



**St. John's
College**



Skills for Life

Course information pack



**Ambitious
about Autism**

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Our curriculum

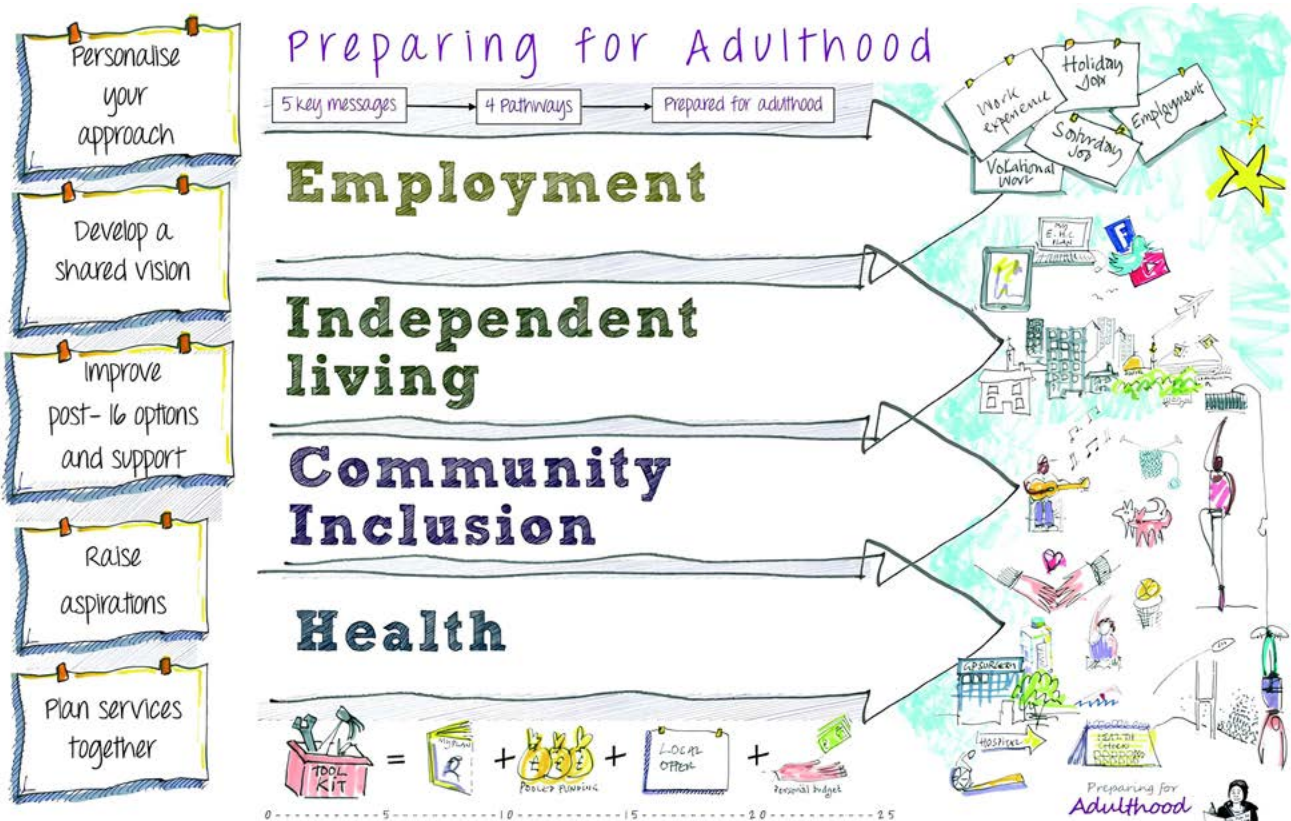
At St. John's College our curriculum aims to prepare learners for life after college by teaching them the skills and knowledge they need to be more independent adults who have a good quality of life.

We provide several destinations-led courses that are all framed around the four preparing for adulthood pathways:

- independent living
- community participation, friendships and relationships
- good health and wellbeing
- employability.

