Farleigh Further Education College Swindon is a specialist residential college for learners aged 16 to 19 plus with Asperger’s Syndrome and associated disorders.

Welcome to Farleigh Further Education College Swindon

Farleigh Further Education College Swindon is an independent specialist residential college for learners aged 16 to 19 with Asperger’s Syndrome and associated disorders.

Established in 2004 to meet the needs of young people with Asperger’s Syndrome, Farleigh Further Education College Swindon is registered with the Learning and Skills Council and is a full member of the National Association of Specialist Colleges of Further Education (NATSPEC).

Learners are aged between 16 and 19 years on entry and have a diagnosis of Asperger’s Syndrome. They have ambitions to live, study and/or work in mainstream communities as self-reliant adults. Learners may have attended special schools or have experienced difficulty at mainstream schools or colleges and typically learners will have been statemented within the terms of the 1981 and 1993 Education Acts.

A range of diagnoses may have been applied to them, including: autistic spectrum disorder, autism or Asperger’s Syndrome. Farleigh Further Education College Swindon can provide places for up to 50 pupils.

We provide:

- Further education in academic and vocational courses
- One to three year intensive programmes
- Preparation for employment or higher education through a range of strategies
- Support in developing strategies to assist with anxieties
- Educational, social and individual development programmes
- Independent living skills

Outcomes

From the outset learners will be encouraged to make informed choices and decisions about matters which affect them.

At the end of their course they will be better prepared to move on to the next step in their independence pathway, be that in higher education, employment, supported accommodation or independent living within the community.
Okus Road - Swindon

Situated within a short walking distance from Bath Road residence, Okus Road is one of two smaller residences. It is a new-build, domestic house set on the edge of a new housing development. Okus Road can house up to five residential learners and is set up to allow learners who have progressed to more advanced levels of independence.

Each learner will be expected to undertake more advanced levels of independent work generally with a higher expectation on independent cooking and budgeting. The building has five separate bedrooms (one with an en-suite bathroom), a shower room, a bathroom (with bath and shower) and a staff cloakroom and office. The learners also have access to an information technology room which is housed in the converted garage at the end of the garden.

Celsus Grove - Swindon

Celsus Grove is also a new-build modern house on a brand new housing development and is only about five minutes walk from Okus Road ensuring that Farleigh Further Education College Swindon residences are all within easy reach of each other. This greatly adds to the sense of a college community and of a collaborative ethos whilst allowing for each residence to maintain its own identity and individual community.

A three storey town house with five separate bedrooms (one being en-suite), a shared bathroom, staff cloakroom, communal living area and garden. Celsus Grove has been designed to allow learners to develop further independence skills in readiness for the next stage in their lives, whether that be university or moving on to employment.

Farleigh Further Education College Swindon is always looking at and reviewing ways in which it can develop and promote positive and realistic steps towards independence for learners. As such, Farleigh Further Education College Swindon has a flexible approach towards the independence programmes and facilities that it uses. For a two year period the college has had access to a small two bed flat which has been used to further develop particular independence skills for those learners in the last stages of leaving Farleigh Further Education College Swindon before moving on to total independence and life.

Care

At Farleigh Further Education College Swindon, we have three main residences and an independent flat. Each residence operates separately, each having its own identity, sense of community and team working ethos. Across the college and between all sites there is also a strong sense of a broader college community and of a cohesive college team spirit.

Across all sites and at all times, all learners are expected to take individual responsibility for their own actions and to maintain high standards of behaviour and mutual respect for both learners and staff.

The three residences are:
- Bath Road
- Okus Road
- Celsus Grove

Bath Road - Swindon

Bath Road residence is a large house in the middle of Swindon’s old town and offers accommodation to thirteen learners. The residence comprises of thirteen en-suite bedrooms each equipped with baths and/or showers. The main house also has communal living areas, dining room, information technology room, staff office and a large garden.

Old town itself hosts cafes, shops and restaurants and is also conveniently placed for easy access in to Swindon’s town centre, shopping areas, local colleges, leisure facilities, train and coach stations.

