



A Guide for
Parents, Guardians
and Carers
of full-time students
2020/21



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Your College Your Choice



Welcome

Dear Parent, Guardian or Carer,

If your son, daughter or young person is coming to the College in September, you will no doubt be amazed at how quickly the years have flown since they started school. Starting at College for a sixteen year old is quite an adult thing to do and it is perhaps a major step towards becoming independent. You and I, however, as parents and guardians, know how young they still really are. They need our support and guidance but, increasingly, they wish to make more and more decisions for themselves. The process of 'letting go' is not easy but we at the NPTC Group of Colleges would like to help. We too have the difficult task of expecting young people to behave in an adult way, whilst respecting their growing independence.

This booklet contains information which we hope you will find helpful. Open and Progress evenings will enable you to meet your son, daughter or young person's Course Co-ordinator or Personal Tutor to discuss their progress and development. We can then work at the ideal of a happy partnership between the students, the College and home.

Please take advantage of the names and telephone numbers mentioned in this booklet and ring the people concerned if you have a problem.

Mark Dacey

**Chief Executive Officer,
NPTC Group of Colleges**

Contents

Page 3	College Contact Details
Page 4	Introduction Why Choose NPTC Group of Colleges? Contact with: Parents, Guardians and Carers Progress Evenings Courses, Courses, Courses
Page 5	The College Tutorial System The First Few Weeks of Term Absence from College
Page 6	What is NPTC Moodle? Financial Assistance for Students
Page 7	Travel to College
Page 8	Study Support for Students Students with Disabilities
Page 9	Personal Support
Page 10	The College's Responsibility to Provide Information to Parents, Guardians or Carers
Page 11	Working Together: How Parents, Guardians or Carers Can Help Student Discipline Careers and Higher Education Planning
Page 12	Part-time Employment Welsh in the College
Page 13	Frequently Asked Questions
Page 15	Term Dates 2020/21

Information contained within this document was correct at the time of production.

If you or someone you know would like this document in an alternative format, please contact the Diversity Office at diversity@nptcgroup.ac.uk or on 01639 648175.

This booklet is also available in Welsh upon request.

NPTC Group of Colleges Contact Details

E-mail: info@nptcgroup.ac.uk • www.nptcgroup.ac.uk



Neath College

Dŵr-y-Felin Road,
Neath, SA10 7RF
Tel: 01639 648000



The CWTC

Cattle Market Car Park, Heol Goueshnou,
Brecon, LD3 7BA
Tel: 01686 614300



Afan College

Afan College, Margam,
Port Talbot, SA13 2AL
Tel: 01639 648200



Newtown College

Llanidloes Road, Newtown,
Powys, SY16 4HU
Tel: 01686 614200



Llandarcy Academy of Sport

Llandarcy Park, Skewen,
Neath, SA10 6JD
Tel: 01639 648722



Swansea Construction Centre

St David's Close, Swansea Enterprise Zone,
Llansamlet, SA6 8QL
Tel: 01639 648120



Pontardawe College

Tawe House, Alloy Industrial Estate,
Pontardawe, SA8 4EN
Tel: 01639 648100



Maesteg Construction Centre

Unit 7, Spelter Industrial Estate,
Maesteg, CF34 0TY
Tel: 01639 648180



Brecon Beacons College

Penlan, Brecon, Powys, LD3 9SR
Tel: 01686 614400

Introduction

This guide is for you as a Parent, Guardian or Carer of a full-time NPTC Group of Colleges student. It is designed to provide you with key information you will need during the year. We hope you find it useful; if you need further details, please let us know.

Why Choose NPTC Group of Colleges?

Although coming to NPTC Group of Colleges may be a big step, we will do everything we can to help new students settle in as quickly as possible. Here are some of the key benefits for students who study at NPTC Group of Colleges:

- Personal support through Course Tutors, Student Support and College Counsellors
- Study Skills support
- Superb sports facilities
- Scholarships available (through an application process)
- Student Ambassador scheme
- A Students' Union (and NUS discount card available)
- State-of-the-art Learning Resources Centres - quiet study areas, computers with Internet access and library resources
- Bursaries available for high achievers from partner schools.

