



**Derwen
College**

Parent/Carer Handbook 2025–26

**Gobowen Campus
Residential Students**

Our students regularly exceed what
they and others thought possible.





We are Derwen. A specialist college for young adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our positive and empowering culture gives students the skills and confidence to live life their own way.



Our vibrant community works together to create a relaxed and positive environment that helps our young adults prepare for real life.

By creating a space for them to develop hands-on, practical experience we give them the freedom to imagine what's possible and empower them to achieve it.



Contents

	<i>Page no.</i>
Welcome from the Principal	5
Term dates	6
Equality, diversity and inclusion statement	7
Derwen College's mission and values	8
Contact us	9
Starting your journey at Derwen College	13
Medical and therapy support	13
Moving around the Derwen College campus	17
Attending Derwen College	18
Working with parents and families	20
Curriculum	24
Kenyon Suite	29
Residential students	29
Additional information	34
College rules	35
Policies and procedures	35
Photography and video consent	36
Personal equipment	36
Short Breaks	34
Supporting Derwen College Charity	36
Clothing and personal items for residential students	37
What should I bring to College?	37
College map	39
How to find us	40





Welcome from the Principal

Welcome to Derwen College

We are delighted that your young person has chosen to come to Derwen College. We look forward to getting to know them and supporting them at every stage of their learning journey, whether as a residential or day student at our main campus or as a day student at one of our three satellite sites.

Coming to College for the first time is a huge step for any young person. As a family, you are likely to be feeling excited about the future but it is also natural to have questions and anxieties. The aim of this Parent and Carer Handbook is to provide practical advice and guidance based on frequently asked questions, and to signpost you to additional sources of information and support where required.

We are very proud of all the young people who live and work at Derwen College and are confident that, once settled in, your young person will thrive in our supportive and inclusive environment. Every member of the Derwen College team works hard to ensure that each student has the opportunities, support and encouragement they need. Our results and success stories speak for themselves.

I hope that you find this handbook helpful. If you think that we have missed something that could, usefully, have been included please do let us know so that we can continue to improve the service we offer.

Meryl Green
Principal & CEO

Calendar 2025–26

Autumn Term 2025	Wednesday 3 September	New/Bungalow students start to transition into College (Residential, Day and Satellites)
	Monday 8 September	All other returning students to start transition back to College
	Wednesday 22 October	Last day of Half Term (all students)
	Thursday 23 October	Half Term – travel home
	Tuesday 4 November	Half Term – travel back
	Friday 12 December	Last day of Term (all students)
	Saturday 13 December	Residential students travel home

Spring Term 2025	Tuesday 6 January	Residential students return to College
	Friday 13 February	Last day of Half Term (all students)
	Saturday 14 February	Half Term – travel home
	Sunday 22 February	Half Term – travel back
	Friday 27 March	Last day of Term (all students)
	Saturday 28 March	Residential students travel home

Summer Term 2026	Tuesday 14 April	Residential students return to College
	Friday 22 May	Last day of Half Term (all students)
	Saturday 23 May	Half Term – travel home
	Sunday 31 May	Half Term – travel back
	Friday 17 July	Last day of Term (all students)
	Saturday 18 July	Residential students travel home

Equality, diversity and inclusion statement

Equality: Making sure that everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect. It means challenging discrimination and removing barriers, so that everyone has opportunities to achieve their desired outcomes.

Diversity: Is about recognising the benefits of different values, abilities and perspectives and celebrating people's differences. This means promoting an environment that welcomes and values diverse backgrounds, thinking, skills and experience.

Inclusion: Is providing a space where everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources and where everyone feels valued and accepted. Everyone should be able to contribute and have a voice.

This may mean making reasonable adjustments to facilitate participation.

Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

We ensure equality, diversity and inclusion sit at the heart of the services we deliver and the culture we nurture with regards to the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In addition, we are committed to advancing equality of opportunity for those from various social backgrounds and with family responsibilities. This includes people from socially disadvantaged families as well as from deprived or remote geographical areas.



Our vision and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity

Our vision for equality, diversity and inclusion goes far beyond compliance. We aim to ensure that we proactively promote inclusion for all and create an environment where our stakeholders can learn, develop, grow and ultimately flourish.

We want to ensure that people with diverse learning characteristics and diverse backgrounds consider Derwen College as an organisation of choice. We want everyone at Derwen College to reach their full potential in an environment which is respectful and that celebrates individual difference. We continually strive to ensure that EDI is promoted across the whole organisation.

Derwen College is committed to:

- Promoting equality, good relations and to challenging discrimination. This is reflected in all college policies, procedures, processes and practices;
- Ensuring that it is a place where everyone, irrespective of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, citizenship and/or protected characteristics, feels welcome and valued, and able to achieve their full potential;

- Protecting the rights of everyone during their time at the organisation;
- Respecting and valuing differences between people whilst meeting the diverse needs of our students and clients;
- Preparing our students and clients for life in modern Britain; and
- Acknowledging the existence of discrimination, should it occur, and being proactive in tackling and eliminating it.

Derwen College's mission and values

'We never thought it possible' is a common refrain about the progress made by people at Derwen College. We work with those we serve to support them to achieve what they want to – and challenge them to do more. We value and respect everyone as an individual and try to go above and beyond to meet all their needs.

We are a reflective organisation, committed to evaluating and learning from what goes on. We are a trailblazing organisation, at the forefront of provision for people with special educational needs and disabilities. This is where we strive to continue to be.



A place of possibility

**Derwen
College**

**We are
Dedicated
Diverse
Dynamic
Derwen**

Contact us

All calls are directed via the main switchboard. To contact specific individuals on their extension, please telephone the main number and follow the automated instructions.

Important note

As a residential College, during term-time there are staff present at the Gobowen site 24/7. All staff work on a rota basis and we do not expect them to respond to contact during their time off. Many staff work during term-time only: student holiday periods are, by definition, quieter than term-time and many staff take the opportunity to take their own annual leave. During the major holidays (summer, Christmas, Easter) there will only be a skeleton staff on site.

	Contact name and email	Telephone number
Main switchboard Term: 8.30am–5.00pm Holidays: 9am–4.00pm Absence line (for students absence), and out of hours		01691 661234
Out of hours Duty Manager		01691 779234
Principal and CEO	Meryl Green meryl.green@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Director of Learning and Curriculum Development	Zoe Wood zoe.wood@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Head of Quality	Dawn Roberts dawn.roberts@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Head of Curriculum	Jennifer Fawcett-Jones jennifer.fawcett-jones@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
PMLD Pathway Lead	Beverley Simmonds bev.simmonds@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Work Experience and Supported Internship Coordinator	Natalie Martin natalie.martin@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234

Director of Care, Health, Wellbeing and Independence	Karen George karen.george@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Head of Care and Registered Manager	Von Bolton von.bolton@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Registered Managers	Frances Muscutt frances.muscutt@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
	Jude Cottrell jude.cottrell@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Head of Student Services and Registered Manager	Paul Bradshaw paul.bradshaw@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Learner Voice Lead	Tabetha Crinson tabetha.crinson@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Short Breaks	Cerys Roberts shortbreaks@derwen.ac.uk	01691 779243
Head of Therapies	Tomi Rekikoski tomi.rekikoski@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Admissions and Funding	admissions@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Director of Communications, Information & Technology	Carol Thompson carol.thompson@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Head of Technology and Digital Services	Daniel Rowley daniel.rowley@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234

If you wish to contact a specific lead practitioner, you may email or telephone them directly. Please be aware that first thing in the morning and during mealtimes staff are likely to be busy.

Residences	Contact name and email	Telephone number
Kent House	Lead Practitioner – Emma Dodd emma.dodd@derwen.ac.uk	01691 779242
	Nursing Team nurses@derwen.ac.uk	01691 886027
Poplar House and Lodges –	Lead Practitioner – Jasmine Tomkins jasmine.tomkins@derwen.ac.uk	01691 779228
	Nursing Team nurses@derwen.ac.uk	01691 886027
Kendall Court	Lead Practitioner – Sadie Nicandros sadie.nicandros@derwen.ac.uk	01691 779238
	Nursing Team nurses@derwen.ac.uk	01691 886027
Cadbury Court	Lead Practitioner – Claire Edge claire.edge@derwen.ac.uk	01691 779232
	Nursing Team nurses@derwen.ac.uk	01691 886027
Beech House	Lead Practitioner – TBC	01691 881215
	Nursing Team nurses@derwen.ac.uk	01691 886027
Bungalows	Lead Practitioner – Maxine Cassidy maxine.cassidy@derwen.ac.uk	01691 779203
	Nursing Team nurses@derwen.ac.uk	01691 886027
Nurture	Pathway Lead – Beverley Simmonds bev.simmonds@derwen.ac.uk	01691 881134
	Nursing Team nurses@derwen.ac.uk	01691 886027
Thomas House (Nurture Residence)	Lead Practitioner – Samantha Popyk samantha.popyk@derwen.ac.uk	01691 779244
	Nursing Team nurses@derwen.ac.uk	01691 886027

Residential students at Gobowen
may be contacted by post at:

Student Name
Entrance C – Main Reception
Derwen College
Gobowen
Shropshire SY11 3JA

Please note: This document has been written on the basis that the majority of our students are aged 18 and above. As such, unless alternative arrangements are in place, our students are regarded as young adults with capacity to make decisions for themselves and the life they want to lead. Please see the section 'Working with Parents and Families' for more information on this subject.

