

Kingston College

Supporting learners with behaviours that challenge



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Kingston College is a general college of further education in South West London. The college has a discrete provision for learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities that is based on a shared site, not located on the main campus. The provision has ten staff plus several learning support assistants (LSAs) and approximately 80 learners who are studying a mixture of full time and part time courses. The courses are branded under the name The Skills Centre, and are intended to provide a range of opportunities to help people with a disability develop their skills. Learners attending the Skills Centre have the opportunity to develop skills to progress to further learning, to find employment, to live independently and for personal and social development.

Supporting Learners with behaviours which challenge -Background information

Over the last three years the college has noticed a change in the learners applying to attend The Skills Centre. The college is now much more likely to have learners presenting with challenging behaviour. As the provision was not originally set up to support such learners there were no procedures in place or established links with supporting agencies.

The traditional approach to dealing with issues of inappropriate behaviour at Kingston College was to suspend the student for a period of time whilst an investigation was carried out. The student was asked to come to an interview accompanied by a parent or guardian and a statement of their version of the incident was taken and captured on an incident form. In separate meetings witness statements were then collected from other staff and students. The information was then collated and taken to a panel of senior staff who determined if a college rule had been broken and if so what punishment should be enforced. The final outcome of the process was then conveyed to the learner via a letter and a meeting with the learner.

This process was often very unsatisfactory as it resulted in the learner being suspended from classes for days or even weeks while the information was gathered. It was often intimidating and frustrating for the learner who was suspended and while it established whether an incident of poor behaviour had occurred it did little to understand why it had happened or to identify steps that could be put in place to manage the behaviour more appropriately in the future.

Finally the college had a tendency to rigidly enforce the college rules without looking to see if some reasonable adjustments could be made that would allow the learner to continue to study, whilst reducing or eliminating the risk of the behaviour impacting on other students or teachers.

How has this been addressed?

The college procedures were reviewed and new procedures adopted for dealing with behavioural issues, these were first implemented from September 2011. A copy of the new "Student Disciplinary Guidance and Procedure" is available. (Annex 1) The concept behind the

new procedure is a swift and accurate recording of the behavioural issue followed by the implementation of procedures to reduce the risk of the behaviour occurring again. Suspension is now limited to only severe cases of behaviour where there is a significant risk to students or staff

The flow chart (Annex 2) shows the two systems that are now in use. For minor incidents of behaviour, the tutor immediately meets the student and identifies the behavioural issue. An electronic card system of green, yellow and red cards is then used to record the behavioural incident on Moodle – which the student and their parents or carers can also access. This allows patterns of behaviour to be recorded and logged. A partnership meeting is put in place to develop strategies to manage the behaviour

For serious incidents an electronic incident report is submitted using a work flow process which allows for instantaneous report of the behavioural incident to all the relevant managers and professionals. A meeting is organised with the student within 24 hours of the incident and ideally on the same day.

The incident and the student's interview notes can then be reviewed by the managers and the investigation outcome reported. The priority is to manage the risk but to put in place workable solutions to modify the students' behaviour so that they can continue on the course. A completed examples of a behaviour management contract is provided (Annex C) After every incident, a resolution meeting is held and following this, the student/s involved are sent a letter summarising what has been agreed to support them to re-integrate into classes. A completed example has been provided (Annex D). A case study has also been produced, showing the implementation of the procedures. (Annex E)

Implementation of the Procedure

This procedure is now the standard reporting procedure used to record and track incidents in Kingston College since Sept 2011. It allows logs of incidents to be kept and means all the information involving an incident is stored electronically. With the Skills Centre it has seen the **number of behavioural incidents recorded fall by 28%** when compared to last year and this academic year there has only been one permanent exclusion of a learner with learning difficulties and or disabilities.

Future Developments

Following a peer mentoring visit to Hackney College the plan for next academic year is to incorporate the ideas of restorative justice into the disciplinary procedures to allow conflict resolution between the victims and perpetrators in behavioural incidents.