Contact with Parents, Guardians and Carers

We greatly value the contact we have with parents, guardians and carers; a student is most likely to achieve their goals when the student and the College work together as a partnership. Please do not hesitate to contact your son, daughter or young person's Personal Tutor or Course Co-ordinator at any time if you have concerns about their progress at College or for any other matter.

Progress Evenings

You will be advised of the dates for progress or information evenings. If you would like to speak to your young person's Personal Tutor or Course Co-ordinator at any time during the course, please contact Main Reception to make an appointment. Tel: 01639 648000 (South) or 01686 614205 (North).

Courses, Courses, Courses

As NPTC Group of Colleges offers an extensive range of courses and levels of study, you may find your son, daughter or young person may need some help making a final decision - some of the factors to consider are:

- Existing qualifications
- Learning styles
- Practical/theory
- Career aims
- Degree choice
- Inclusion of work experience/ placement in programmes of study
- Enjoyment of the subjects to be studied

Careers Wales Advisers are available throughout the summer period to help your son, daughter or young person with their plans. You can contact Careers Wales on **0800 028 4844**. They will also be available during the enrolment period.

It is always advisable for students to find out as much as they can about the courses beforehand by talking to staff or visiting the College on Open Days to ensure that the course suits them and their aspirations.

The College Tutorial System

Every full-time student is allocated a Personal Tutor who has responsibility for ensuring that his/her group of students achieve the maximum benefit from their course of studies at NPTC Group of Colleges.

During planned tutorial sessions, tutors and students discuss progress, set targets and create action plans for improvement. This process includes producing an Individual Learning Plan. Individual Learning Plans cover career and higher education issues together with various aspects of personal and social education.

Tutors are supported by Student Support, Careers Wales and the College Counsellors.

The First Weeks of Term

Courses start with an induction period to ensure new students settle happily into College life. Each student will receive a Welcome Pack covering the services we offer, our expectations of students, details of the way we operate and useful telephone numbers. All new students will undergo a detailed induction with their tutor. At this point, we will check that students are taking the most appropriate course and are fully aware of all the facilities and resources at the College.

Absence from College

100% attendance is normally expected.

However, if your son, daughter or young person is ill and unable to attend college they will need to ring the **ABSENCE LINE** on **01639 648640** by 9.30am on each day that they are absent. Failure to ring may result in EMA payments or WGLG being stopped.



For absences of 6 or more consecutive college days, a medical certificate from their doctor will be required. This should be submitted to their **Course Tutor** on their return to college.

Your son, daughter or young person will need to meet with their **Course Tutor** when they return to ensure that they are given the work that they have missed during the absence.

Medical appointments: students must obtain Authorised Absence permission from their tutor and Student Support in advance of any appointment.

Please note that regular single day absences are not acceptable and will be challenged. They will also affect EMA and WGLG payments.

Students should **NOT** arrange routine doctor/dentist appointments or driving lessons when they should be attending classes and holidays must **NOT** be taken in term time.

Only 1 episode of Authorised Absence is permitted in each half term, and this includes such things as driving tests, family funerals etc. More details about Authorised and Unauthorised Absence will be found on the student Moodle system.

What is NPTC Moodle?

The Moodle software is known as the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). It is accessed via the Student Portal on the College Website for teaching, learning and communicating. NPTC Group of Colleges Moodle is used to support classroom and workshop sessions.

What does it offer Students?

- access to online learning resources
- access to teacher resources
- access to revision materials
- access to shared resources
- access to lessons, coursework and homework resources
- access to personal workbook and progress records
- always available as it is accessed via the Internet.

How do students access it?

Every student is allocated a personal NPTC Group of Colleges Moodle username and password. This enables every student to login to this resource. (moodle.nptc.ac.uk)

Financial Assistance for Students

Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA)

The Welsh Government continues to offer EMAs for 16, 17 and 18 year olds in full-time education across Wales. EMAs are intended to help with the cost of attending college, and

for those who qualify, a payment of £30.00 per week will be paid on a fortnightly basis directly into the student's bank account. Payments will be made to students based on household income. Students sign a Learning Agreement and payments are made according to attendance, progress, attitude and behaviour.