Our courses are designed to reflect each learner's future goals. This means that both the content and number of sessions are planned to give learners the knowledge and skills they need for their intended next steps after college. For example, if a learner's goal is to find a job after college, their course will include more sessions focused on employability than those of learners with different aspirations.

This pack gives an overview of our **Skills for Life** course.



Preparing for Adulthood pathways from the Delivering Better Outcomes (DBOT) team



Quality of life

Quality of life is embedded across all our college courses. Learners are supported to develop their skills and knowledge in areas that are meaningful and relevant to them as individuals to improve their quality of life.

The Ambitious Approach

The Ambitious Approach is a values-driven, learner-centred philosophy to positively promote a learner's quality of life and outcomes.

There are three core underpinning values applied to our teaching:

- dignity
- respect
- compassion.

The curriculum

- Curricular models vary across the portfolio of services; however, all curriculums are designed to provide the relevant knowledge and skills that will support and prepare autistic learners to their destinations beyond us.
- Dedicated teams including lecturers, therapists, behaviour and employment specialists work collaboratively to personalise the curriculum offer and to identify and deliver relevant interventions.
- Teams regularly evaluate for progress and adjust accordingly.

Curriculum delivery

- We recruit staff with the right values who are committed to the approach of teaching and learning with dignity, respect and compassion.
- We train our staff to provide high-quality teaching through deep subject knowledge and specialist knowledge of how autistic children and young people learn.
- We ensure our learning environments support and nurture a learner's physical and psychological needs.

Collaboration

- We value the voices of learners, parents and carers, and staff work closely with them and together to address barriers to learning to support the best possible outcomes.
- The Ambitious Approach is our commitment to a personalised, destination focussed curriculum which is delivered with dignity, respect and compassion. This supports learners to be 'future ready' with improved outcomes and quality of life.



Wellbeing

1. Emotional wellbeing
2. Physical wellbeing
3. Personal development



Independence

4. Independent living
5. Self determination
6. Rights
7. Employment
8. Material wellbeing



Social participation

9. Community inclusion
10. Interpersonal relations



Skills for Life

course overview

This course is designed to prepare learners for adulthood through purposeful educational activities that develop the skills they need to access the world around them as independently as possible.

Learners will typically need a high level of regulation, sensory or communication support and their primary destination is likely to be social care based. Our aim is to develop their knowledge and skills so that they leave us with more independence and control over their future lives.

Learners on this course will:

- improve their ability to identify and communicate their needs and preferences
- increase self-regulation, communication and occupation skills through the support and guidance from our in-house therapy team
- develop peer and community engagement and interaction skills enabling them to access learning and community activities
- develop essential daily living skills
- develop skills for safe community participation, including travel
- develop vocational skills
- develop daily routines to support good health
- develop functional skills in literacy and numeracy, including digital skills
- develop skills and strategies to cope with change.

Next steps and destinations

- Learners will have the skills they need to take part in meaningful activities, including vocational opportunities, beyond college.
- They may go on to supported living or residential care environments, where they can use their new skills and be more independent in their daily lives
- Learners can use their skills to be active members of their communities.
- Learners may progress to our Explore Employment course (depending on their rate of learning and progress within the three-year programme).

Skills for Life course: Example timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.30-10.00am Check-in	Preparation for learning	Preparation for learning	Preparation for learning	Preparation for learning	Preparation for learning
10.00-11.00am	Community skills	Work skills	Shopping skills (Literacy focus)	Relationships	Communication (Literacy focus)
11.00-11.15am	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
11.15am-12.15pm	Community skills	Work skills	Shopping skills (Numeracy focus)	Relationships	Communication (Literacy focus)
12.15-1.15pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1.15-2.15pm	Community skills	Household skills	Cooking skills (Numeracy focus)	Sports	Enrichment
2.15-3.00pm	Community skills	Household skills	Cleaning skills (Numeracy focus)	Sports	Enrichment
3.00-3.30pm Check out	Reflection: My targets	Reflection: Learner voice	Reflection: About me	Reflection: Key worker meetings	Reflection: Achievements

Functional skills numeracy, literacy and digital skills are embedded throughout the week.