Where a student is under 18, they remain a minor and we liaise with parents/carers on that basis.



Starting your journey at Derwen College

Induction process

Induction starts as soon as the student arrives. Students will have an opportunity to get to know key staff, familiarise themselves with the campus, get to know other students, and find out more about their programme and the support available to them.

There are Freshers' activities in the initial two weeks, where students have the opportunity to socialise with new friends, and participate in a variety of clubs and activities on campus, such as swimming, football, arts and craft.

Personal tutorial system

Each student is assigned a personal tutor. Your young person's personal tutor will email you in the first term. The preferences and needs of the student will lead the way in which the student and tutor work together.

Through regular meetings, the personal tutor provides support, information, advice and guidance around the student's programme of study. The tutor oversees the student's individual programme, involving them in reviewing, recording and celebrating progress and achievement at each stage. The personal tutor monitors all aspects of the student's programme and is able to signpost to additional sources of support if needed. The personal tutor will also participate in Annual Review meetings.

Tutors will talk to parents directly if the need arises, provided that the student is happy for the information to be shared. Tutors have teaching commitments throughout the day and may have limited availability. If you would like to arrange to speak to your young person's personal tutor, please email them to arrange a convenient time.

Where possible, we like to keep a student with the same personal tutor throughout their time in College.

Care

Every student will have a personalised and individual Care Plan when they arrive at college. This is to ensure their medical, therapy, and personal care needs are met. It also includes details of their communication preferences, dietary requirements and favourite ways to enjoy their spare time.

Care Plans are reviewed each term or if there is a change in circumstances. Each student has a timeline, which is completed by support practitioners. It contains details of their day and reflects their current wellbeing.

The Care Plan and Daily Record are confidential documents. Students must give permission before they can be shared with a third party, which includes parents or family members.

Medical and therapy support

All care and vocational staff are first aid trained and, when required, will have completed the Administration of Medication Training.

Students who have specific care needs will be assessed by the nursing team and the therapy team. Support practitioners work with both parents and professionals to ensure that students have the correct equipment and support while at College.

The care team provide day-to-day care. Any health concerns will be referred to the nurses, or the emergency GP if out of hours. In the event of an emergency, or a student being taken ill, the student's next of kin will be informed.

Parents will not automatically be informed if the student has a cold or minor illness or injury. In these circumstances, the support practitioner will always ask the student if they wish to speak to their family.

Each student has a medication safe in which their medication and Medication Administration Record (MAR) chart are stored. Students are

assessed for their potential to be able to self-medicate, or self-medicate with supervision. For those students who are unable to self-medicate, the support practitioners hold the keys for the safes and administer all medication. This includes both in College and when out on trips.

Some students should continue seeing their dentist, optician or audiologist when they are at home. If a student has a medical appointment they need to attend during term, they will need to be accompanied by a parent/carer, unless they have asked to attend independently. Transport can be organised for them where appropriate, but the use of public transport will be encouraged.

Support practitioners can work with the student to prepare them for their appointment. This will include talking about who they are likely to meet, the sort of questions they might be asked and if there is anything they would like to ask the doctor or clinician. The outcome of this appointment should be shared with the link nurse so they can add it to the student's health record.

Where students need more specialist interventions, such as support with Gastronomy PEG/JEJ, staff will receive full training before the student starts at Derwen College.

Therapy support at Derwen College

Therapy provision at Derwen College will support the young person to move forward into adulthood. Strategies utilised within the school environment may look different at College, as the young person is taught and supported to develop skills for self-management of their therapy needs to ensure that therapy strategies are sustainable and manageable by the young person and those who support the young person long-term.

Therapy intervention is based on the student's needs as identified by College's HCPC registered Health Care professionals, and as such are subject to change. Any proposed changes to the way therapy is provided will be discussed with the student, College staff and other relevant stakeholders both informally

during term and formally in annual reviews. The therapy team uses the universal and direct model to deliver our services.

Universal therapy provision

All students at Derwen College benefit from a highly skilled staff base, enabling approach to developing independence in preparation for adulthood and transition post-College.

Therapists' recommendations, advice can be given to ensure strategies are embedded through the day and needs are met throughout College.

Direct therapy provision

For some students, additional direct therapy provision may be recommended to meet their needs. Direct therapy provision is individualised and specific to each student that requires it. Direct therapy requirement needs to be identified in the student's EHCP/IDP and funded by the Local Authority.

The therapists may recommend additions/alterations to EHCP/IDP outcomes and changes to therapy provision during annual reviews. Direct therapy provision may take the form of guidance, strategies and advice to the student and their key staff, provision of equipment, visual resources, group work or 1:1 support for a period of therapeutic intervention.

A student's direct provision will be reviewed regularly, to ensure it meets their needs in the College environment. Therapy will be delivered in the most appropriate way to enable students to achieve their individual goals and outcomes.

Students with potential mental health needs will be signposted to appropriate community healthcare services or their GP.

Speech and language therapy (SALT)

The speech and language therapy team at Derwen College works as part of a multi-disciplinary team to maximise staff knowledge and skills around communication and dysphagia.



This ensures therapy is embedded into college life providing a total communication approach. Students are given the opportunity to achieve their communication goals effectively in a real-life learning environment.

A range of approaches and strategies are used in a personalised way to meet the needs of the students.

This may include:

- Dysphagia assessments
- Makaton signs and symbols
- Communication passports
- AAC devices
- The Listening Programme
- Staff training and support

The speech and language therapy team follows the *Royal college of Speech and Language Therapy 5 Good Communication Standards* as a guide for good practice.

There is good information that tells people how best to communicate with each student

Staff help the students to be involved in making decisions about their care and support

Staff are good at supporting students with their communication

Students have lots of opportunities to communicate

Staff help the students to understand and communicate about their health

Derwen College is Makaton Friendly and has a network of qualified Makaton Tutors.

Occupational therapy

Occupational therapy (OT) at Derwen College aims to support students in a person-centred way by considering the daily activities that are important to the individual, but are challenging or difficult for them to do. The therapists provide support and practical advice to reduce the frustration that an individual may feel when they are unable to complete a task.

An occupational therapist will assess students in their residence or work environment and get to know them. They will work with students to find the best solution that supports them to overcome any challenges they may be experiencing. This will enhance their skills and opportunities for learning and independence.

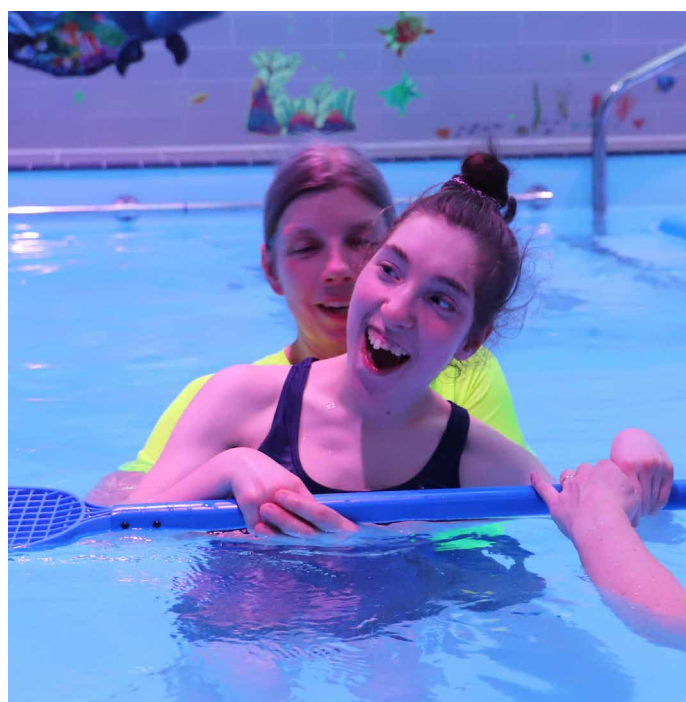
Ways in which OT can help students:

- Help students to do things that are interesting and valuable to them.
- Work to build new skills and confidence in their own abilities.
- Increase opportunities for students to take part more fully in new experiences and look towards a future beyond Derwen College.
- Encourage students to build relationships with the people around them.
- Help students develop routines and organise their time so that they have a balance between self-care, work and leisure.

