



High Quality Education For All

Vision: To be an outstanding college

COLLEGE CHARTER



2009 – 2010

Contents:

	Page
Information	3
Admissions	3
Environment & Health and Safety	4
Curriculum Information	5
Teaching and Learning	6
Equal Opportunities	7
Information, Advice & Guidance	8
Learning Support	9
Student Liaison	9
Financial Information	10
Employers and the Local Community	10
How are we doing (complaints & suggestions)?	11
Where can I find the College Charter?	13

Birkenhead Sixth Form College makes the following commitment to you:

Information



- 1 The college will provide an annual handbook, available on request, which will contain information on:

- the programmes and qualifications offered to students at the college and entry requirements
- student destinations
- broad information on teaching and learning facilities

Examination results are available from the college office on request.

- 2 The college will produce information by December each year of the destinations of students leaving the college and will make it available to partner high schools and Connexions. This information will also be displayed in the college on Open Evenings.
- 3 A full list of the Governors of the college is available from the Clerk to the Corporation at the college and is also on the college web site.

The senior staff and Governors of the college are as follows:

Principal: Kathryn Podmore

Deputy Principals: Roger Dawe
Mike Kilbride

Assistant Principals: Ted Behan
Kate Rigby
Paul Rigby

Clerk to the Corporation: David Barnes

Chair of Governors: Peter Cumings

Admissions

- 1 **The college will:**

- ensure that admissions materials are free from bias and
- stereotyping and provided in alternative formats (tape and braille) if required
- respond to telephone enquiries on admissions matters within two working days
- make freely available accurate information on teaching and learning facilities and on programmes of study and qualifications offered



- offer the opportunity to prospective students to look around the college and its facilities and to talk with staff and students, through Open Evenings and Open Days
- provide all reasonable opportunities for prospective students to disclose learning difficulties and /or disabilities
- respond appropriately to any learning support needs disclosed during the admissions process

2 The college will on application:

- offer an individual guidance interview to every applicant who applies before the published closing dates and to other applicants wherever possible
- respond to applicants within two weeks of interview with regard to the outcome of their application, except where written references need to be sought
- make an offer of a place in writing
- offer a second individual guidance interview to every new student during the registration process to help them finalise their choice of course
- make available subject specific information and careers guidance during the registration process

College Environment

- The college recognises the need to maintain a comfortable and appropriate environment, in which teaching and learning may effectively and enjoyably take place.
- Concerns or suggestions about the college environment can be directed to the Assistant Principal (Estates) or the Health and Safety Co-ordinator.
- The college will try to respond to concerns or suggestions as funds and priorities permit.
- The Principal and Governors of Birkenhead Sixth Form College accept responsibility, under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), for providing a safe and healthy environment for all students, employees, visitors and other persons who may be affected by the college's activities.
- The college is a non-smoking building. Designated smoking areas are located behind the Drama Studio and at the rear of the college by the Shrewsbury Road car park.



Curriculum Information



Each subject area in the college will produce a leaflet (as a paper copy, or electronically on the college website and on the college handbook CD ROM), for prospective students, which will include:

- an outline of course content and syllabus
- reference to teaching and learning methods
- reference to assessment methods

and may include where appropriate:

- specific entry requirements for that subject
- key skills development
- work experience opportunities
- recommended subject combinations
- progression opportunities
- resources available

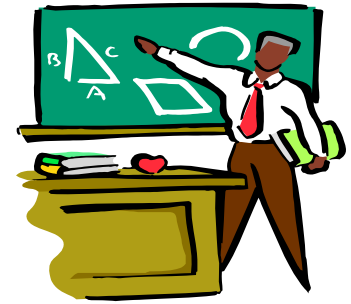
2 Each subject area will supply to students who have selected the subject a handbook, which will include:

- course content and examination structure
- teaching and learning methods
- homework policy
- study skills guidance
- assessment and feedback procedure

and may include:

- welcome and introduction to staff
- examiner's advice
- coursework deadlines
- careers advice
- key dates
- health and safety information
- information on support

Teaching and Learning



The college will ensure that:

