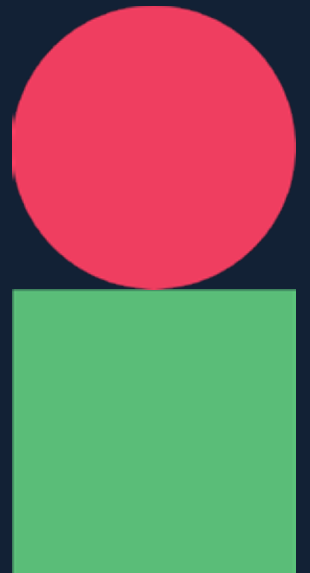




Parent/Carer Handbook 2026–27

**Gobowen Campus
Day 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.



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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 2026–27

Autumn Term 2026	Thursday 3 September	Academic year start date. Term time colleagues return to College
	Tuesday 8 – Friday 11 September	New students start to transition onto Gobowen campus (day and residential students)
	Wednesday 9 September	New students enrol at Ludlow and Telford campuses
	W/c Monday 14 September	Returning students start to transition into College (residential and day students across all campuses)
	Wednesday 21 October	Last day of half term (all students)
	Thursday 22 October	Half term – residential students travel home
	Sunday 1 November	Half term – residential students travel back
	Monday 2 November	Day students return to College
	Friday 11 December	Last day of term (all students)
	Saturday 12 December	Residential students travel home
	Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 December	PD Days
Spring Term 2027	Monday 4 January	College opens. All colleagues return
	Tuesday 5 January	Residential students return to College
	Wednesday 6 January	Day students return to College
	Friday 12 February	Last day of half term (all students)
	Saturday 13 February	Half term – residential students travel home
	Sunday 21 February	Half term – residential students travel back
	Monday 22 February	Day students return to College
	Thursday 18 March	Last day of term (all students)
	Friday 19 March	Residential students travel home
	Monday 22 and Tuesday 23 March	PD Days
Summer Term 2027	Monday 5 April	Summer 2027 start date. All colleagues return
	Tuesday 6 April	Residential students return to College
	Wednesday 7 April	Day students return to College
	Monday 3 May	May Day Bank Holiday
	Thursday 27 May	Last day of half term (all students)
	Friday 28 May	Half term – residential students travel home
	Sunday 6 June	Half term – residential students travel back
	Monday 7 June	Day students return to College
	Friday 16 July	Last day of term (all students)
	Saturday 17 July	Residential students travel home
	Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 July	PD Days

Day students are not expected in College on travel days or Bank holidays.
For colleagues, travel home days are normal working days.

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 so 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 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 Quality	Zoe Wood zoe.wood@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Head of Inclusion, Admissions and Transition	Dawn Roberts dawn.roberts@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Head of Curriculum and Quality	Jennifer Fawcett-Jones jennifer.fawcett-jones@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Head of Satellite Provision and Careers	Sam Brown samantha.brown@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Head of Nurture Provision	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, People and Resources	Natalie Bellis natalie.bellis@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Head of Care. Registered Manager	Von Bolton von.bolton@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Director of Student Services, Safeguarding and Wellbeing. 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	Phil Corrin shortbreaks@derwen.ac.uk	01691 779243
Head of Therapy and Nursing	Tomi Rekikoski tomi.rekikoski@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Admissions and Funding	admissions@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234
Director of Communications, Student Recruitment and 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
Corner House	Lead Practitioner – Zac Crabbe zac.crabbe@derwen.ac.uk	01691 661234

Please be aware that these are also teaching positions so are not always able to answer the phone. In the event you are unable to contact them by phone, please do email them and they will respond as soon as they are able.

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.

Personal tutorial system

Each student is assigned a personal tutor. Your young person's personal tutor will contact you via email during 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

All our day students have an individual risk assessment, which is reviewed regularly or if changes occur. The risk assessment will include specific medical information, details of allergies, as well as any behaviours which could put

them or others in danger. Staff will work with the student to help them to understand their risk assessment and agree any actions or measures to be put in place to keep them safe.

Therapy provision for day students

Universal therapy provision

All day students at Derwen College benefit from a highly skilled staff base, enabling a universal 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.

Therapy provision for day students

Universal therapy provision is available for all day students. When required, the student will be assessed by appropriate therapist who will offer advice to the student and staff on how to manage the presenting issue.

If further therapy input is required, the therapist will signpost/refer the student to appropriate community health services for ongoing treatment.

Therapy services will also support staff on how to manage individual students' needs and offer training such as Makaton and Elklan.



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.