Areas of focus:

- Personal care
- Domestic skills
- Workplace assessment
- Environmental adaptations
- Sensory assessment and strategies
- Aids and equipment

The occupational therapy team work collaboratively with other staff and professionals to enable a student's learning and independence. They take referrals from all College staff that are working alongside students.



Physiotherapy

The physiotherapy team at Derwen College offer a range of specialist programmes that are completely tailored to the physical health needs of students. These may also be integrated across the curriculum and our residential environments, ensuring that they are delivered in a continuous and functional way. Students will work with their physiotherapist to develop their own programme and may have individual and / or group sessions.

Physiotherapy programmes may include:

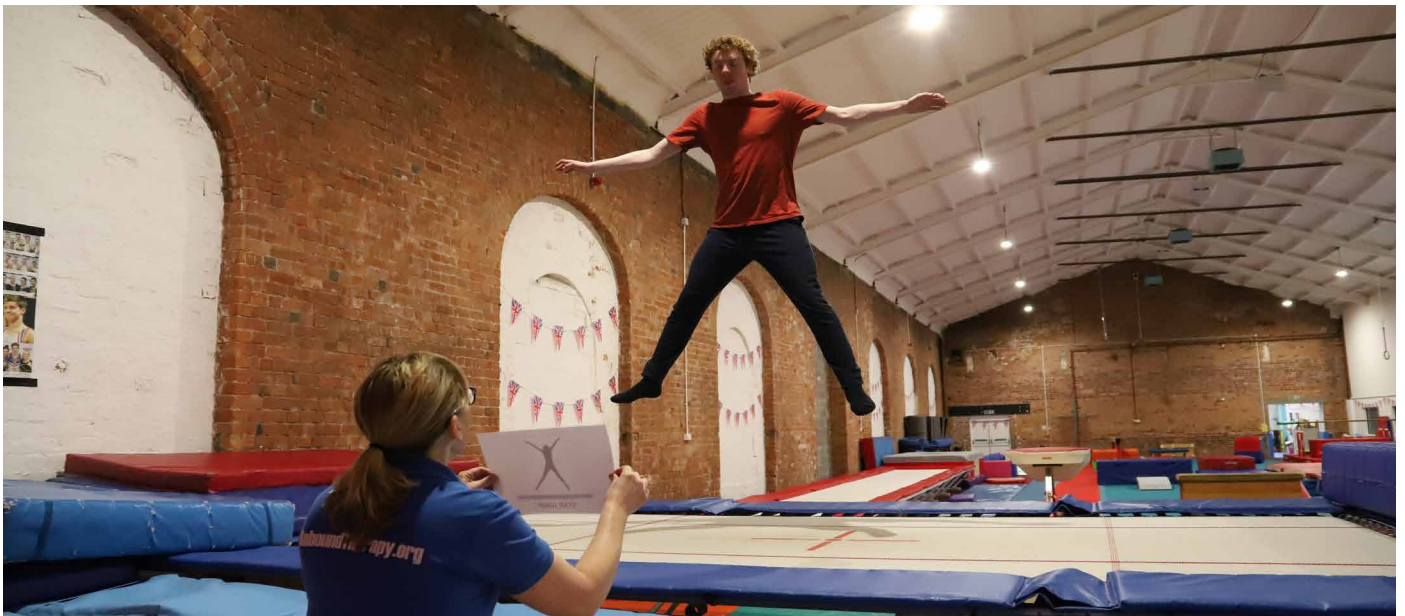
- Pain management
- Posture management
- Respiratory support and management
- Gait and balance training
- Rebound therapy
- Hydrotherapy
- Stretch and standing routines
- Mobility

Social, emotional and mental health support at Derwen College

The mental health of our students will impact on all areas of development, learning, achievement and experience. Derwen College is committed in providing and ensuring a high quality of education to all of its students, including students with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties, and to do everything it can to meet the needs of all of our students.

What supporting Positive Mental Health means to us:

- The student stays at the centre of every conversation.
- We prioritise those who need our help most, but we promote positive mental health with everyone.
- We embed social, emotional and mental health awareness across the curriculum and care.
- Young people are taught skills to build resilience and manage everyday stressors



- Staff wellbeing, resilience and mental health is a key focus.
- We have a highly trained pastoral team who lead on evidence-based practice for all our interventions.
- Where necessary, our students have access to highly skilled mental health specialists, such as Clinical Psychologist, for more targeted support.

Healthy lifestyle

All students are encouraged to participate in activities and make healthy food choices. This includes clubs, swimming, sports and attending social occasions.

All staff have a duty of care to ensure students are given encouragement and opportunities to make healthy food choices. However, staff will not impose food choices unless a student has a medical condition which requires a specific diet. If a student was assessed as lacking capacity around health and wellbeing then staff would take advice from their GP.

Specialist diets, allergies and cultural requirements will be catered for.

Support practitioners monitor students' weight, and any concerns will be discussed with the student and, if appropriate, a referral made to their GP. However, it is not unusual for a student's weight to fluctuate during their time at Derwen College.

Moving around the Derwen College campus

Students are issued with electronic access ID badges which allow independent access to the areas of the campus that are open to them.

Parents do not have independent access to the campus and must sign in at the main reception. Parents are then accompanied through the campus. These procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the students and applies to all visitors. Visitors sign out on leaving.

Where possible, please book appointments ahead of time so you can be assured of availability.

Please note, there is a 5mph speed limit across the whole campus.

Vehicle access and parking

Vehicles are not allowed in the main campus area. Please park in the designated car park areas and log your car details when you sign in at reception. If you need help moving your young person's belongings then the admissions team will be able to allocate a trolley and some assistance. Please book this in advance so we are prepared and ready for your arrival.

Local authority transport

Parents/carers should liaise directly with their local authority regarding drop-off and collection times.

If Derwen College needs to close at short notice (for example, in the event of extreme weather), we will inform all parents/carers that the site is closing. Parents/carers will then need to contact their young person's transport provider to make arrangements.

Individual transport arrangements are the responsibility of parents/carers.

Drop off/collection

In the event a student drop-off or collection is running late, we ask you to advise your young person's lead practitioner as soon as you are able.

Attending Derwen College

Digital care management system

The College embraces a digital approach to the management of care, with the Nourish Care system.

With the use of handheld devices, staff can securely record and access care notes on the go, allowing for more effective monitoring and visibility of information in real-time.

By having access to the right information at the right time, staff can continue to provide highly responsive and person-centred care, whilst spending more time with students.

Every student has a risk assessment embedded in their care plan. The risk assessment includes specific medical information, details of allergies, as well as any behaviours which could put them or others in danger. Support practitioners work with the student to help them understand their risk assessment and agree any actions or measures to be put in place to keep them safe.

Students will carry out a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) with a support practitioner. They will discuss what to do in the event of a fire or emergency and how to safely evacuate the building. They will also be shown their fire assembly point and practise reaching it during a fire drill. Students who may have difficulty hearing the alarm or evacuating the building quickly will discuss this with their support practitioner, and any specific requirements they have will be put in place, such as a vibrating-pillow alarm.

Acoustic Monitoring System

An Acoustic Monitoring System called CLB has been installed in Thomas House, with Acorns, Poplar House, two of the Poplar Lodges and Bungalows 10 and 11. It will continue to be rolled out across other residences over a period of time.

Acoustic/ visual monitoring is an intelligent technology, which alerts a central system to any abnormal sounds or movement which could indicate that someone is in distress. It facilitates staff to respond more effectively and so improve student safety.

Benefits:

- Reduces the need for intrusive night-checks, therefore improving sleep quality and overall wellbeing.
- Enables fast, responsive reactions to incidents as and when they occur.
- Aids those who are non-verbal to request support during the night.

Staff remain present throughout the night, responding to any alerts, and assisting with direct care to those who need it.

As this system involves acoustic and, potentially, video monitoring, we do require permission from parents if the young person is under 18 or the young person of aged 18+ for its use with our residential students who are in rooms that have the technology installed.

Camascope

We have introduced a modern digital system called Camascope, designed to aid and support the way we manage medications. It facilitates accurate medication tracking and timely administration of medication and streamlines communication around medications. It provides an aid in ensuring that each individual's medication schedule is followed closely and securely, with a clear record that is accessible by authorised users.

Camascope brings several key advantages, including:

Accuracy and safety: Camascope helps reduce the risk of medication errors by providing clear instructions and reminders, ensuring that the correct medications are given at the right time and in the right doses.

