

College Experiences

This information was gathered from [REDACTED] college students. Two workshops took place. 14 students took part in the workshop.

Overall Summary

Most students feel happy and positive about college, valuing being treated like adults, feeling included, and having supportive relationships with staff and peers. They appreciate clear explanations, visual and interactive learning, and the help they receive from teachers and TAs, which supports their confidence and independence.

Friendships, small groups, and a calm environment contribute to their sense of belonging, while many note that college helps them develop important life and work skills such as travelling independently, cooking, and managing money.

To improve practice further, students would benefit from more consistent support, greater use of interactive and practical teaching methods, and clearer communication across staff. Providing extra help with reading, writing, and spelling, alongside increased opportunities for independence and emotional support on difficult days, would strengthen confidence and engagement. Teachers could also enhance inclusion by improving accessibility around college, and ensuring all students feel listened to and supported in their individual needs.

Feedback

How do you feel about college?

1. Happy I am treated like an adult
2. It's okay
3. Happy
4. I feel happy about college
5. I feel happy because I like to see my friends
6. Alright. I like college, it's my second year. I want to stay for another year
7. Happy coming to college
8. I hate it
9. I feel okay
10. I don't mind it
11. I don't mind college. It's better than school. They don't treat me like a little child
12. I'm learning more here than my last college but it depends if I'm having a good day or not
13. Good I enjoy coming every day
14. I feel happy and calm seeing the teachers

Do you feel comfortable and included at college?

1. Yes I do and I like the smaller groups
2. Yes I do most of the time
3. Yes I do
4. Yes
5. Yes I do sometimes
6. Not really
7. Yes
8. Yes – people I know already at college makes me feel comfortable. I feel included by all my friends and teachers
9. Yes
10. Yes I always feel included at college
11. Yes
12. Yeah
13. Yes – I go to the café, sports hall, kitchen, independent living flat and garden
14. Yes

Do you get the help you need in your lessons?

1. Yes with reading and spelling
2. Yes
3. Yes
4. Yes all of the time
5. I need help sometimes and I get it
6. When we are doing writing, my teacher writes things down and I can copy. My teacher or other staff or friends help me read questions
7. Yes
8. Sometimes
9. With all the teachers and Ta's
10. Yes but need more LSA's in class
11. Yes I get help if I need it
12. Yes the teacher helps me
13. Yes
14. Yes I can support in Maths and English

How do teachers and support staff help you learn best?

1. By explaining work and helping me when I struggle
2. Well they listen and I learn best by presentations, so they put them on the board and explain after
3. Reading, writing, repeating
4. I don't know
5. By helping me with writing and talking

6. Write it down and read the question for me and help me in general if I need it
7. They help by showing and helping to remember what I have learned
8. The interactive screen and the whiteboard
9. One to one prompt. Visual pictures and videos. Games to learn – maths and communication
10. They provide a plethora of solutions
11. Pictures, repeating, going over topics again
12. I don't really have people helping me
13. By letting us take pictures of the lessons we need
14. Let me write on a whiteboard

What could college do to support you better?

1. To get gcse's and a career
2. I get enough support
3. Add more interactive lessons
4. Better Wifi / repeat questions
5. Read questions out when I don't understand it
6. Help me more with spellings
7. Let me go to the canteen on my own. It should hopefully start after xmas
8. It could help me prepare for work
9. Shorter days
10. ***left blank***
11. 1:1
12. Well my teacher at the moment is supporting me and I am learning so I'm not too sure. But some teachers don't communicate with the pupils so that could change.
13. To help me deal and stay in college on a bad day, college could provide a member I can go to when I need them
14. Have more hard maths work

Do you feel more confident since coming to college?

1. Yes very
2. Yes to speak and do things by myself
3. Yep
4. I have walked home, gone to shops and remembered what to buy independently
5. Yes I feel a lot more independent since my first day at college
6. Yes because using my mind to think
7. Yes. When I was at school I kept asking for help all the time but I don't need to ask for help as much now, I feel more confident with my work
8. Not using my ear defenders anymore. Walking into town and going on escalators
9. No

10. Sometimes
11. Yes
12. Yes definitely
13. Yes I do feel more confident
14. Yes

What things have you learnt to do by yourself?