Sessions information

Preparation for learning

Learners will be supported to prepare for, engage and establish a routine to engage positively with their learning experiences. Educational activities will include:

- personalised strategies to support learners to get ready to learn
- understanding the plan for the day
- understanding their learning targets for the day
- identifying and preparing their required resources for learning
- establishing and embedding motivational strategies for learning.

Quality of Life indicators

- Wellbeing – emotional wellbeing, personal development.

Community skills

Community participation is an important part of all our lives. Learners will work towards accessing the community safely to support their quality of life and ability to engage with the world. This course will give them the opportunity to develop the following skills:

- identifying what to bring on a trip out
- accessing community spaces safely
- accessing different modes of public transport safely
- following basic road safety rules
- communicating with unfamiliar people in the community
- understanding basic social conventions, such as queuing
- accessing a range of leisure opportunities and making choices, such as ordering a drink
- understanding money and making transactions
- knowing who to ask for help in the community
- understanding simple social signs, for example, toilets.

Quality of Life indicator

- Social Participation – Community Inclusion.

Work skills

In this session learners will develop their work skills onsite at St. John's College. These skills are then applied and practiced through community projects and work experiences. Skills development will include:

- following instructions from familiar and unfamiliar people
- remaining focussed on a task for increased periods of time
- engaging with others
- exploring jobs in a work setting and communicating preferences
- role specific skills, for example using a photocopier for administration tasks
- communicating with others in a work setting, for example asking for a break
- travelling safely in the community.

Quality of Life indicator

- Independence – Employment, Material Wellbeing.

Household skills

Using our purposefully designed flat, the aim of these sessions is for learners to develop ability and independence in basic household tasks, so that they have more autonomy and control over their future lives.

In household skills sessions, learning will include:

- using cleaning tools and products safely
- cleaning surfaces and floors
- making and changing beds
- washing and drying clothes
- emptying bins and recycling
- using appliances correctly and safely.

Quality of Life indicator

- Independence – Independent Living.



Shopping skills

This session helps learners develop important daily living skills.

Learning will include:

- creating and understanding a shopping list
- getting ready to go shopping, such as planning how to get there and what to bring
- finding items in the shop
- following a shopping list
- counting and checking items
- paying at the checkout or using automated check outs
- using money and cards
- following rules in the community.

Quality of Life indicators

- Independence – Independent Living.

Cooking skills

Developing vital cooking skills equips learners for life beyond college. The aim of this session is to enable learners to develop their cooking ability and increase their independence levels.

Learning will include:

- personal hygiene and health and safety in the kitchen
- using basic kitchen equipment safely and correctly
- using basic kitchen appliances safely and correctly
- preparing simple meals and drinks
- following easy-read recipes
- storing food safely and correctly
- understanding basic healthy and unhealthy food choices.

Quality of Life indicator

- Independence – Independent Living.

Cleaning skills

The aim of this session is to enable learners to develop ability and increase independence in basic household tasks therefore giving them more engagement, interaction and control over their own future lives.

In cleaning skills sessions learning will include:

- keeping the kitchen clean and tidy
- washing up and loading and unloading a dishwasher correctly
- using cleaning tools and products safely
- cleaning surfaces and floors
- cleaning kitchen appliances safely and correctly.

Quality of Life indicators

- Independence – Independent Living.



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

High-quality relationships and sex education (RSE) help create safe communities where learners can grow, learn, and develop positive and healthy behaviour for life. This session develops learners' understanding and skills to enable them to self-advocate and understand how to develop healthy relationships to enrich to their own lives.