Real-time monitoring: The system offers real-time tracking of any medication schedule, allowing us to monitor adherence and adjust plans as needed.

Better outcomes: By improving accuracy and reducing medication-related risks, Camascope helps ensure that students' health and wellbeing is being supported in the best possible way.

Attendance

We request students not to take holidays in term time, however if they need to be absent for any reason they should contact their lead practitioner.

The College has an obligation to inform local authorities of an extended absence from College.

Students are expected to attend full College days, according to their full programme offer and timetable.

If a student is to be absent for a day or more, parents/carers should telephone Reception at the Gobowen campus and email studentabsence@derwen.ac.uk in good time so staff are aware and can contact the local authority if necessary. The Absence Policy and Procedure are available on the College website.

As far as possible, hospital appointments and dental treatment should be arranged out of term time. Most hospitals are willing to arrange the date of an appointment when students are at home, if the situation is explained to them.

If an appointment is made during term time, the College may not be able to provide an escort to take the student to and from the hospital and parents/carers are expected to make arrangements for the journey. Students may be collected the day prior to the appointment if it would be difficult for the journey to be made on one day.

Please advise your young person's lead practitioner about any appointments, including the results of tests and Consultant's reports.

Exceptional leave of absence

Derwen College has a clear policy not to authorise any absences from college during term-time, unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Should that happen, contact the lead practitioner. The student must have agreed realistic plans with staff to catch up on work missed.

Review meetings

Every English-funded student has an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), and every Welsh-funded student has an Individual Development Plan (IDP) or a Learning Skills Plan (LSP) in place when they start College, and staff support them to meet their intended outcomes.

At the end of the student's first term they will have a report on their progress. This will be sent to parents and key local authority contacts with the student's permission.

The review will also provide an opportunity to discuss work experience opportunities that the student could access close to home during the holidays and start to talk about transition to life after college.

In their second term, first and second year students will have a review meeting which will update their EHCP, where appropriate, and report on progress.

Important: review meetings are driven by each student's local authority, and change to the EHCP can only be made with their approval.

Derwen College makes all the practical arrangements, and supports both parties.

Students will be supported to prepare for this meeting and take an active role throughout. The student's social worker and other named local agencies who support, e.g. careers advisor, will be invited and it is helpful if families can inform the College of any changes to their local named contacts.

In the first term of their final year, each student will have a transition meeting. This is similar to the review meeting, but focuses on options for the student's time after College. Staff support students to prepare for this meeting and to take the lead role in deciding what they would like to do at the end of their programme.



Working with parents and families

Going to College is a major step into or towards adulthood. Our staff make it their responsibility to ensure that each young person is supported to make this transition. This support aims to inform and guide each person to be as independent as possible in all aspects of life. Children's services and adult support services are very different, and our staff work with parents to help students take their initial steps into the adult world.

The transition from being a child to an adult at 18 can provide challenges for all young people, but for those with a learning disability there are significant implications for their independence, care and support.

Alongside the practical differences between children's and adult services, there is a range of legislation which supports a young adult's human rights and civil liberties. We advise parents to discuss this with their young person prior to them starting college. There are a number of resource packs and organisations who can help with this, including:

- ☒ Preparing for Adulthood
- ☒ www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk
- ☒
- ☒ British Institute for Learning Disabilities:
- ☒ www.bild.org.uk

The support of parents/carers and families is essential in helping students reach their potential and ensure they get the most from their time at Derwen College. For many students, this may be their first time living away from home. Initially this may seem daunting for both students and their families, but students settle very quickly into college life and relish the range of opportunities, fun, friendships and freedom on offer. Alongside this autonomy and freedom comes an understanding of responsibility, for both themselves and those around them.

Staff will encourage students to be respectful, kind and supportive to others. All students are expected to follow a *Code of Conduct*, which will be explained to them when they start College.

Students also learn how to independently access support, information and advice. Initially, if they are feeling unsure, students may turn to family members. In these instances, it is helpful if parents advise their young person to first seek support from the many staff who are on hand to provide it. They will soon become familiar with key staff members and more confident in communicating with them. This will reduce anxiety in the future if family members are not immediately on hand. Do speak with staff if you feel your young person is finding this difficult and needs extra support.

Mental Capacity Act 2005 and transition to adulthood

While staff at College always aim to work in partnership with parents and key people in the student's life, families should be aware that once a student has reached the age of 18, specific pieces of legislation become applicable. In line with the *Mental Capacity Act 2005*, it is always assumed that a student has capacity unless it is proven otherwise. We cannot share personal information with a parent without the student's permission (General Data Protection Regulations) and this includes both education and healthcare information. Derwen College staff are experienced in supporting students and their families through this transition and will always be happy to offer advice and information.

The following resource may be useful for students and their families.

Mental Capacity Act Resource Pack. It is available on the Mencap website and explains how the Act applies to families of people with a learning disability

www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/mental-capacity-act

Power of Attorney and Court of Protection Orders

If you hold Power of Attorney for your young person, or if you are their deputy for the Court of Protection, evidence of this will need to be provided on enrolment day and copies of the documents will be taken.

Power of Attorney is granted by an individual, who has capacity, appointing a third person to manage their affairs. There are two types of Power of Attorney: health and welfare; or property and financial affairs.

An individual who is deemed to lack capacity may have a deputy of the Court of Protection. A deputy is appointed to make decisions on behalf of the individual on financial and/or personal welfare matters. The Court of Protection Order will detail the role and responsibility of the deputy. They are expected to make an annual report to the Office of the Public Guardian detailing their actions.

A deputy would be expected to follow the guidance of the *Mental Capacity Act 2005* and demonstrate that the individual has been supported to understand a decision affecting them.

Day-to-day care, support, and if required, best-interest decisions, will be undertaken at Derwen College by staff who follow the guidelines of the *Mental Capacity Act 2005*. If you hold a Court of Protection Order for your young person, please speak to the Director of Care and Independence (contact details can be found at the front of the document) to clarify the way in which staff and yourself need to work together.

In the event of a divergence of opinion, the college will seek independent advice. Students may also access an independent advocacy service.

For more information about Power of Attorney and Court of Protection Orders visit:

- ☒ Government websites:
- ☒ www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney
- ☒ www.gov.uk/become-deputy
- ☒ www.gov.uk/make-decisions-for-someone/making-decisions
- ☒ Citizens Advice
- ☒ www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/looking-after-people/managing-affairs-for-someone-else

Parent/carer voice

Parents and carers are sent an online survey each year, which covers all aspects of provision at Derwen College. We invite all parents and carers to complete the survey to help us gain views on specific services.

Parents/carers meetings

We hold online question-and-answer sessions for parents/carers at the start of each College year. There are also termly meetings for parents/carers, organised by campus.

Parents and carers are also welcome to contact their young person's lead practitioner if they would like to make an appointment to discuss any aspect of College life and how their young person is settling and adapting.

Visiting Derwen College

Friends and family are welcome to visit students at college. If you are visiting a student, you will need to sign in at main reception. All visitors are asked to wear a badge for the duration of their stay and return the badge before leaving the site.

Dogs are not permitted in any buildings and must be kept on a lead when on campus.

Visitors and students are welcome to make use of our 'Marketplace' including the Walled Garden Café, Orangery Restaurant, Vintage Advantage Charity Shop and Garden Centre and shop. There is a walled garden to visit and the Walled Garden Café has a play area for small children.

Visitors can also stay at the College's on-site mini-hotel, Hotel 751. To make an enquiry, please email enquiries@hotel751.co.uk, or call 01691 779200.

Students are welcome to go off-site with visitors, provided they inform staff in the residences and/or their support practitioner.

Feedback, compliments and complaints

Derwen College aims to offer an excellent service to all its students all of the time.

However, we are aware that, on occasion, parents/carers or students may be unhappy about aspects of life within education. When this happens, we are very keen to hear what the problem is as soon as it arises, so that we can investigate and put things right where necessary.



If you wish to give feedback to the College, make a complaint, or give a compliment, there are a number of ways in which you can do this. You can contact the College directly using the contact details below. Alternatively, you may fill in a feedback slip or complete the annual survey. All parents are invited to complete the survey and the results are followed up through an action plan. Any complaints or feedback should be made by contacting Carol Thompson via telephone, or via email:

Email: haveyoursay@derwen.ac.uk

Telephone: 01691 661234

All complaints will be dealt with in line with our Complaints Policy, available on our website. If you are unable to access the website and wish to see the Complaints Policy please contact the College.

Student Support

There are a range of staff that can offer support to students in their unstructured time or in communal areas. We have a student services team who are available during the day to provide ongoing support and guidance to students regarding relationships, friendships or things such as feeling homesick.

Teddy the therapy dog is also based at Gobowen, and students are welcome to come and spend time with him if they would like.