1. Travel to college
2. Making the bed, cleaning, IT skills
3. Checking spelling
4. Cooking
5. Gardening and looking after my mental health
6. Ironing, crossing the road safely, and using money in shops
7. Writing more independently, I can walk to different parts of the college more independently now
8. I can carry my own bags. Vacuuming and doing my own zip, buttons on my coat.
9. Nothing
10. Coming to college
11. Finding my way around
12. I'm not too sure
13. I feel like my confidence has grown. I feel more independent
14. Walk independently to and from college, started filling in application forms and signing forms. Theory test

Are there times when you feel unsure or need more help?

1. No I always feel fine
2. No
3. When faced with tricky maths problems
4. Sometimes
5. Sometimes, just sometimes
6. I need help to go to the canteen and order my lunch
7. When we go out on Tuesdays, I do feel safe but it can make me feel anxious. I can get upset in the morning on Tuesdays; my teacher helps me. I love Maths at the moment it's too easy, I think it should be harder. I would like some extra work to challenge me. I find the sensory room helpful to calm down and talk to my teacher
8. Yes when I don't understand a question
9. Yes
10. Mostly in the lessons
11. Yes
12. No not really but if there is any help then I will ask
13. On a day when I am struggling

14. Want more life skills sessions to prepare for adulthood

Do you have friends or people you enjoy spending time with at college?

1. Yes I have a massive friend group
2. Yes Harry, Nathan, Will
3. HOW staff, Nathan, Riley, Will, Katie
4. Nathan, Riley, Katie
5. My main two best friends
6. I have many friends that I can talk to during college
7. Yes, I've made a new friend at college, I have other friends in college too
8. Yes I have friends
9. Yes
10. I have a few friends
11. Yes I really like spending time with my friends at college
12. Yes I do
13. Yes I do
14. Yes

What is the best thing about college for you?

1. Doing a course I enjoy
2. Making friends, learning more
3. The trips on Tuesdays
4. Making new friends
5. Seeing everyone and making friendships with students
6. I like having conversations with people at college
7. Just being here. I like being independently than at school
8. Best place to be because of friends
9. Going home
10. Meeting new people
11. Learn different subjects
12. The best thing is coming here and knowing that I'm trying to make a new life away from my old school
13. The learning experience
14. Friends and teachers. Maths is my favourite subject

What is something you would change if you could?

1. Nothing
2. Better accessible lifts and doors. Smoother access through doorways. Better food choices in the café. Accessible sports equipment
3. Open HOW café a bit later to let others rest a bit more. Add more free time. More diverse trips.
4. Have better food in the canteen/more choice

5. Absolutely nothing, I love it all
6. I would change my classroom to it's original location
7. I want a swimming pool put in. I would like it if the canteen was on the same level as the base so it's easier to get to as I am not too good with stairs.
8. Have games like bingo
9. Shorter days
10. Teachers and students to understand disabilities
11. Being able to ask for help
12. I think that before you come to college your old school should communicate
13. Something to help me on a bad day, someone specific I can talk to
14. We need more sport equipment. I would like to go and do more work experience at my old school. We would like the sensory room back

Do you feel like college is preparing you for your later life?

1. Yes doing my own decisions
2. Yes
3. Yes absolutely
4. Yes
5. Yes because it helps a lot
6. I feel like college is helping me to become more independent
7. Yes – I'd like to work with children. College are teaching me to be independent. Cooking and trying new food. Going out into town. How to make a bed/housework. I want to leave college next year (do one more year)
8. Yes
9. No
10. Yes sometimes
11. Yes
12. Yes I think so as I want to work in a nursery and the course I'm on will help me going towards that dream
13. I feel like college is making me more independent for the future. I know what my career pathway is and I'm working towards it.
14. Yes – I am doing things I wouldn't have done before

Conversations verbally with young people

- Teachers and the students don't understand anxiety
- Communication between my old school and college has been terrible. I don't feel believed when I say things
- I haven't seen my EHCP
- College is draining. I need more places I can retreat to
- It can be so noisy in the classrooms