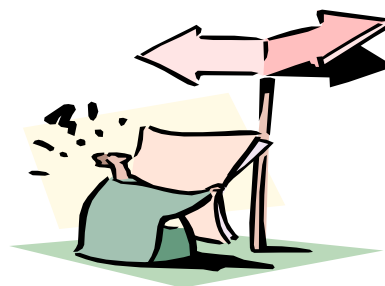
- students will be given a deadline for completing each assignment set. As long as the work is handed in by the deadline date set by teaching staff, it will normally be returned within ten working days.
- staff will structure and plan courses of study to ensure that they meet the assessment requirements for each qualification
- programmes of study are offered by the college leading to nationally recognised qualifications
- courses will be designed to promote the development of good study skills
- most students will have the opportunity to develop a broad range of skills within the Short Course Programme
- students and their parents or guardians will receive regular written and verbal reports on progress and attainment. Parents or guardians will be invited to one consultation evening each year. All students will receive at least two reports per year.
- student achievements will be assessed and shared with the student and recorded regularly throughout their courses
- each subject organises an end-of-course review and at least one student focus group to enable students to make known their views
- most students have the opportunity to develop Key Skills
- the planning and delivery of all courses will take into account the individual learning needs of students
- staff will tackle discrimination, promote equality and challenge stereotypes to ensure equality of opportunity for all
- all parents, guardians and students will be treated with courtesy and respect
- Students and their parents / carers will be informed if attendance and punctuality do not meet college expectations.

Equal Opportunities



1. The college is fully committed to achieving equality of opportunity and celebrating cultural diversity. All students and staff will be treated with respect and dignity and the college aims to provide an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
2. Behaviour or activity which discriminates on grounds of colour, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, age or social / economic background will not be tolerated.
3. The college is committed to meeting all students' needs, to enable them to achieve their potential and to ensuring that those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are treated fairly. All reasonable adjustments to provision will be made to ensure that disabled people are not substantially disadvantaged. Access to most areas of the college is available for students with disabilities and only the J area is totally inaccessible.
4. All enquiries about students with learning difficulties and disabilities will be referred to the Learning Support Manager.
5. Every member of the college has responsibility for equality and diversity. Advice is available from the Equal & Diversity Co-ordinator. Copies of the college Equality and Diversity Policy and Single Equality Scheme are available in Personal Tutor bases and from the Equal & Diversity office (opposite the Drama Studio). It can also be accessed via Moodle (the college Intranet).
6. The college monitors differences in gender, ethnicity and disability in recruitment patterns, retention and achievement.

Information, Advice & Guidance



1 On entry to the college, the college will provide:

- an information, advice & guidance interview to finalise course choice and ensure that students are on a course appropriate to their abilities and aspirations
- information which makes explicit what is expected of students and parents and what they can expect

2 While studying at the college, full-time students will have:

- timely and supportive guidance in the event of a course change early in the year
- contact with a Personal Tutor through weekly tutorial sessions and individual interviews
- access, through a Personal Tutor, to further timely and supportive information and guidance advice on personal matters, academic matters and progression
- advice as to professional agencies, including a professional counsellor, when required
- regular assessment of progress
- action planning with tutors at regular intervals
- careers guidance, available throughout the course, including advice on alternative places of study, if appropriate, and employment
- information, advice & guidance on progression, through a Careers and Higher Education Programme

3 Students will be entitled to a carefully considered personal reference. Students will have:

- a fair and honest assessment from all Subject Tutors
- a Personal Tutor comment where appropriate
- an interview to discuss the contents of any substantial reference, including UCAS.
- the right to express any dissension from the above reference

Learning Support

ALL STUDENTS

Study support is available for all students in English and Study Skills in the Study Support Room. Students can refer themselves or their Subject Tutor(s) / Personal Tutor can recommend referral. If referred by a subject(s) a student is expected to attend as this is a vital element in achieving potential.



STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND/OR DISABILITIES

- The college will make reasonable adjustments for students with learning difficulties and / or disabilities to ensure they are not disadvantaged in their studies.
- Students are assessed for their additional support needs by the Learning Support Team, who will liaise with external agencies who have supported the student. This information is summarised and appropriate support is organised for the student.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

One-to-one and small group support maybe available to students whose first language is not English.

Student Liaison

The college will:

- provide each student with the opportunity to stand for election to the Student Council
- ensure the Student Council elections are carried out in a fair and transparent manner.
- give all students the opportunity to vote in Student Council elections.
- provide opportunities for all students to communicate with staff, Student Council representatives and governors via a range of methods including email, in person, student forums and through informal lunches with governors.