The student helpdesk is part of this team, and will help students get to work, deal with any timetable queries and ensure they are in the right place at the right time.

During the evenings, and at weekends, there are also additional staff that help run activities and clubs and encourage student participation. These staff are called student engagement officers and will invest time getting to know the students and helping them resolve any issues that may arise.

Safeguarding

Our safeguarding team works closely together to support students if there are concerns around safeguarding issues. The team includes:

- Head of Student Services
- Director of Care and Independence
- Safeguarding Manager
- Student Services team

The Safeguarding Manager works closely with external professionals and safeguarding teams. If there are any concerns that need further referral they will action it. This may include the Care Quality Commission, Shropshire Adult Safeguarding Board and safeguarding boards across the country.

If students have worries or concerns, they are encouraged to speak with staff. All staff are trained in safeguarding procedures and are available to offer support as needed.

Students are involved in the safeguarding process throughout, in line with government advice of making safeguarding personal. There are “Need to talk” posters around College with photos of the safeguarding team and contact details for students and staff to use.

Safeguarding of students is of paramount importance. There are policies and procedures in place for staff guidance around their role in safeguarding students and themselves.

All staff have a role to play in working to create a safe environment for students to be able to progress with building life skills and increased independence whilst taking measured risks, which enables them to learn and develop.



Positive behaviour support (PBS)

During the first term, staff will discuss with new students the ethos of Derwen College and the type of behaviour expected.

Our PBS approach is embedded throughout college at all levels, staff receive various levels of training depending on their role. We have a cohort of staff who are qualified PBS coaches and some qualified in Basic Functional Assessment.

We work in line with the person-centred PBS framework providing universal, targeted or specialist level of support to students.

Understanding that behaviours of concern happen for a reason ensures that we can better meet students' needs. PBS is values-led and evidence based, evidence is gathered through direct/indirect assessments and observation.

The development of a student's PBS Plan will detail the support needed to manage behaviours of concern safely and support the student proactively to improve their overall quality of life.

The Positive Behaviour Support Policy and the Restrictive Practices Policy are available on request.

Derwen's therapy dog

Derwen's therapy dog is called Teddy. He is a flat coated retriever who lives at home with a staff member and travels to College on most days.



Teddy is integrated within College to benefit any student who wishes to spend time with him.

Curriculum

Derwen College has developed a wide and varied curriculum for students with a range of cognitive abilities. The curriculum is personalised as necessary with the student's aim of placement driving the content.

More information about the pathways and programmes available at Derwen College can be found on the website (derwen.me/pathways) or in our specific pathways and programmes booklet.

Work experience and transition

At Derwen College, if appropriate to their programme, students will experience real work situations within a supported structure.



The majority of students will begin with work experience on campus and most progress on to an external placement. The work experience team provide support, advice and guidance around all aspects of external work experience.

External placements are arranged by the work experience and supported internship coordinator and are linked to the curriculum area. This could be a placement within the local community with one of our many employer partners. These include national chains such as Premier Inn as well as local libraries, catering establishments and shops.

If your young person already undertakes work experience or paid employment, please let the work experience and supported internship coordinator know and they will endeavour to continue the placement at the closest branch where appropriate. There are opportunities to discuss the link between College and home area work experience and transition support at each review meeting.

Embedding learning at home

During their time at Derwen College, students will gain confidence in their independence skills. It is likely they will exceed everyone's expectations, including their own.

At the end of each term, each student will have a termly report, which will be sent out to parents (with student consent if aged 18+) and form part of the review process. The termly report will report on the student's progress throughout the term and identify their next steps.

It is essential that students can continue practising what they have learnt at College during the holidays. Wherever possible, please provide opportunities for your young person to prepare meals, do their laundry and attend to their personal care while at home.

If you are with your young person when they are accessing services in the community, encourage them to actively participate. If you notice a difference between their abilities at home and what is recorded in their termly report, please contact the personal tutor so it can be noted and the appropriate action taken.

In addition to a scheduled term-time programme of work experience, Derwen College encourages parents to seek holiday work placements to extend the range of opportunities for their young person. Transition is a shared responsibility and while Derwen College offers advice and guidance in relation to holiday placements, there is a clear expectation that we work together with the student and their family to achieve the best possible opportunities. This often involves parents seeking and establishing specific placements in the home area based on their local knowledge and this joint approach is generally the most effective and sustainable.

If you have identified a work experience opportunity close to home that your young person can access in the holidays, please speak to the work experience team at Derwen College.

Personal social and health education (PSHE)

The personal social and health education programme underpins students' experiences in everyday life as young adults. Students learn how to keep themselves and others safe in all aspects of their lives; to think about their role in society and to gain skills to become resilient young adults.

Sessions include:

- Rights and cultures
- Relationships and sex education
- Online safety
- Drugs and alcohol awareness
- Moving on

In addition, tailored support is available from wider College teams.

Awareness of Prevent and British Values is embedded into all sessions.

Independence skills and travel training

Development of independence skills takes place for all students during timetabled sessions each week and is a combined approach of planned and experiential learning. The aim of

independence is to enable students to grow in confidence in living as independently as possible.

We work with students using the active support and active participation models. Our support practitioners will help and guide students to undertake a range of daily living activities such as shopping, travelling, choosing suitable clothing, preparing a snack or meal and community safety.

Programmes are personalised for each individual student. It really enhances a student's learning when they're able to practise these skills at home during holidays.

All students will undertake a programme of travel training to ensure that they have the skills they need to keep safe in the wider community, and support is very closely matched to ability level at every stage.

At College, students will regularly use the local bus service to go to Oswestry, or the train to travel further afield. If the student does not already have a travel pass then, as part of their Independence sessions, they will be supported to get one. The pass is their property and they can decide if they wish to keep it themselves or ask staff to store it in their file. Passes may be used in the holidays at home, so please remind your young person to take it home with them if they are likely to access public transport in the holidays.

Technology and online safety support

Technology has a central place at Derwen College and students are encouraged to use technology throughout their learning and social time. The majority of the curriculum areas at college have access to computers and/or to wi-fi to allow for mobile learning.

The monitored and filtered wi-fi is available in most indoor areas.

Prior to starting College, students should be familiar with their own mobile devices. It is a good idea to discuss with your young person and staff what should happen if they become locked out of their device account.

Whilst we do our best to support students with internet device usage in College, we do ask parents/carers to ensure appropriate controls and safeguarding measures are in place at home.

All electrical equipment brought into Derwen College will need to be Portable Appliance Tested (PAT), which will be done regularly. Items that fail must be removed from campus. All students will need to bring their own headphones and all equipment, including chargers, must be labelled with the student's name.

All electrical items will need to be in good working order and insured on your home insurance.

Derwen College will support students to use the internet safely. Online safety sessions will take place in groups or 1:1. The safeguarding team will monitor internet use and support students with concerns they may have. Any discussions around internet use will take place in private.

Strategies will be put in place if students are thought to be putting themselves or others at risk. Safeguarding procedures will be followed when required.

It is advisable for parents/carers to discuss online safety with their young person prior to starting at Derwen College.

For more resources on internet safety visit:

Mencap Safesurfing:

www.mencap.org.uk/about-us/our-projects/safesurfing

www.childnet.com/resources/be-safe-and-smart-online/

Learner voice

Derwen College has an active Student Council, which is affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS).

Student Council members are elected every October and each area has a representative. The representatives listen to and carry forward ideas in termly meetings with the leadership team and governors.

The Student Council is also involved in voluntary projects and promoting the work of Derwen College.

Every student at Derwen College can apply for an NUS card. Through their work with the NUS, our students take an active role in promoting the rights of people with learning disabilities at a national level.

Careers education information, advice and guidance

Careers advice is embedded into each student's programme with a schedule of employability modules and ongoing personal tutor support.

Derwen College works with local authorities to identify local opportunities for students to move into employment or voluntary opportunities.

If you are aware of careers events happening in your area, please let us know as students sometimes wish to attend.

Leisure time

Derwen College offers students a wide range of social and extra-curricular activities both on and off site.

Throughout the evenings and weekends students can join activities including art and craft, tennis, football, dance, bikeability, cricket, karaoke and swimming.

The Student Union is regularly open at break times, evenings and weekends. It provides a place to meet with friends, play pool, games or watch a film.

There is a regular disco night as well as special events such as the Halloween Night, fireworks display, Christmas Ball and the Summer Prom.

Students may also make use of local leisure facilities or go shopping in the local village or town.

Sports opportunities

We have an ever-evolving programme of sport and leisure activities on offer in the evenings and at weekends. Your young person may have an existing sport they enjoy or they may like to



try something new. Students may choose:

- Football
- Canoeing
- Boccia
- Tennis
- Swimming
- Dance
- Running
- Cycling
- Horse riding

or something else. This is just a taste of what we offer!