Learning includes:

- knowing your body parts (including private body parts)
- understanding safe and unsafe touch
- saying no effectively
- knowing the concepts of public and private
- recognising different types of relationships
- understanding who 'safe' people are
- making friends
- understanding personal space and boundaries
- equality, diversity and inclusion and understanding simple differences, such as different religions and cultures
- basic citizenship, for example taking part in community actions projects.

Quality of Life indicators

- Wellbeing – Personal Development.
- Independence – Self-determination, Rights.
- Social Participation – Interpersonal Relations.

Community sports

Physical and mental wellbeing is important for us all to sustain a healthy lifestyle. In sports sessions learners are supported to undertake a variety of physical activities to support ongoing physical wellbeing and identify a wider range of preferred activities they can continue to sustain their wellbeing beyond college.

In sports sessions learning will include:

- understanding the importance of warm up and cool down activities
- developing the skills required to take part in a variety of sports/ exercise activities
- learning how to use equipment safely and correctly
- improving fitness, balance, strength, and motor skills
- identifying the benefits of physical activity on our bodies and overall health
- identifying preferred activities and where they can access these after college
- taking part in group activities
- following instructions and responding appropriately.

Quality of Life indicator

- Wellbeing – Physical Wellbeing.



Communication

Language and communication allows us to interact with the world around us in a meaningful way. It supports us to engage and share our needs, wants, thoughts and feelings with others. Communication sessions will develop learners' expressive and receptive communication skills so they can get the most they can out of their interactions.



Learning will include:

- making requests for wants and needs (including asking for help)
- expressing likes and dislikes
- understanding and expressing feelings and emotions
- using non-verbal communication skills appropriately
- following basic one step instructions
- understanding and responding to basic questions
- engaging in social interactions with peers and groups
- taking turns in tasks and activities
- taking turns in conversations
- intensive interaction skills (where appropriate)
- using Augmentative and Alternative Communication tools (AAC).

Quality of Life indicator

- Wellbeing – Emotional Wellbeing.
- Independence – Self-determination, Rights.
- Social Participation – Interpersonal Relations.

Enrichment

Enrichment provides learners with opportunities to explore a range of activities that they may not have had access to before. These activities have the potential to broaden engagement, discover new talents, and increase overall quality of life.

Activities can relate to physical and mental wellbeing, the arts, or simply exploring an area of interest. A range of new experiences will be offered, and learners will choose the activities they wish to engage with on a weekly basis with no pressure to undertake a complete course in one area. Learners also can mix, and form friendships with other learners with similar interests who may not be in their own class.



Potential enrichment activities include:

- drama
- music (for example, drumming and percussions workshops)
- singing
- dance (for example, Bollywood or street dance)
- circus skills
- sports
- yoga
- art
- DJ skills
- magic skills
- interest groups, for example LGBTQ+
- animal and bird experiences
- gaming.

Quality of Life indicator

- Independence – Self-determination.



Reflection

Reflection sessions at the end of each day give learners opportunities to:

- identify aspirations and long-term goals
- understand and collaborate on their learning goals
- understand what and why they are learning and how it will help them in life beyond college
- understand the progress they are making towards their learning goals
- identify any extra support they might need to succeed
- share how they learn best and like to be supported in their learning
- recognise and celebrate their achievements
- give feedback on their college experience to help the college work towards continuous improvement
- receive pastoral support to foster learners' emotional, social and mental wellbeing.

Quality of Life indicators

- Wellbeing – Emotional Wellbeing.
- Independence – Self-determination.

Literacy, numeracy and digital functional skills

Literacy, numeracy and digital skills development give learners the basic skills needed to live, learn and work. Skills are embedded across the curriculum sessions and learning takes place in everyday contexts. This ensures the skills learned are relevant, practical, and engaging.