Moving around the Derwen College campus

Parents/carers do not have independent access to the campuses and must sign in accordingly. Parents are then accompanied to where they need to go. 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.

Vehicle access and parking

Please park in the designated car park area.

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

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 bad 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

Derwen 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.

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 the 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.

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.

Derwen 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 Procedures are available on the college website.

As far as possible, hospital appointments and dental treatment should be arranged outside of term time.

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.

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 and refer to the Attendance and Punctuality procedures on the college website for parents and carers. Also, please complete the exceptional leave of absence form request.

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 will 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.

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 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 other key people in a student's life, families should be aware that once a student reaches the age of 18, there are important changes in how decisions and personal information are managed.

In line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, we must presume that a student has the capacity to make their own decisions unless it is established otherwise. We will provide appropriate support to help students make their own decisions wherever possible.

We must also respect students' rights to privacy

and confidentiality. In most circumstances, we will seek the student's consent before sharing personal information with parents or others, including information about their education, care and health. There may be circumstances where information can be shared without consent, for example where there are safeguarding concerns or where a student lacks capacity to make the relevant decision.

Derwen College staff are experienced in supporting students and their families through this transition and are always happy to offer advice and guidance.

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

Visitors and students are welcome to make use of our 'Marketplace' at the Gobowen campus. Facilities include 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.

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

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 ext.291

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.

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 We understand that some students may display behaviours of concern to communicate a specific need. These students are supported by all staff who are trained to provide positive reinforcement and consistency.

We may support these students with a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) to identify and meet their needs using positive and proactive strategies. Our aim is for our students to strive for independence and increase their capability to make positive choices.

During the first term, staff will discuss with new students the ethos of Derwen College and the type of behaviour expected. The Positive Behaviour Support Policy and the Restrictive Practices Policy are available on request.





These policies detail the way in which staff will manage challenging behaviour, the Behaviour Support Plan which may be implemented, and the suspension and exclusion procedures

Students who cause deliberate damage to college property may be asked to cover some or all of the cost of repair or replacement. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The College has clear guidance in place for managing student behaviour and disciplinary matters. Temporary and permanent exclusion may be considered in line with college policy and procedure. The Student Disciplinary Policy is available on the College website.

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 each 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 track the student's progress throughout their time at Derwen College and identify their next steps.

It is essential that students can continue practising what they have learnt at college while they are at home. 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 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. Support practitioners teach 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 outside of College.

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.

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.

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 Derwen College have access to computers and/or to wi-fi to allow for mobile learning.

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.

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 Online Safety Officer 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.

Students are required to comply with the Information Technology Policy.

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

Wellbeing Opportunities

We have an ever-evolving programme of wellbeing activities on offer, including different sports, arts and craft, walking and much more! New groups are designed depending on the young person's interests. Sometimes these groups are accessed through community clubs and organisations in the local area and on the main campus, where we have a sports centre, gym and an indoor swimming pool.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

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

Our 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

Student life

Students sign in and out of College, ensuring their safety and wellbeing during the day. Each student is allocated a locker to keep their belongings in.

Students access the curriculum and learning opportunities in the same way across all locations and have Independence Skills Sessions as part of their timetable. With the student's permission, parents will be kept informed of their progress in independence skills and encouraged to practise at home what they have learnt.

Staff promote healthy lifestyle choices and encourage students to think about what they eat and keep active. All lunches are provided for students with a dedicated team of support workers, who work with students on meal preferences and dietary requirements.

Funding for day students at Derwen College does not cover activities or support after 5pm Monday to Friday or at weekends. However, all day students are welcome to participate in some extra-curricular activities, particularly the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and sports fixtures.

If a day student would like to stay on to participate in any of the clubs, the cost to access these will include support costs for them whilst still in College and will include a supported tea. All additional support costs will be assessed on an individual basis dependent on needs.

Meals

Lunch is provided for day students.

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.

Additional information

Lost property

Lost property will be stored locally on campus. Students who have lost items are encouraged to check with staff 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.

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, Wellbeing Centre or speech and language team as required.

While 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

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. 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- and Vape-Free Policy and students are discouraged from smoking and vaping. Cigarettes and vapes are not available at any of the retail outlets and smoking or vaping is not permitted inside any of the buildings. If a student has chosen to smoke or vape 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 illegal use or possession of 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.

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/carers 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

What should I bring to College?