Our fabulous on-site facilities include:

- Indoor heated swimming pool
- Sports centre
- Dance studio
- Fully equipped gym
- Sports field
- Woodland Walk
- Hydrotherapy pool
- Sensory space

Derwen College has strong links with community clubs and organisations, and external sport and exercise opportunities are available for all to enjoy.

Derwen College is also proud to have strong links with Shropshire Cricket Board, Shropshire Paddle Sports, fencing club Phenzyne, The Tennis Foundation/LTA, and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award which provide further opportunities for the students.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Derwen College is proud to be a licenced centre for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Students have the opportunity to attain their bronze, silver and gold awards while at Derwen College, requiring them to participate in:



- Volunteering
- Learning a new skill
- Taking part in a physical activity
- Completing an expedition

Students challenge themselves, make new friends and reach an incredible sense of achievement. The Awards Ceremony each year is not to be missed!

For more information about the Duke of Edinburgh's Award visit: www.dofe.org

Kenyon Suite

Objectives:

- To educate and support students to access appropriate local primary healthcare services.



- To support students to learn about their own health and wellbeing and promote a healthy lifestyle and self-care whenever possible.
- Ensure a person-centred approach to care is provided throughout their College journey.
- The Kenyon Suite has two qualified learning disability nurses. At the start of College, each student will have an identified link nurse who will support them.

All residential students attending college will be given the opportunity to register with our local GP practice. Alternatively, students may wish to remain with their current GP practice in their home area. If students choose to remain with their family GP, any required medication will need to be provided throughout their time at College.

The college medical service is provided by Cambrian Medical Practice, based in Oswestry. All students who register with Cambrian will receive an annual health check.

All students registered with Cambrian Medical Practice will need to provide an up-to-date list of all current medication on the day they commence College. Also, if a student has a current medical exemption certificate, a copy will be required by the nurses, otherwise prescription charges will have to be paid in full by the student (unless the student is from Wales).

Students who register with Cambrian Medical Practice will be annually invited to receive the flu vaccination. All other students will need to contact their own GP should they wish to have the flu vaccination.

During the College holidays, prescriptions for medication will be sent electronically to a nominated pharmacy: this is usually a pharmacy near to the student's home. This will guarantee that students have enough medication to last them through the long holiday periods, particularly Easter, Christmas and summer. During the shorter half-term holidays the College will send out medication with the student.

Please note: Some pharmacies may not have an electronic prescription service, therefore Derwen College will send a paper prescription to the student's home, by post prior to the holiday.

Please note: If your young person's prescription changes at any time, please ensure the medical practitioner provides written confirmation of the change to the College directly.

Students are asked to make all routine appointments, e.g. dental and optician, with their local provider during student holidays. This helps to maintain continuity of care.

During the summer term students are advised to follow sun-safety guidance and purchase a suitable factor sun cream to meet their individual needs.

The nurses work Monday to Friday
08:45am–5:00pm.

If your young person contacts you to say that they are unwell, please encourage them to discuss this with their support practitioners. If you are concerned that they may be unable to seek help, please contact the College directly.

Residential students

There is a wide range of accommodation types, from 'Halls of Residences' to single flats.

Each residence has a dedicated care team to help each student become as independent as possible. We endeavour to place students in the accommodation that most closely matches their needs and aspirations.

First-year students will usually be in a residence with higher levels of support and staffing. At the end of each year there will be a review meeting at which students can discuss the progress they have made and the type of accommodation they feel will suit them the following year.

The lead practitioners oversee the wellbeing of students in their residence and manage the care team. Support practitioners will generally be based at one or two houses so they will get to know individual students very well. This

also ensures that students quickly become comfortable with the staff in their house.

A list of items that a residential student may need at College is included on page 37–38.

It is essential that all clothes are clearly labelled with each student's name as washing can easily get mixed up and items misplaced. Please ensure that any new clothes or presents given to students are also labelled, particularly when students return after the holidays. Easy-to-wash items are preferable and less likely to get damaged.

Many students will bring a phone, iPad, games console or other electrical equipment to College. Please ensure that it is labelled with their name and, where possible, only inexpensive items are brought to college. Please make sure that items are insured, the College cannot be responsible for damaged or missing items.

Derwen College can accept no responsibility for student's individual mobile phone bills or data usage.

Whilst electronic devices can bring many benefits, they can also become a source of distraction which may have an impact on work and sleep. For this reason, staff encourage students to work with staff to explore the most appropriate use of electronic devices.

Students are provided with a single bed. If they feel that this may not be suitable, larger beds are available: please speak to the lead practitioner or the Head of Care before your young person begins College. Students will need to provide their own bedding – a full list of items to bring is included on page 35–36.

Students are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. If they have pictures, posters or things to make them feel more at home they are welcome to bring them along.

Students are required to remove all their personal items and effects at the end of each academic year.

Teaching of independence skills will take place for all students from the moment they get up to when they go to bed. Some of this work will be part of their day-to-day activities, but they

will also have specific times to focus on their individual targets as shown in their EHCP/IDP. This may include getting the bus, food shopping, washing and cooking. The Care Plans and Independence Skills targets will incorporate the Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), where appropriate, according to the individual student. Our support practitioners work with students to suggest revisions to outcomes for consideration at annual reviews.

All students are encouraged to take care of their own personal care and well-being. The level of support is personalised for each student and will change as they move through college. Support will be given, along with prompts, if they are assessed as unable to do this themselves. Students will be supported to dress appropriately for the weather and the activity they are doing.

All residences have a kitchen, and students are encouraged to be independent in making themselves a drink, snack and some meals. They will be supported to purchase their preferred choice of food when out shopping.

Washing machines and tumble dryers are available for students to use and support given to those who are new to the task. All students are encouraged to keep their room tidy and wash bed linen.

Meals

All main meals are included for residential students.

Important Information about Confidentiality and the *Mental Capacity Act*

Derwen College is required to comply with the *Mental Capacity Act 2005* and the *Data Protection Act 1998*. Students who are over 18 are legally regarded as adults and all students are assumed to have capacity unless proven otherwise. Derwen College has a Confidentiality Policy which all staff adhere to, and is available to parents on request.

Personal information on students aged over 18 cannot be given to parents or family members

unless the student has given permission. Information relating to another student will not be shared with a third party. This includes Care Plans and Daily Records.

See the section on Power of Attorney and Court of Protection Orders on pages 21–22.

Support practitioners work with parents and families to ensure that their young person is given the best guidance and care possible, but staff cannot impose parental preferences on students. This principle will apply wherever the student lives in the future, after College, and is an important element in the transition to adulthood.

Leisure time for residential students

Students will have a demanding programme during the week: they are given the choice to decide how they spend their free time in the evenings and at weekends. This may be socialising with friends, on an iPad, playing games, relaxing or watching TV. They may wish to participate in trips at the weekend, which can be a great way to visit local sites and make new friends.

On campus, there are clubs, discos, open swimming sessions and a range of organised activities. Student engagement officers are on hand to support students and ensure they are able to access what is on offer.

Students are also free to make use of the commercial outlets on site as well as the Bradbury IT Centre and Student Union. Initially students may find self-directed free time difficult, but they soon adjust and enjoy the freedom this brings. Although Derwen College is an open campus, staff ask students to inform them of their whereabouts so they can ensure adequate support is provided.

Students are encouraged to be in their residences by 10pm on a week night to allow sufficient time to rest and to ensure they do not disturb other students.

Wi-fi is available in residences so students are able to use their own devices with the support of staff should they need it. We do have coverage in every bedroom, but please bear in mind that

this does depend on the device being used. The network team can connect smart TVs, games consoles and smart speakers to wi-fi upon request.

The wi-fi is turned off at 11pm and students are encouraged not to watch TV or use electronic devices late at night. Students must comply with the Information Technology Policy.

At weekends, students won't be woken unless they have an activity to get to. The exception to this will be if they require medication at a specific time, in which case this is administered with minimum disturbance.



Trips

Derwen College offers a number of trips during evenings and at weekends. Students' needs and wishes are taken into consideration during the planning of social and leisure trips, and they are actively encouraged to share their ideas regarding future outings.

The safeguarding team try to accommodate students on as many of their chosen trips as possible, although there are occasions when a trip is over-subscribed. In such instances, every effort is made to ensure that an alternative is offered, be that another trip or activities available on campus.

There are also occasions where students are asked to represent the College at sporting

or cultural events, and they are given the opportunity to consider which trip they would like to attend.

Religious worship, faith and cultural needs

Where possible, students' religious and cultural needs will be met. If a student wishes to attend a religious service they can discuss this with the student services team. For example, on Sundays a taxi is currently available to take those students who are able to independently attend church.

