



PARENTS GUIDE



**NORTH
SHROPSHIRE
COLLEGE**

At North Shropshire College we understand the important role parents and guardians play in the decision making processes when a young person is thinking about coming to college. Before making important decisions about education in the crucial years between 16 and 18, it is important to understand all of the options open to your son or daughter.

At this stage, you may have only a general impression of what studying at the College is really like. These pages contain some of the most frequently asked questions to help you understand the benefits of studying at college.

GETTING STARTED

What kind of courses do you offer?

North Shropshire College offers a wide range of courses which ensures that we can provide a combination that is able to meet the educational needs of most students.

Please pick up a copy of our prospectus from reception to see the range of full time courses or download a copy at www.nsc.ac.uk.

How does my son/daughter apply?

Just complete the application form in the prospectus or the online form on our website. Early application is advisable to guarantee their first choice.

Your son/daughter will receive a detailed admissions interview, which you can also attend if you wish. Details of their past achievements and future aims will be recorded at the interview and this record is made available for the tutor and student at the start of term.

What happens at the start of the year?

Enrolment will take place in late August/early September (following confirmation of results). During the first week at college all first year students attend an induction programme. This will introduce every aspect of college life, with the clear aim of providing comprehensive information about individual courses and what is expected of students at college.

The induction programme includes details of the tutorial system, timetable, college rules and discipline, the library and resource centre, computer facilities, course content and how it is assessed, careers information and routes, university entrance processes and student support.

Will my son/daughter be in the same group as their school friends?

Part of coming to College is about maturing and making new friends. If the course has more than one group, it may be that they will not be in the same one.

How does college differ from school?

The college provides a disciplined and well-supported environment, but it also challenges students to develop and acquire personal learning skills that will help them succeed. Whilst standards for work and behaviour are high, there is undoubtedly an adult atmosphere, which is apparent in the way students interact with their peers and in staff-student relationships. There are also adult learners and mature students on degree courses in the college, which encourages students to act in a mature and more adult fashion. Students have the opportunity to meet people from different parts of the county and beyond. This can develop their social skills and understanding of others. These factors create an environment that provides an invaluable "stepping stone" between school and university or the workplace.

FACILITIES

What facilities does the college offer?

The college boasts a comprehensive range of facilities and resources for learning.

Oswestry Campus offers some of the best educational facilities in Shropshire – an exciting, modern campus on a shared site with the superb, purpose-built Oswestry Leisure Centre. Our purposeful learning environment provides an excellent range of classrooms and well-resourced learning facilities, including new dedicated study centres. Specialist facilities include:

- four hair and beauty salons meeting the latest professional standards
- newly designed bricklaying, plumbing and electrical installation workshops
- dedicated art studio, with ceramics and photography facilities
- six computer classrooms plus graphics/multimedia workshop with a suite of Apple Macs
- Professional teaching kitchen and Scholars restaurant
- High-quality sports pitch, training pitch and Multi-Use Games Area

Walford Campus is situated amidst a beautiful 220-hectare estate, which includes mature woodlands, new tree plantations, fishing pools and a rough game shoot. Thanks to recent investment of over £10m, Walford provides some of the best land-based facilities in the region. We are particularly proud of the new RD Park Dairy Centre with its state-of-the-art robotic milking parlour. We also benefit from excellent engineering, motor vehicle, equestrian

and sports facilities set within an extensive country estate. The award-winning Harris Centre provides fantastic specialist resources for animal care, which houses over one hundred species and over seven hundred animals ranging from alpacas to meerkats, snakes, rats, kookaburras and bearded dragons. As well as specialist animal laboratories, a dog grooming parlour and an impressive birds of prey centre.

The Aspire Centre is a thriving centre for technical engineering and motor vehicle training based in superb facilities on the Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire border. The Centre benefits from spacious and well-equipped workshop facilities, which are ideally suited to practical training. Recent capital investment has been made to upgrade IT facilities and extend the range of specialist engineering equipment available.

Shipley Campus is a thriving centre for education and training within easy reach of Bridgnorth, Telford, Wolverhampton and the Shropshire/Staffordshire border villages. Thanks to significant capital investment in recent years, the centre now offers a superb range of specialist full-time courses in animal management, in addition to full-time childcare courses and a range of part-time programmes.

Are there facilities to buy food?

On each main campus there are refectories, which provide hot and cold meals, drinks and snacks. There are shops selling food, snacks and stationery and residential students can also purchase toiletries at Walford refectory. Around the campuses there is also a range of vending machines.

How do I find out about the residential accommodation?