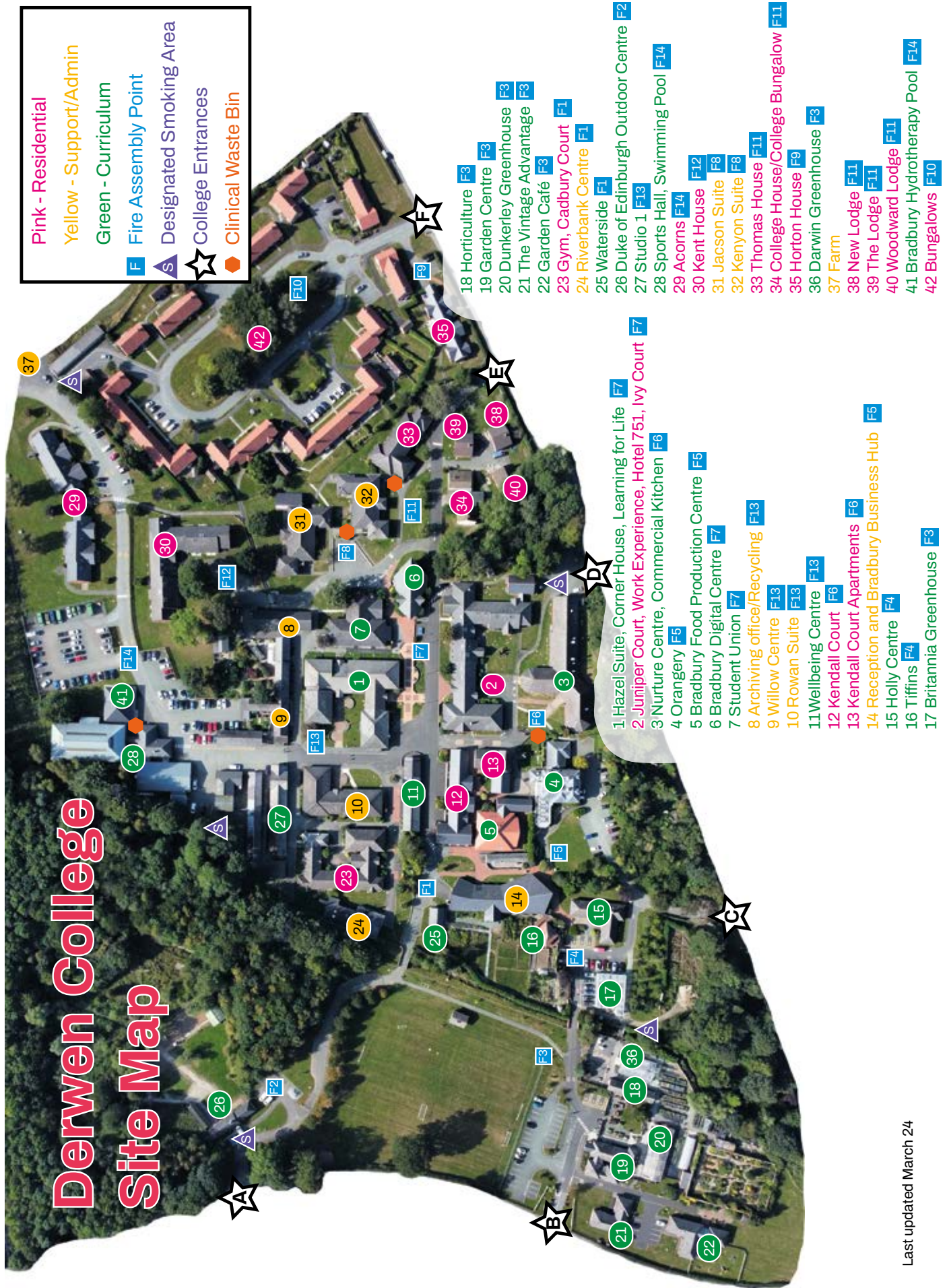
The following is recommended clothing and personal belongings that you will need with you at College.

Pathway/programme	Suggested items
Medication	Ensure all medication has an up to date prescription and clear instructions
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 At least one white shirt for one-off events / competitions 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 Sun hat and sun cream in the summer*
Performing Arts	Comfortable loose clothing (jogging/tracksuit bottoms, t-shirts) Comfortable trainers Water bottle Plain black clothing for shows Black jazz shoes or indoor shoes for studio work
Learning for Life	Comfortable loose clothing (jogging/tracksuit bottoms, t-shirts) Comfortable trainers Gym kit Swimming kit Waterproof clothing and wellington boots for Forest School Vocational pathway clothing / items
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.

Derwen College Site Map

- Pink - Residential
- Yellow - Support/Admin
- Green - Curriculum
- F Fire Assembly Point
- S Designated Smoking Area
- ☆ College Entrances
- Clinical Waste Bin



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