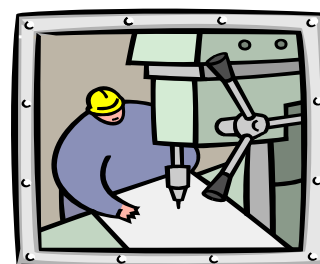
Financial Information

1. All full-time students who are UK or EU citizens will not be charged course fees.
2. The college will ask all students for a single voluntary contribution to the **College Fund** which is used to enhance the education of students in the college, supporting activities which would otherwise not take place.
3. The **Educational Maintenance Allowance** is available to all 16 – 19 year old students in full-time education, subject to means testing.
4. The college has a **Hardship Fund** for all students. It is available for expenses, which students might have to meet to enable them to stay in education.
6. The college will pay for the **examination entries** of students except in certain specific situations, which are outlined in the college Examination Entry Policy, which is available on request.
7. **Books, equipment** and **educational visits** are provided by the college to students. In most circumstances these are provided free of charge if they are essential for the course which the student is following.
8. Where the college is organising an **educational visit** for which a charge is made, the college will consider students on benefits separately and favourably. Support may be provided to such students.
9. The college will make available information on **free transport** and **public transport** opportunities and will support students living over three miles from the college by contributing to their transport costs.
10. The college has available a range of information on **welfare rights and benefits** and Personal Tutors will direct students towards appropriate agencies if required.



Employers and the Local Community

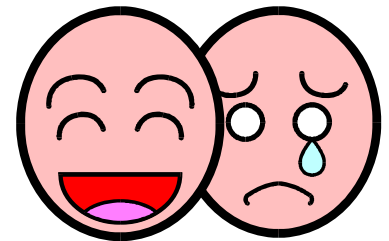
1. The college has a member of staff responsible for Links with Industry and the Community. Contact with the college should be through this person in the first instance.
2. The college will respond to enquiries of a general nature within 5 working days.
3. The college recognises the value to employers of the development of all Key Skills and will construct opportunities through the Short Course Programme and at other times to achieve this. Further details are available from the Short Course Programme Manager.
4. The college will make available opportunities for Work Experience and Work Shadow for most students. The opportunity to investigate careers in the caring professions will be provided through the Community Programme.



- 5 The college will further endeavour to ensure that:
 - employers are informed of the purpose of the Work Experience and Work Shadow
 - employers are informed of their responsibilities and those of the college in respect of assessment and supervision
 - students are prepared for the experience
 - students are given the opportunity to feed back on their experiences
 - employers' comments on the performance of the student are considered and retained for Work Experience
 - placements made available are relevant, whenever possible, to the students' programme of study
6. The college will work in partnership with appropriate support agencies and networks to further links with the local business community.
7. The college will endeavour to ensure that employers offering work placements operate within the college's Equal Opportunities Policy.

How Are We Doing?

BIRKENHEAD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE COMMENTS AND CONCERNS



If you feel concerned and / or worried about something to do with the college, or you would like to congratulate us or make a suggestion about how we can improve our service, the following information explains what you should do:

The college welcomes your comments and criticisms. Whatever you say will be taken seriously and dealt with objectively and efficiently.

- Complaints tell us when you are not happy with a service and this gives us the opportunity to put things right.
- Comments / suggestions provide ideas on how we can improve our services.
- Compliments let us know when you are happy with a college service and tell us when something is working well. We can then share this good practice with other college services.

If you have a concern

- 1 Where possible, especially if **you** feel that the issue is of a minor nature, talk to the member(s) of staff concerned, your Personal Tutor or the relevant Head of Subject (remember to stay calm and be polite). Your Personal Tutor can advise you on how best to proceed. If you receive learning support, you can speak to a member of the Learning Support Team or your Personal Tutor.

- 2 If the issue is a general one, which you feel affects numbers of students, please discuss it with your Personal Tutor or bring it to the attention of a member of the Student Council.
- 3 All complaints will be treated with confidentiality, unless there is a serious threat to your personal safety or that of a member of staff or others or where there is a legal requirement to disclose the information (see college confidentiality and disclosure policy (DDA)).
- 4 **Try to resolve the situation informally.**
- 5 If this becomes impossible, and / or you are still not happy then you can complete a complaints form (available from reception or on Moodle) or write a letter. You can complain orally and ask for it to be treated as a formal complaint if you wish.
- 6 All complaints or expressions of concern received in writing will be treated as formal complaints.
- 7 We will acknowledge your formal complaint within four working days.
- 8 A senior member of staff will investigate your complaint.
- 9 He or she will let you know the outcome within 15 working days by letter (if a delay occurs you will be informed of the progress made and the likely date you should receive a full written outcome).
- 10 If you are still not happy, you can appeal to the Principal, in writing and within 10 working days (see separate appeals procedure, sent with the outcome letter). If you are still not satisfied, you can refer your complaint to the local Learning and Skills Council.
- 11 Copies of this Complaints Procedure and the Appeals Procedure are kept by all senior staff and in the college reception. The Complaints Procedure is also part of the College Charter and is published on the College Website and on Moodle

Where can I Find a Copy of the College Charter?

Copies of the College Charter are available in:

- all Personal Tutor bases
- the College Office
- Moodle (Learner Services menu and then Student Information) and the College Web Site (College Information tab and then in College Policies).