There is residential accommodation located at Walford campus and priority for allocation of rooms is given to students on land-based courses for whom daily travel presents particular problems. Generally the hostels are single sex and the accommodation comprises mainly of single study bedrooms with washbasins, bathrooms, showers, and social/kitchens areas. One room has been specially adapted to allow disabled access. Students are asked to register interest in accommodation at interview and their details are then passed to the Accommodation Manager to process the request. To find out more or to ask to view the hostels please ask to speak to the Accommodation Manager at Walford campus.

SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING

How do you keep in contact with parents and students?

Throughout the year there are regular updates of College information such as upcoming events.

- College website

- College social media pages
- Moodle – the college virtual learning environment. Students have access to a range of learning resources on Moodle - accessible from via the internet. Students should log on to Moodle every day to keep up to date with what is happening in college.

The College uses Social Media platforms to share information with current students, prospective students, local employers and the wider community. Following us on Twitter and Facebook are great ways to keep up to date with things that are going on in College. We will also release any important or urgent announcements via Social Media and our Website.

How do you support students?

Each full-time student has a personal tutor who they will meet regularly on a one to one basis. These meetings monitor attendance and progress and set targets. A copy of the agreed outcomes will be recorded in an electronic Individual Learning Plan which can be accessed online by both tutor and student and will be used as a monitoring device prior to the next meeting.

In addition there is a range of support services available for students including Peer Mentors, Counselling, Advocates, Finance Adviser, Pastoral and Welfare Advisers and a range of visiting health specialists.

What about discipline?

Life as a College student is very different to being at school. Students will have more independence and will be expected to manage their own time. Students do not wear a uniform and there are no bells for lessons, but the college is nevertheless a disciplined environment. All students are made aware that discipline is an essential priority and a pre-requisite for high standards of work, behaviour and results. There is a clear disciplinary procedure with an ultimate sanction of exclusion if this is contravened.

There are some things that we expect from students:

- Regular and punctual attendance
- Be prepared for lessons with correct equipment and uniform if require
- Switch off all mobile phones and electronic devices during lessons
- Behave respectfully toward staff and students
- Behave responsibly in class
- Respect the College facilities including only smoking in designated areas
- Complete homework and assessments on time

All college staff are trained to support and care for their students and to help them achieve their goals.

We have a simple code of conduct and students agree class rules at the start of the college year. The code of conduct mirrors what employers expect from their workforce – so we see this as a positive reinforcement for working life.

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How do you deal with bullying in college?

Bullying and harassment of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, students are able to talk in confidence, knowing that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is encouraged to talk to staff. North Shropshire College believes that it is always unacceptable for a learner to experience abuse of any kind. We are committed to providing a safe environment for all of our students.

We expect learners to:

- Attend regularly and be punctual.
- Hand in all their work on time and ask for help if they need it.
- Respond to reasonable requests from college staff.
- Turn off mobile phones in classrooms and learning centres.
- Treat everyone with respect and tolerance.

The College will not tolerate:

- Disregard for health and safety precautions.
- Substance misuse of any sort, including drink and drugs.
- Theft, fraud or damage to property or equipment.
- Threatening, abusive or offensive language or behaviour.
- Any activities deemed as discrimination or hate crime (e.g. Homophobia, Racism, Sexism, Disablism etc.).
- Misuse of the Internet or college computers.

Most of these situations are very rare; we do however reserve the right to suspend and discipline learners where necessary.

Equality and Diversity

The College prides itself on being inclusive and is positive about students from other races, cultures, religions and those who have disabilities or particular sexual orientations. Our day to day environment encourages working together and mutual respect; our tutorial subjects encourage discussion on equality and diversity issues and promotes equality of opportunity and tolerance to all learners.

What about safeguarding and health and safety?

The College has a Safeguarding Policy and designated Safeguarding Officers at both campuses. Every member of staff is trained in safeguarding which helps ensure learners are safe and protected from all forms of abuse. Essentially the policy puts the welfare of the learner at the centre of all we do. Safeguarding is covered in tutorials so students know what to do if they have an issue themselves or know of someone else in danger.

We strive to ensure that our learners are safe at all times. We carry out regular risk assessments on placements and activities. All trips and visits are carefully planned so that risks are properly identified and the students' safety is ensured. It is essential that students have the necessary appropriate or protective clothing for their course activities and a list of essential clothing and equipment is sent out to all applicants during the summer.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

How many days will my son/daughter be in College?

Most students are in College from three to five days a week - it varies from course to course. The length of the College day also varies according to the campus:

- at Oswestry the day starts at 9am and ends at 4.30pm
- at Walford the day starts at 9am and ends at 4.15pm
- at Aspire the day starts at 9.30 am and ends at 3.45pm
- at Shipley the day starts at 9.30am and ends at 4pm.