All learners who come to Farleigh Further Education College Swindon are expected to actively engage in a full timetable of college work and independence work. At Bath Road all learners will be expected to work on independence skills such as laundry, keeping their own bedrooms clean and tidy as well as supported independent travel to and from college each day.

Catering is provided on site with a main meal being produced and cooked each evening. There is also a small kitchen for learners who are ready to start independent cooking. Learners will be expected to help with the setting up and clearing away of each meal.

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For information on our specialist education and care services:

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Or visit our website: www.priorygroup.com/farleighfeswindon
Residences

All residences at Farleigh Further Education College Swindon are staffed 24 hours a day (with the exception of the independence flat) and all have night waking officers on shift every night. Each residence has a dedicated team of learning support workers who work closely with the learners at each site. In addition to the support workers, each residential site is overseen by a senior member of staff and shift leaders who are responsible for running the day-to-day education, support and care of each learner. Working in this way develops close working bonds and helps develop mutual trust and support for each learner and their needs.

Staffing and support

All staff are expected to complete specialist training and develop an understanding and working knowledge of Asperger’s Syndrome. Support staff develop particularly good working relations with the learners that they work most closely with and all learners are assigned a member of staff who oversees their time with us and who liaises with family and parents.

It is essential that learners at Farleigh Further Education College Swindon and their parents/caregivers are able to voice their concerns when they feel things are going wrong. Farleigh Further Education College Swindon is committed to ensuring the highest quality of its provision for all learners belonging to this college.

Complaints and concerns are welcomed to ensure this commitment is met and upheld. In the first instance, complaints should be directed towards a member of staff who will implement the complaints procedure.

Education

Farleigh Further Education College Swindon gives learners the opportunity to reach their potential and develop academic and life skills for independence and integration into the community.

Learners attend one of the two local Swindon colleges where they have the opportunity to access a variety of academic and vocational courses. Learners are supported within mainstream settings by our own specialist learning support staff.

There is a dedicated resource centre on campus which is used by our learners for study during the day and evening. Programmes are in place for skills for life including numeracy, literacy and independence training.

Education is continued within the residential setting with sessions in social, leisure and communication skills, as well as additional work on independent living skills.
Therapy and specialist services

Speech and language therapy

Our speech and language therapist takes a consultative role as well as working directly with learners to assess their needs and plan and implement intervention. Many of the learners have a varied communicative profile, often presenting as very able verbally, but failing to detect and/or understand more subtle verbal and non-verbal cues. For example, appreciating ambiguous statements and understanding how tone of voice or changes in posture can affect the message conveyed.

Some learners receive individual sessions, but the focus is on group sessions which demand a much higher level of communicative competence and are more reflective of real-life situations. These also provide opportunities for peer feedback and support.

The overall emphasis of speech and language therapy is an integrated approach working closely with staff to promote a consistent approach to social communication. This helps learners to raise awareness of their individual difficulties, the effect on others and provides clear information of how to function and give the learners useful strategies for communication which they can use in their adult life beyond college.

Art therapy

Art therapy offers learners the means to communicate and express feelings through the use of a range of art materials.

Through unconscious imagery, exploration of past, present and future, issues can be acknowledged and worked through with a therapist who acts as witness and support to the learner.

Through making art, the learner has something concrete which acts as a record of the therapeutic process, something that cannot be denied, erased or forgotten and which offers possibilities for reflection in the future.

Art therapy is not dependent upon language. This can be particularly helpful to learners with Asperger’s Syndrome, and is why it is offered at Farleigh Further Education College Swindon.

Therapy referrals

Usually referrals for therapy are from the learners themselves. However, parents/caregivers and personal tutors can also make referrals but only with the consent and co-operation of the learner.

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Learners choosing to move on to higher education will work through the following process:

**Step 1**
A long list of appropriate courses is compiled with the help of UCAS materials.

**Step 2**
Universities on the long list are approached, asking how they might support a learner with Asperger’s Syndrome.

**Step 3**
The learner compiles a short list of universities, based on the responses.

**Step 4**
Visits are arranged to the short listed universities to meet the disability officer, the accommodation officer and the appropriate academic tutor.