The Church of England vicar from St Oswald's in Oswestry, Reverend Harvey Gibbons, visits weekly (Thursdays 4–5pm) for a Pray and Praise session.

In addition to Christmas and Easter, staff will work with students and families to recognise and celebrate a range of religious customs.

Please speak to the lead practitioner about your family's customs. However, while cultural and religious opportunities can be made available, parents must be aware that participation by the young person will be optional whilst at College.

Hair and beauty appointments

Students can use local hairdressers in Gobowen or Oswestry. If they wish to do this, they can take money out of their account and their support practitioner will help them to visit the hairdressers.

Some students prefer to continue using their hairdresser at home. Students will exercise their right to choose their own style and haircut.

If they wish to have their hair coloured they will be advised to have it done by a hairdresser. Our support practitioners will not support students to dye their own hair, however, a student may decide to do this themselves.

If students wish to have a special hair and beauty trip, they can arrange this through the Independence sessions and their support person can attend with them.

Contacting friends and family while living at college

Students may contact friends and family whenever they wish and staff will support them to make calls if required.

Most students have their own mobile phone, but each residence has a phone which they are welcome to use. Some students will choose to use Teams, Zoom or Facetime to contact their family. Where possible, students are encouraged to do this in their rooms to protect the privacy of others in the vicinity.

Whilst the College recognises that family members can be a great comfort and support to students when they are away from home, students should be encouraged to use the available support from staff at college to solve any problems that do arise. This is an important part in developing independent life skills, and will help your young person gain confidence while settling into College. Family members and friends are welcome to call any time between 8:30am and 9:30pm.

Friends and family are welcome to visit students at College. If possible, please inform your support practitioner at the residence in advance of your planned date and time. If visitors wish to go into a student's bedroom they will need permission from the student first. Dogs are not permitted in any buildings and must be kept on a lead when on campus.

If you wish to bring food in for students, please do not bring high risk items such as meat or dairy products. Students are not permitted to have visitors overnight. Students may go off-site with visitors, provided they inform their support practitioner first.

Please see the 'Visiting Derwen College' section on page 22 for further information.

Travel

Students are able to obtain a 16–25 Railcard or a Disabled Persons Railcard if travelling regularly by train. For more information, please contact the student services team.

Students are encouraged to pack for themselves at the end of term. If there are specific items that you think your young person may need while at home, please ask their support practitioner to remind them to pack them.

Birthdays

If a student's birthday falls during term-time, residence staff are happy to discuss options, with the student, about how they wish to celebrate and consider their particular preferences.

Whilst birthdays can always be celebrated on campus, special occasions such as 18th and

21st birthdays can be arranged off campus. For example, students can be supported to visit a restaurant of their choice, the cinema or go bowling with a group of friends.

We are happy to liaise with the students and their parents in order to facilitate something different.

Birthday celebrations are costed on an individual basis, as additional charges such as transport and staff support costs must be taken into consideration and the total cost is charged to the student's College account following the event.



Additional information

Lost property

Lost property is located with the Student Services department. Students who have lost items are encouraged to check with Student Services regularly. Any unclaimed items at the end of an academic year are donated to charity.

Relationships at College

Students are encouraged to make the most of the social opportunities that Derwen College provides. This is a unique time for many students, when they will be able to form important friendships and relationships that may stay with them for the rest of their lives. Derwen College recognises that students have the right to make their own choices about relationships.

All students will attend Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) sessions which will support them in understanding different types of relationships. The Kenyon Suite is also an important source of information for staying healthy and the safe use of contraception.

Derwen College has a Relationships and Sexuality Policy, which is available on request. The policy complies with the *Mental Capacity Act 2005* and gives students the right to make informed choices. Staff recognise that students may need specific support and will refer students to the internal therapies, Kenyon Suite or the speech and language team as required.

Our support practitioners play an important role in offering support and enabling privacy and intimacy where appropriate.

While College staff recognise that the transition to adulthood can be an anxious time for parents, providing an opportunity for students to experience relationships in a supportive environment is invaluable. Positive risk-taking and learning from experience are important stages in development for all young people.

While those with a disability may need additional support, it is recognised in law that everyone has the right to a private and family life (*Human Rights Act 1998*). Derwen College

aims to ensure that students are confident in their decisions and can access support when they require it.

The British Institute for Learning Disabilities has some useful resources on this subject including easy read resources:

www.bild.org.uk

Students' finances

When your young person enrolls at Derwen College, a student account will be created for them to cover the cost of any external trips they take part in. Parents and carers are asked to deposit £300 per term, at least one week before the start of term.

Paying into your young person's College account

Payments should be made to a student's account preferably through online banking to the College account.

Lloyds Bank
Account name: Derwen College
Sort code: 30 99 95
Account no: 28840560
Ref: student name

If you prefer to pay by cheque, please make the cheque payable to Derwen College with the student's name clearly written on the back and send to the Finance Department at the Gobowen campus.

Day-to-day expenses and spending

Where students are capable, they should be provided with their own payment card by their parents/carers to cover their day-to-day expenses. This should be managed between yourselves and your young person. Derwen College staff will support your young person throughout their time at College to develop their skills to manage their own money.

Students who might lack capacity to manage their own money are always assessed in accordance with the code of practice issued with the *Mental Capacity Act 2005*, and their best interests are fully considered. Funds for these

students will be managed by the finance team. Derwen College has a Student Finance Policy with additional information, which is available on request.

Student feedback

All students are supported to complete an annual survey, which gives them an opportunity to put across their views and give feedback to the college.

If a student wishes to comment, or give feedback on a service that they have accessed, they will be supported to do so.

For external services, support will be given to access the complaints procedure or give feedback. If students have a comment or issue with a healthcare provider then they may contact organisations such as PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) and Healthwatch Shropshire.

Advocates

If a student would like an independent advocate, or if staff feel that they would benefit from the support of an advocate, they will be signposted to the local advocacy services. If they require support in contacting an advocacy service it will be provided. Details of the current local providers are below:

Peer Counselling and Advocacy Service (PCAS):

www.shropshirepcas.co.uk

Celebrating student success

Every opportunity is taken to celebrate the many successes and achievements students make, and small-scale events are held across College throughout the year. At the end of each term, curriculum areas hold very informal celebrations to highlight the individual successes of their learners, and at the end of July a cross-College summer prize-giving is held.

In October each year, a more formal graduation ceremony is held, off site, about which families of leavers will receive notification. Please be

advised that a charge applies for each ticket requested to this event.

College rules

The following rules apply to all students at Derwen College.

Smoking

Derwen College has a Smoke-Free Policy and students are discouraged from smoking. Cigarettes are not available at any of the retail outlets and smoking is not permitted inside any of the buildings. If a student has chosen to smoke and they wish to stop, then they will be supported to do so.

Alcohol

Alcohol is not available on campus.

Students who wish to consume alcohol on site would need to discuss this with their lead practitioner and they will be given advice and information about the effects of drinking and how to drink responsibly.

Students who take medication that may be affected by alcohol will be given information and advice so they can make an informed choice.

Students are discouraged from drinking in communal areas and asked not to share alcohol with other students.

Drugs

Any evidence of the use or possession of illegal drugs will be immediately reported to the Police. Students who abuse or misuse any drugs may be asked to leave college.

Dangerous materials

Students are not permitted to bring any weapons or dangerous items, such as fireworks, to college.

Computer safety

The computer network has protection against viruses, offensive material and other downloads which could damage the system or cause disruption.

Derwen College will support students to use the internet safely. Online safety sessions will take place in groups or 1:1. The safeguarding team will monitor internet use and support students with concerns they may have. Any discussions around inappropriate internet use will take place in private.

Policies and procedures

At Derwen College, we aim to ensure that everyone has an enjoyable, safe and healthy environment to learn, live and work, where they can reach their full potential. Learner activities, staff procedures, guidance policies and resources are continually reviewed to ensure there are the greatest opportunities for success.

Policies and procedures are available on the Derwen College website or on request. Visit derwen.ac.uk/about-derwen/policies-reports

Photography and video consent

Throughout the academic year we take photographs/videos for a variety of purposes – to evidence educational progress and assist learning, to support care plans, for reports and marketing purposes. Photographs that identify students are defined as ‘personal information’ under GDPR and we require consent for some of these purposes.

Clinical photographs may be taken for a number of reasons – for students personal care records e.g. to demonstrate positioning, to monitor skin integrity. They may also be used for internal professional training.

Media permissions

We would like to be able to make use of student photographs/videos for external promotion often used in the public domain. We will always seek permission from the students to allow us to do this.

Personal equipment

Please ensure that all valuable equipment is appropriately insured and labelled.

Wheelchairs

Wheelchair users should have third party indemnity insurance.