Timetables are renewed annually and are issued at enrolment.

What are the term dates?

The term dates are sent out in the summer and are also on the college website.

AUTUMN TERM	5 September 2016	to	16 December 2016
Half Term	24 October 2016	to	28 October 2016
SPRING TERM	3 January 2017	to	7 April 2017
Half Term	20 February 2017	to	24 February 2017
SUMMER TERM	24 April 2017	to	23 June 2017
Half Term	29 May 2017	to	2 June 2017

Do we have to inform the college if my son/daughter is going to be absent?

Yes – we need to know if a student is not going to be in college that day. Students are required to attend every class, unless ill or if there is some other unavoidable reason.

If your son or daughter is unwell or unable to attend College, please telephone or let us know for each day of the absence before 10am, stating name, course, tutor and reason for being away.

Email – absence@nsc.ac.uk

Phone –	Oswestry Reception	01691 688000
	Walford Reception	01939 262100
	Shipley Reception	01902 709840
	Aspire Centre	01584 811789
Text –	ABSENCE to 07624 810 364	

Students should not arrange routine doctors' or dental appointments or driving lessons when they should be attending classes. Holidays must not be taken in term time.

There may be occasions when your son/daughter could be absent from College for a reason known in advance, such as a medical appointment that cannot be arranged outside of College hours. If this is the case, please make the personal tutor aware of this.

Do students need to be in College when they don't have a lesson?

No, however there are a variety of things to do to keep them occupied. Students can come into College to work on projects or assignments, using the library or computing facilities.

Can my son/daughter keep their part-time job and still come to the College?

Many of our students undertake part time employment whilst at College. In most cases, this is highly beneficial and students benefit not just from the additional income they receive but also from the experience and independence part time jobs often give.

However, there is now a lot of evidence that when full time students have part time employment in term time of more than 10 hours per week, their College work is likely to suffer. As well as attending classes, students are required to do a considerable amount of private study, and we very much hope you agree with us that your son/daughter's first priority should be their College course. We would, therefore, welcome parents restricting their son/daughter's working hours to a reasonable amount.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Will I get help in paying for kit or equipment?

Your son/daughter may be entitled to financial assistance from the Bursary Funds, to assist with essential course related costs, if you are experiencing exceptional and severe financial difficulties or are experiencing financial barriers that prevent your son/daughter from following their aspirational course of choice.

Eligibility for financial support is based on household income. Further information is available on the College website. Applications are considered throughout the year. If you are unhappy with the decision that we make regarding any bursary application you can appeal by writing to the Principal, giving the reasons for the appeal.

The Welsh EMA is also available to eligible students. See the College website for details

As a full time student, your son/daughter may be entitled to free meals at College. Information about qualifying for these meals is available on our website. If you are entitled to free meals at College, you will be given vouchers to the value of £3 each day toward the cost of food in our refectory. Attendance at College is required to receive this allowance.

Will I get help in paying for a travel pass?

Accessing local education and training can often be a challenge for young people due to the high costs of travel. The College has decided to offer free travel on some selected routes to enable the young people of North Shropshire to access education and training at their local college. To request a travel pass on any of the free routes please apply using a Bursary Fund Application form indicating the route and pick-up point.

Details of all routes and times can be downloaded from the website www.nsc.ac.uk

Many local authorities have transport schemes to assist 16 to 18 year olds and details of these are published on their websites. Travel remains free on all routes where students are eligible for a travel bursary.

ON PROGRAMME SUPPORT

What type of contact can families and guardians expect from the College?

We greatly value the contacts we have with parents/carers. Your son or daughter is most likely to achieve their educational goals if he/she, parents/carers and the College work together as a partnership. Please do not hesitate to contact your son/daughter's personal tutor at any time if you have any concerns about your son/daughter's progress at College or any other matter.

Each level of learning at the College also has a dedicated Curriculum Area Manager (CAM) who looks after the students within their area. They will help to make sure that every student is achieving on their course and have the opportunity to progress when they complete their studies. CAMs work with Student Services and tutors to support all students.

Your son/daughter's personal tutor will contact you if we have any concerns and we will involve you if any significant decisions, such as changing course, need to be made.

Consistent with this general position, North Shropshire College will keep parents/carers informed about issues affecting a son or daughter under 18 enrolled as a student or a 'vulnerable adult' over the age of 18 years. There may, however, be circumstances under which we may not be able to provide information. For example, when parents/carers are separated or divorced we may not be able to give information to a parent/carer with whom the student does not live. The law also recognises that minors may be capable of making their own decisions on medical matters, without the need for parental consent, and under such circumstances, the College may not be able to release information to parents/carers.