Please note that staff will normally only discuss a student's EMA with their parents if the student has given express permission. Students with EMA queries should go to Student Support for help.

Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG)

The Welsh Government offers WGLGs for student of 19 and over. WGLGs are intended to help with the cost of attending college, and for those who qualify, payments are made on a termly basis, directly into the student's bank account. Students sign a Learning Agreement and payments are made according to attendance, progress, attitude and behaviour.

The Financial Contingency Fund for Students (FCF)

This fund may be able to help with costs incurred as part of the programme of study, such as childcare, travel, college lodgings, free meals etc. Further information is available from our Student Support team and application forms available from Student Support on 01639 648711 (Neath) or 01686 614202/599 (Powys).

NOTE: The Financial Contingency Fund is provided by the Welsh Government. The fund is limited and allocated on a first come, first served basis. We regret that it may not be possible to help every student who applies. Early application is strongly recommended. Students must be in receipt of EMA or WGLG before applying for FCF.

Getting to College

All students aged 16 to 21 should apply for **My Travel Pass (MTP)** - a free pass which gives up to 1/3rd off travel costs on all buses in Wales (except National Express and Megabus). Apply, free of charge, by visiting: <https://www.mytravelpass.gov.wales>

Students studying at Afan, Llandarcy, Neath, Pontardawe and Swansea need to buy mtickets to travel to college. You can buy the **mticket** by downloading the First Bus phone app. The mticket will remain on your phone and must be shown to the driver each time you travel.

Using your mytravelpass (MTP) to get the discount, the cost of mtickets are:

- Annual pass for unlimited travel in Neath/Swansea area £307 (without MTP £460)
- Termly ticket for travel to and from college till 8pm £100 (without MTP £150)
- Flexi5 ticket allows all day travel on 5 individual days £13

Students studying at Brecon and Newtown who are 16, 17 or 18 may be given a free Powys County Council bus pass at enrolment. We will organise this for you. Queries? **01686 614205**

Students from other counties:

If you live outside Neath Port Talbot/Swansea/Powys you must apply to your local County Council for help with transport costs in the first instance. Please call Student Support on **01686 614202** for further information.

Study Support for Students

Many students, for a variety of reasons, need extra help if they are to succeed with their studies and achieve their potential. All full-time students are given an informal assessment of support needs at the start of the course or at interview, please let us know if you think your son, daughter or young person would benefit from extra help. There is more information about this in the Student Support section of the Student Zone on the college website.

The Study Support team offers a wide range of help and support including:

- Working with students, in drop-in sessions or workshops, on coursework and/or to improve their writing or maths skills
- Specialist equipment and support for students with specific learning difficulties, e.g. dyslexia
- A team of Study 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
- Additional time or special arrangements for examinations.

If you would like to discuss your son, daughter or young person's additional support needs, please contact the **Study Support Team: Natalie Joseph**: 01639 648075

Students with Disabilities

NPTC Group of Colleges is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities, including those with additional learning needs, are treated fairly. We will make all reasonable adjustments to our provisions to make sure that Students with additional needs are not disadvantaged.

NPTC Group of Colleges is an equal opportunities provider and we actively encourage applications from students with additional needs or disabilities.

We have a range of specialist equipment to help those with disabilities such as sight and hearing impairment, and trained staff who offer friendly support and advice.

Further details are available in NTPC Group's Disability Statement.
If your student does have an additional learning need, please let us know so that we can do everything to help them succeed. Contact Natalie Joseph: **01639 648075**

Personal Support

College Counselling

The College has a professional Counselling Service. College Counsellors are based in Student Support and provide a confidential service for all students. Counsellors are professionally qualified, adhere to the BACP Code of Ethics and have extensive experience in a wide variety of areas. Contact with Counsellors can be made via Student Support.

