

Students with additional learner needs wanting to study mainstream L2, A Level and BTEC qualifications should see the Learning Support section on our website.

Transition from school

We have an application process for prospective students which runs alongside the mainstream applicant's process. Students are then invited for interview and an assessment takes place to ensure that our course is appropriate for the learner. We work closely with Local Authorities and schools to ensure that the transition from school is successful.

The college allows for additional visits to the site to be arranged prior to students joining if appropriate. These visits give learners an opportunity to explore the college, meet tutors and potential new peers and have a go at a range of activities.

The Curriculum

We have four groups of students, each working towards **Functional Skills** qualifications in the core skills of **maths, English and ICT**. These range from entry Level1 up to full Level 1. The rest of the curriculum is made up of lessons promoting independence skills in the home, in the community and at work. Students complete a portfolio of units that will be submitted to achieve a **BTEC Diploma/Certificate/Award** from the Foundation Learning qualifications:

- Entry Level 1 - Extended certificate in Pre-Vocational Studies
- Entry Level 2 - Extended certificate in Pre-Vocational Studies
- Entry Level 3 - Extended Certificate in Entry 3 Entry to Vocational Study & Award in Personal Growth and Wellbeing
- Level 1 - Introductory Diploma in Vocational Studies & Award in Personal Growth and Wellbeing

Pathways students also attend weekly assemblies and tutorials. They access the tutorial programme either in our department or, with support, in a mainstream tutor group.

They also receive a weekly ethics lesson covering topics such as citizenship and equality. In addition, students take part in a weekly PE session using the college gym and sports facilities, according to preference.

The Course

The programme is delivered over 5 days, Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm during college term time. We have maximum manageable group sizes that varies from level to level and each group is taught by a specialist teacher. Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) are employed to provide appropriate support according to student/group needs.

Students typically enter a two year programme in Year 12 (aged 16) and complete the course, with the aim of progressing one level across the 2 years. A further year is available to those students who would benefit from studying at the next level, only if this is in the best interests of that student and meets their progression needs.

Students are taught in four groups which are made up of both first year and second year learners. Older students have occasionally joined us if our provision is appropriate, can meet their needs and there is space in that provision.

The Learning Environment

We are based in a quiet area of the college on the ground floor with the classrooms grouped near to each other and we have full access to the teaching kitchen. The college is fully accessible and DDA compliant. Once a week the students cook their own lunch and eat together. The ingredients are bought at the beginning of the week when one group goes out to a supermarket.

Entry Level groups go out on a weekly trip into the community working on skills such as using public transport, road safety and awareness and ordering / buying their own lunch. They travel in small groups with a ratio of staff to students of 1:3. **Our students bring a weekly amount of money to cover the cost of these sessions.** Any students who are eligible for the means tested bursary run by college on behalf of the Government will get support for these costs.

We aim to provide a work experience placement for each student during their time on the course. Our students are currently placed in a variety of work environments including charity shops, cafes, offices and nurseries. We place students according to support needs, locality and interests. They attend once a week for half a day (or a full day on our Level 1 course). Students are provided with placement support as required.

Support

Each student is assigned a key worker who stays with them over the two year programme and can give support with their academic and pastoral studies.

In addition, LSAs also provide support during breaks and lunchtime both in the canteen and in classrooms. Pathways students eat in the college canteen along with all other students and staff, and support is provided as needed.

This may include helping with appropriate food choice, handling money and communal eating. Lunchtime activities are also organised which can include art and crafts, football in the sports hall and yoga sessions.

Personal care can also be provided, our LSAs are trained in manual handling, using hoists and specialist lifting equipment. We have a college minibus fitted with a tail lift and staff trained in using this and securing a wheelchair for transit. Within the department we have a medical room and can supervise administration of some medicines. We also have a rest bed that is electronically controlled and manual/mechanical hoists. This room is also used as a quiet space for those students that sometimes need to come out of lessons.

We have trained First Aiders to support students with medical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes and we are committed to ensuring that staff receive any training that may be required to meet the needs of our students. We work closely with other agencies that can provide specialist support such as Stockport Sensory Services, social services and the Careers Support staff.

Some of our staff are systematic instruction trained for high quality support of students with SEND in the workplace.

Three members of our current staff are BSL trained at Levels 1 and 2.

As part of our pastoral care one member of staff is a trained counsellor. We can access the college counselling service with fully qualified therapists if needed and support to attend these sessions is given if required.

Student Progress

We provide termly targets and subject reviews in line with the College systems. We arrange and conduct annual Education, Health and Care Plan reviews; where we liaise with and invite all the support team around the student to contribute and plan for their progression and future development. This process includes setting the students targets to ensure they make progress both at home and in college. Students are also set further personalised targets within their lessons which are monitored by teaching staff and key workers.

Safeguarding

There is a drop off area at Reception where students can be met by staff and taken to their lessons. At the end of the day a member of staff can escort students to their Taxi, parent, or carer.

We undertake risk assessments of all external activities and make use of LSA support for such activities as required and appropriate.

All Pathways staff have been trained in safeguarding through Stockport Council: they are aware of the issues relating to the safeguarding of students and the procedures to follow.

Destinations

On completing their programme, our students' next steps tend to include:

1. **Other education providers** such as Cheadle & Marple College, Stockport College, Reaseheath College
2. **Employment programmes** such as Supported Internships, Supported Apprenticeships, Pure Supported Employment
3. **Adult Social Care Packages** such as Pure Innovations run - Pure Radio, Animation workshops and their cafes and bakery.

Contact

For any further information please contact:

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Links:

SEND code of practice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Stockport Local Offer

The Stockport Local Offer pages tell you what is available for children and young people who have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) in Stockport.

www.sensupportstockport.uk

<https://stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/localoffer.page>