All curriculum areas offer progress review evenings at least once a year, where you can discuss progress and ask questions. But if you have any questions and concerns during the year, please contact their personal tutor by telephoning reception.

What happens if my son/daughter wants to change their course?

It is possible to move across to a different course or change options and this decision must be taken with the advice of the personal tutor and Curriculum Area Manager. The cut off point for this is generally week 4, after which it is usually not possible to move to a different course.

Are there opportunities for my son/daughter to develop sporting or hobby interests at college?

There are a range of sporting and recreational activities on offer coordinated by the College Sports Maker. Details of fixtures and activities are posted on noticeboards as well as on Moodle and on Social Media.

In addition, students are encouraged to participate in off-campus-visits as part of their course, which can be local day trips or longer and possibly overseas visits.

How much homework will my son/daughter have?

It varies from course to course, although most will have assignments to work on as well as other related work. At the start of the course, students will receive a schedule which highlights deadlines for assignments. There is no schedule for homework as students are expected to take responsibility for their deadlines.

What if my son/daughter falls behind with their work?

Personal Tutors monitor grades and student work online. This allows them to see very quickly if a student is falling behind and step in to help. This help may take the form of referring students to an assignment workshop or to study support sessions where, as well as assistance with college work, students will receive practical advice such as time management skills.

My son/daughter had learning support at school. Will they still get help at College?

This will be discussed at the initial interview. The personal tutor is the first port of call if there are any concerns about your son/daughter during their time at NSC. The personal tutors work with a wider pastoral support team, which includes Pastoral Learning Mentors, Student Finance, Counselling Services and Learning Support Assistants.

Many students, for a variety of reasons, need extra help if they are to succeed in their studies. We welcome parents letting us know if they think their son/daughter would benefit from extra help.

We offer several different types of support, including:

- Support in an informal setting, allowing students to work in small groups of two or three on coursework or to improve their written or maths skills; or 1:1 where appropriate to meet specific needs.
- A large team of learning support assistants who can provide help in or out of class.
- Help for those with a physical disability, such as hearing or visual impairment, or restricted mobility.
- Special arrangements for examinations.

Will my son/daughter be able to improve their Maths and/or English skills?

Today more than ever employers and educational institutions value and expect maths and literacy skills – as well as the ability to be able to use and apply modern technology.

In order to best prepare our learners for higher education and the world of work we passionately believe that there needs to be a wide range of opportunities to achieve these qualifications – especially if they have been unable to do so at school.

The College offers students the chance to gain qualifications in Maths and English at a level which reflects their needs and abilities. Any student who has not already achieved an A*-C grade in GCSE English or Maths will work toward this qualification as part of their study programme. Attendance at these classes is compulsory – any student who does not attend these classes or the exam will not be able to achieve their main qualification.

Are your teaching staff well qualified?

College courses are taught by specialist tutors whose qualifications usually relate directly to the course they deliver. Many tutors also have a master's degree or other postgraduate qualification in addition to a first degree. Because many college lecturers pursued careers in business or industry before joining the teaching profession, they can bring significant additional experience to their lectures.

Tutors who teach on vocational courses will almost certainly have both professional qualifications and career experience in the subject that they teach.

CAREERS AND THE FUTURE

Can my son/daughter study for a degree at North Shropshire College?

We offer a range of higher education courses at North Shropshire College. This has a number of positive spin offs:

- highly qualified tutors who also teach 16 to 18 year olds
- university standard technical resources and facilities that are also available to 16-18 year old learners
- a purposeful and adult atmosphere
- a role model for those aspiring to university.

To find out more about these courses please follow the university courses link on our website.

Will my son/daughter receive advice about university entry and careers?

North Shropshire College offers a careers and guidance service in conjunction with Shropshire Youth. The service is available before your son/daughter starts at college, throughout the duration of their course and after they have completed their studies if they are unsure about what to do next.

The college has contacts with UCAS and all the British universities and also works in partnership with Shropshire Youth, Harper Adams University College, Glyndwr University and Staffordshire University to provide a Careers Service for students.

Students also receive help and support with job seeking, applying for employment and preparing for interviews. Our personal tutors can also help to prepare CVs and help with job applications.

If my son/daughter requires a reference for university or work who should they contact?

Requests for references should normally be made in writing to the relevant course team leader. The reference will be based on the tutors' knowledge of the student after discussion with other appropriate staff.

LEARNER VOICE

What do your students think about college?

We invite students to share their views of the college provision through formal structures such as Student Governors and Course Representatives. In addition students can make their voice heard through focus groups, surveys and questionnaires as well as the comments and complaints process.