Learners will work towards developing the following skills:

- listening and responding to simple questions
- recognising basic words, signs and symbols used in everyday life
- expressing their needs and wants
- using key words and signs symbols to obtain information or follow instructions
- asking for help
- counting and using numbers in daily life
- relating events to days in the week and times of the day
- describing and comparing items for size and shape
- sorting and organising objects
- interacting meaningfully with apps using a touch screen
- taking a photo
- typing using a keyboard
- using communication tool interfaces.

Quality of Life indicators

- Wellbeing – Personal Development.
- Independence – Independent Living.

Therapy offer at St. John's College

Ambitious about Autism has a two-tier model for therapy delivery, through either a universal or enhanced offer across speech and language, occupational therapists and staff trained in positive behaviour support.

Universal offer

Therapists are involved with individual young people and classes, but this is primarily indirectly. For example, therapists work closely with the team around the young person but the direct work is carried out by the class lecturer or support staff on a consistent, daily basis.

Through our universal offer:

- Therapists will train, upskill, support and model the identified whole-college strategies and interventions for their relevant discipline. These have been agreed on the basis there is a strong evidence base for impact.
- Therapists will review individuals and class progress on an ongoing basis, alongside the class team and other specialists involved.
- Therapists will advise and support the class teams on adjustments required to the college environment and teaching styles.
- Therapists will provide advice to families and support relevant reporting on progress.

Enhanced offer

At the enhanced level, therapists will often make individual assessments to inform individualised programmes, however, they may also still work indirectly with young people.

Through our enhanced offer:

- Therapists may assess through highly specialist consultation and formulation that there is a need for a personalised programme with direct, therapist-led interventions.
- Personalised programmes will include the identified whole-college strategies and interventions for their relevant discipline agreed on the basis there is a strong evidence base for impact.
- Therapists will provide individualised assessment of specialist resources and support the class teams on adjustments required to the college environment and teaching styles.
- Therapists will provide advice to families and support relevant reporting on progress.



	Universal provision	Enhanced provision
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support access to and engagement in the teacher-led curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver targeted therapy that complements but is distinct from the teacher-led curriculum.
Key features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding occupational therapy and speech and language therapy expertise into teacher-led processes. • Joint problem-solving access and engagement issues. • Co-creating an enabling environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapist-led intervention. • Goals based on therapist assessment and clinical decision-making. • Therapy integrated where possible into curriculum.
Mode of delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily consultation-based. • May include therapist observation or assessment to inform advice. • No separate therapy goals or therapist-led sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires therapist-led observation and assessment for therapist led goal setting and programme planning. • Programme may be delivered by a therapist or another professional.
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-led. • Therapists act in a consultative and supportive role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapist-led. • Goals set and reviewed by the therapist.
Intended impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress and engagement in the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress against therapist-led/ therapy-specific goals.



Admissions

If you are interested in a placement at St. John's College, please contact our admissions team. They will be able to talk through any questions you may have, organise informal visits and advise you on the admissions process.

We meet the needs of learners across London and the southeast as well as many other UK local authorities.

Before being offered a place at St. John's College, all learners will have an assessment. This will involve key members of staff looking carefully at reports and available documentation, the young person spending one day at St. John's College and sometimes our staff visiting them at home or in their current placement.

St. John's College will only consider making an offer of placement once an assessment has been completed. If you are seeking a privately funded place, we are happy to talk you through this process.





St. John's College

We are Ambitious about Autism

Ambitious about Autism is the national charity standing with autistic children and young people.

We believe every autistic child and young person has the right to be themselves and realise their ambitions.

We started as one school and have become a movement for change. We champion rights, campaign for change and create opportunities.

Contact us

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Ambitious about Autism is a registered charity in England and Wales: 1063184 and a registered company: 03375255.

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How to find us

Public transport

St. John's College is a short 10 min drive from Brighton Railway Station. The 37 City Buzz bus runs direct to our site.

Travelling by car

Please input the postcode BN2 0AF into your GPS for navigation to St. John's College. Parking is available on request.