Looked After Children/Care Leavers

The College has Designated Persons who provide support to Looked After Children and young people leaving the care system as well as Young Carers. Please contact Mandy Mellor on **01639 648033**

Oxbridge

We encourage students to aim high and those who aspire to Oxford or Cambridge are given help and support by Oxbridge tutors and senior College staff. Specific visits to Oxbridge, including an overnight stay, have been arranged for students intending to apply, where advice on the application process has been given by University Admissions Tutors.



Gifted and Talented Excellence Programme (Neath College)

Members of NPTC Group of Colleges Sixth Form Academy may be eligible to apply for our support for those learners with exceptional GCSE results (mainly A* and A grades gained at GCSE). Those applying to competitive universities, particularly those in the Russell Group, Oxford and Cambridge, will receive personalised support through our Gifted and Talented Excellence Programme. Application to competitive universities is about more than excellent grades. You must make an informed choice regarding the subjects you want to pursue, understand the competitive selection process and systems, submit a polished application and excel at interviews.

If you have a GCSE profile consisting of mainly A* and A grades, you will be placed into a specific tutorial group which will cater to your needs and aspirations. The aim is to broaden your horizons beyond your chosen subjects and to promote analytical reasoning and discussion. If you need more information prior to enrolling please contact Deputy Head of Sixth Form, Lisa Jenkins on 01639 648453.

Study Skills Coaches and Student Support

We provide on-going, confidential support for students, enabling them to achieve their full potential and remove barriers to learning. We liaise with staff, parents, carers and internal and external agencies to ensure the needs of students are met. We also facilitate student support groups based on demand and need.

Advice and Guidance

If students need extra help and guidance or have concerns that are troubling them, the Student Support Team are there to help and support. We have a professional and friendly team of front line staff who are able to offer advice, advocate and signpost students to staff and partner organisations that can help.

The College's Responsibility to provide information to Parents, Guardians or Carers

We are committed to developing closer relationships with all parents, guardians and carers of students who are aged under 18 and providing you with as much information on their progress as possible. However, there are some restrictions on the information we can provide you with due to the Data Protection legislation.

In some circumstances, in order to comply with the Data Protection Act, it may be necessary for us to obtain permission from students before we can provide information about them. Due to the Data Protection Act restriction, we are unable to provide you with information immediately over the phone. We will take your details and phone you back, once we have verified that we are able to provide you with the information you have requested.

For students over 18, the law does not recognise any rights of parents, guardians or carers to information about their children. It would also be a breach of Data Protection if we ignored an express wish from a student that information should not be released. However, even with these restrictions, we will continue to maintain close contact with you and we encourage you to contact us with any concerns you may have.

Working Together: How Parents, Guardians or Carers Can Help

You can help by supporting and encouraging your son/daughter/young person in making the right course choice and maintaining contact with the Personal Tutors over any issues of concern.

Student Discipline

We want everyone to enjoy their time at College and we expect good behaviour from all students, including respect for others.

The Student Code of Conduct explains our key rules and regulations. Students should familiarise themselves with this policy which can be found on Moodle.

We have a formal Student Disciplinary Procedure. Staff will make students aware of any issues of concern. All students are normally entitled to go through each stage of the Student Disciplinary Procedure (other than for serious offences). However, there may be times when the nature of the behaviour results in a written warning or exclusion even though it may be the first time such behaviour has taken place.

There are normally 4 stages to the Student Disciplinary Procedure:

1. Verbal warning
2. Written warning
3. Final written warning
4. Serious misconduct, leading to exclusion

Where appropriate, we will involve you in the Disciplinary Process; this will usually be regarding instances of repeated behavioural problems and/or serious incidents.

Careers and Higher Education Planning

NPTC Group of Colleges works closely with Careers Wales to help students and there are a wide range of careers resources available in the College which will help students with their future career choices.

If you would like any further information on any aspect of careers, please contact Student Support. Tel: 01639 648000 (Neath) or 01686 614205 (Powys).

Part-time Employment

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 provide.

However, there is now some significant evidence that indicates that when full-time students have part-time employment of more than 6 hours per week, their College work is likely to suffer. As well as attending classes, students are required to do private study, in order to prepare sufficiently for assessments and examinations, and we hope you agree with us that a student's first priority should be their College work. We therefore strongly recommend that full-time students should avoid working in part-time jobs of more than 6 hours per week.