All students who use wheelchairs are required to wear lap belts, unless they have agreed otherwise with therapists.

All students who use a powered wheelchair must also have a suitable manual wheelchair to be used in case of breakdown and, if required, for emergency evacuation.



Short Breaks

Short Breaks at Derwen College is available for holidays and respite stays. Visits are tailored around what the student enjoys doing.

Email shortbreaks@derwen.ac.uk for more information or visit:

derwen.ac.uk/short-breaks-respite/



Supporting Derwen College Charity

Derwen College is a registered charity and we hope that you will want to support and promote the work we do.

Your termly parent/carer newsletter gives you an update on events, activities and news from the college and what the students have been taking part in.

There are several ways parent/carers and families can support Derwen College. We welcome participation with all the various fundraising events, such as the 10km Challenge, Derwen Fete & Dog Show, and the Christmas Fayre. These events are a lot of fun and an opportunity for students to show family members what they have been doing and introduce them to their new friends.

If you would like to support Derwen College with fundraising you can visit the fundraising page on the website or make a direct donation. Our Derwen Charity staff will be pleased to discuss any suggestions or ideas for fundraising.

More information on our events and fundraising activities can be found at:

www.derwen.ac.uk/charity

Clothing and personal items for residential students

Students should bring their own bedding, duvet and pillows, along with personal belongings. We encourage students to personalise their rooms, so homely touches such as photos, posters and ornaments can help students feel settled in their new surroundings.

Electronic devices such as mobile phones and tablets, alarm clocks, electric toothbrushes and shavers may be brought to College, but please ensure they are in good working order, are clearly labelled and included on your household insurance. Please also remember to pack the relevant chargers!

New students must come with at least 4–6 weeks of medication to ensure we have enough, especially if registering with our GP.

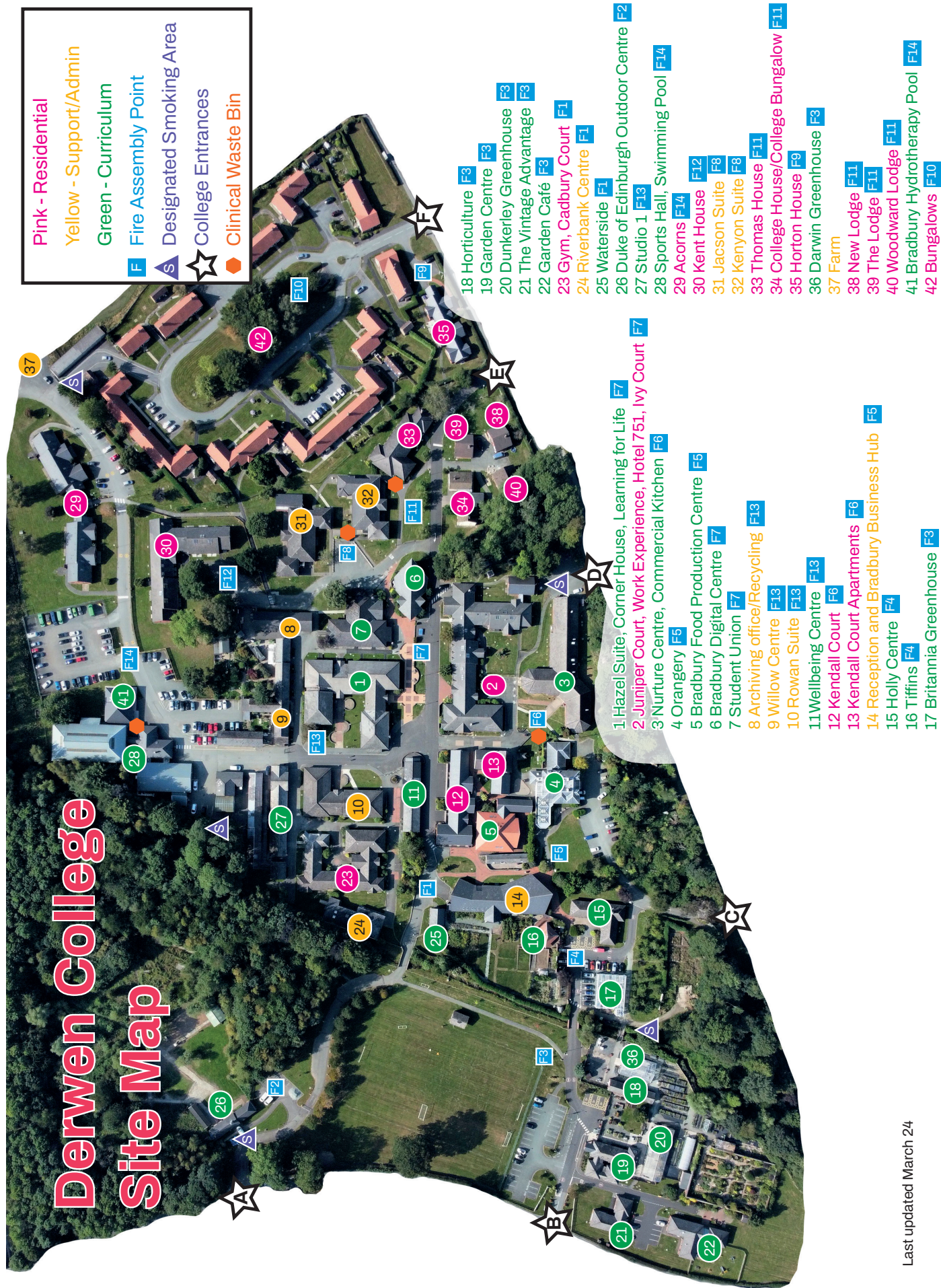
- Suitcase and small holdall for use at half-term
- Drink bottle
- Casual clothing for evenings and weekends, including warm and waterproof coats
- Sun protective clothing

- Sun cream
- Winter and summer hat
- Smart outfits for trips, discos, special events etc
- Prom outfit (July)
- Handbag or sports bag for use on trips
- Swimming kit, including towel and bag
- Sports clothing (football kit, boots, gym clothing, trainers)
- Personal toiletries including sanitary items
- Towels (bath, hand and face cloths)
- Nightwear, including dressing gowns and slippers
- Bedding, comprising of:
 - Duvet and pillow(s)
 - Two sheets, two pillow cases (per pillow) and two duvet covers

What should I bring to College?

The following is recommended clothing and personal belongings that you will need with you at College.

Pathway/programme	Suggested items
Hospitality and Food	Plain black polo shirts (no motifs) Black trousers (no jeans or leggings) or a black knee-length skirt Sensible black shoes with a good grip Steel toe-capped shoes Note: the College will provide all Personal Protective Equipment Hair will need to be tied up. No nail varnish or false nails. Jewellery – only one ring
Retail and Enterprise	Plain black polo shirt, no motifs Plain black cardigan, fleece or jumper, no motifs Black trousers or a black knee-length skirt Sensible black shoes with a good grip
Horticulture	Plain polo shirts, no motifs Plain body warmer, fleece or jumper, no motifs Trousers suitable for outdoor wear (shorts in the summer) Waterproof jacket and trousers Steel toe-capped boots Wellington boots Hat, scarf and gloves for the winter months
Performing Arts	Comfortable loose clothing (jogging/tracksuit bottoms, t-shirts) Comfortable trainers
Learning for Life	Comfortable loose clothing (jogging/tracksuit bottoms, t-shirts) Comfortable trainers Gym kit Swimming kit
Nurture	Comfortable clothing (joggers and t-shirt) Swimwear (including hydro sling where needed) Protective waterproof jacket or poncho* Spare clothing* Warm coat and/or blankets in the winter Sun hat and sun cream in the summer* Spare pads and equipment to support personal care* Medications or specialist feed/thickener and any equipment needed to support this* Any communication devices and chargers *items can be brought into College on a daily basis, or a set can be kept at College for use when needed.



Last updated March 24

How to find us

Derwen College Gobowen

Derwen College
Whittington Road
Gobowen
SY11 3JA

Derwen Marketplace is open daily from 9am to 4pm (10am–4pm on Sundays and public holidays), and comprises:

- Walled Garden Café
- Garden Centre and Gift Shop
- The Vintage Advantage Charity Shop
- Hotel 751
- The Orangery Restaurant

Derwen College Telford

Stafford Park 7
Telford
TF3 3BQ

Derwen College Walford

Walford
Baschurch
SY4 2HL

(When approaching the Walford campus (towards Shrewsbury) go past the main Walford campus entrance for the Harris Centre, and take the next turning right. Turn immediately right and park in the small car park. Follow the signs to Derwen College Walford along the footpath.)

Derwen College Ludlow

8–9 The Business Quarter
Eco Park Road
Ludlow
SY8 1FD