**Step 5**
The learner chooses up to five universities, writes a personal statement and completes UCAS forms (usually at the beginning of the autumn term of their last year).

**Step 6**
Learners are informed about the support available at university, through the disabled learner’s allowance (DSA).

**Step 7**
Learners apply for assessment for DSA as part of their learner loan application in February.

**Step 8**
An ACCESS assessment is set up to determine the personal and academic support the learner is entitled to at university (usually during the summer term of the last year).

**Step 9**
Having received offers from universities the learner decides upon their first and insurance choices. We accompany learners on visits to these universities, meeting the disability officer, accommodation officer and academic tutors. University visits usually occur in the summer term of the last year.

**Step 10**
Disability officers, Farleigh Further Education College Swindon staff and the learner liaise as they begin university.

**Transition**
Our mission is to help learners to prepare for life as fulfilled and self-reliant adults in mainstream situations. People with Asperger’s Syndrome can often feel socially excluded, with consequent implications for starting and maintaining friendships and sustaining employment appropriate to their abilities.

At Farleigh Further Education College Swindon learners can develop communication and social skills, which are transferable to their chosen destination after leaving us. However, there is a need to make practical preparations for transition, to give leaving learners the opportunity to embed the skills they have developed in their new situations.

Learners wishing to take up work based training, or open employment in their home areas will be advised and supported by their local Connexions advisors. They may in turn introduce them to the disabled employment advisors, sheltered employment providers or directly to employers. Connexions advisors play an important role in learners’ lives. They work with our staff, the learner and his or her family to prepare for the return home. Connexions advisers are invited to all learners reviews to enable early preparation for transition.

Learners wishing to continue studies at their local college will receive help in choosing appropriate courses and in negotiating appropriate support there.
Central admissions procedure

Our mission is to help learners to prepare for life as fulfilled and self-reliant adults in mainstream situations.

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Following each admissions day, learners whose needs cannot be met are informed in writing within five working days. Learners whose needs can be met need to await a decision as to whether a place can be offered until all of the admissions days are completed. A date is given for this, no later than the end of the autumn term.

In conjunction with other professionals involved in the admission days, an offer of a provisional place is made subject to:
A) Appropriate offer of a place at one of the partner mainstream colleges
B) Obtaining funding

Farleigh Further Education College Swindon is usually oversubscribed. Those learners whose needs can be met, but have not been offered a place due to oversubscription are automatically placed on a waiting list, which is prioritised in terms of needs. It is relatively common for places to unexpectedly become available. Learners whose paperwork arrives late ie when admissions days are already in progress will be added to an ‘awaiting assessment’ waiting list, if required. They will only be assessed in the event of more places becoming available.

Once funding is agreed, the placement at Farleigh Further Education College Swindon is confirmed.

Learners who have been offered a place will attend an enrolment day, in which further information about their needs is gathered, and a suitable college course at one of the partner colleges is identified. The head of education then applies for funding.

Once funding is agreed, the placement at Farleigh Further Education College Swindon is confirmed.

Initial contact with Farleigh Further Education College Swindon by Connexions adviser, learner or learner’s family/guardians

Prospectus sent to learner

Learners papers sent for consideration by Deputy Principal to arrive no later than 15th October in the year prior to entry

Acknowledgement of receipt of learners papers by post within three working days

Decision made by Deputy Principal on ability to meet student’s needs in September prior to the year of entry. Learners whose needs cannot be met are informed in writing at this stage. Learners whose needs may be met are invited to an admissions day

Admissions days are held during the autumn term prior to the year of entry, to assess whether or not individual learners needs can be met. There are usually around six admission days with six to eight students and parents attending on each day

Once funding is agreed, the placement at Farleigh Further Education College is confirmed. Students will be invited to a new students day in the summer holiday prior to September entry in order to reduce anxiety.

Procedures for the preliminary and assessment stage of the admission process are determined by the needs of the learner.

Further details of the admissions process can be obtained from the admissions office at Fairleigh Further Education College Swindon.