Welsh at the College

Welsh language and culture is an important part of the ethos of NPTC Group of Colleges. The college is aware of how being bilingual can benefit students in education, the workplace and in everyday life. Provision is expanding across many of our subject areas, giving students the opportunity and choice to study through the medium of Welsh or bilingually in the classroom or on work placements.

We are here to support Welsh speaking students should they wish to have a Welsh speaking personal tutor, study in Welsh, complete assignments in Welsh, sit exams through the medium of Welsh or to receive their course materials and resources in Welsh, whilst studying with us at the college. We will also encourage non-Welsh speaking students and Welsh language learners to develop their Welsh language skills, giving them better employment opportunities in the future.

Please contact 01639 648409 or email cymraeg@nptcgroup.ac.uk for more information.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the differences between school and college?

In many ways, school and college are similar. Attendance at classes is compulsory, students are required to meet all deadlines for the submission of work, and students are expected to behave in a responsible way so that they do not prevent others from learning. NPTC Group of Colleges' Code of Conduct outlines the rules and regulations which we expect students to conform to. There is no upper age limit; we have many adult students at NPTC and, although most attend courses particularly designed for adults, we welcome them on all our courses. It is possible, therefore, that there may be adult students in some classes; adult students are nearly always very committed to their course and work hard, so they set an excellent example to 16-17 year olds! Students are treated more like adults and are expected to behave responsibly and treat other students and staff with respect.

2. I am concerned about personal difficulties my son/daughter/young person is facing. What should I do?

If you think the college can help, you are more than welcome to contact your son/daughter/young person's Personal Tutor or Wellbeing Officer. If appropriate, we will signpost you to a relevant agency outside the College.

3. How much work will be given?

This will vary from course to course, but all students on full-time courses should be spending some time each week on work outside classes, which can include research for assignments and extra/supplementary reading as well as set homework. Less than 10 hours a week would be unusual, and homework will, of course, increase at certain periods of the year, such as prior to examinations or assignment deadlines. If you are concerned that your son/daughter/young person does not appear to be spending sufficient time studying, please contact their Personal Tutor.

4. Will a BTEC/UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma allow progression to University?

Yes. BTEC Level 3 Extended Diplomas are equivalent to 3 A Levels. Ask your son/daughter/young person to call into Student Support for more information on university entrance requirements.

5. Who should I contact if I have concerns about my son/daughter/young person's progress at College?

Please contact their Personal Tutor in the first instance. If you would like to meet the Head of School, please contact them to make an appointment using the telephone numbers shown at the front of this booklet.

6. Will I still be able to carry on receiving Child Benefit if my son/daughter/young person stays on at College?

If your student is 16, 17 or 18 and learning **full-time**, you will still be able to carry on receiving Child Benefit, Child Tax Credits, or Universal Credit as appropriate. For more information, go to www.hmrc.gov.uk

7. What eating and drinking facilities are available?

A wide variety of meals, snacks and drinks are available in College from Monday to Friday. These are available in the Refectory on each site. Vegetarian options are available.

8. What should I do if I have a concern?

If you do have any concerns about any matter concerning NPTC Group of Colleges, please contact your son/daughter/young person's Personal Tutor in the first instance. We do recommend that you talk through the problem with the tutor or the Head of School, as on most occasions we have found this is the best way to resolve problems. However if you are unable to resolve your concerns with the Tutor or Head then please seek further advice and guidance from Student Support.

9. Who do I contact if I have a concern relating to religious, cultural or equality issues?

In the first instance, please contact the Diversity Officer who is happy to discuss any matter related to equality or diversity.

Contact the Diversity Officer on 01639 648175 or diversity@nptcgroup.ac.uk



Term Dates 2020–2021

Autumn Term:

2 September 2020 - 18 December 2020

Half Term:

26 October 2020 - 30 October 2020

Spring Term:

5 January 2021 - 26 March 2021

Half Term:

15 February 2021 - 19 February 2021

Summer Term:

12 April 2021 - 2 July 2021

Half Term:

31 May 2021 - 4 June 2021

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