V06 August 2022

**Information**

**Student Involvement**

Sense College - Operational Strategy

To monitor effectiveness of the avenues for students’ voice.

To ensure that staff have the skills required to seek and respond effectively to the views of

all students;

•

To ensure that when students’ voice opinions, they are responded to;

•

To provide information about how students’ voices can be heard;

•

To ensure the views of students inform quality improvement;

•

For the college student involvement strategy to be effective, it is important that staff are clear

about its purposes and understand the processes, protocols and outcomes; and above all,

perceive it as an effective and supportive mechanism for raising standards and student

experiences. Staff will monitor the effectiveness of the strategy and contribute to its

development through the team meetings and the college’s quality assurance systems.

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•

**Outcomes**

In order to ensure an effective process of student voice, the purpose and aims of student

involvement within college needs to be clear:

•

To work to the principles of the SEND Code of Practice (2014);

•

To work to the principles of the Mental Capacity Act (2005);

To work to the principles of the Equality Act (2010);

•

To develop students through high quality teaching, learning and pastoral support;

•

To develop the informed decision-making skills of students;

•

To ensure that students are involved in decision-making;

•

Engaging and working together in partnership;

•

Sharing and listening;

•

Taking informed risks;

One of the Sense College’s fundamental beliefs is that everyone accessing the college has a

•

Respecting what everyone has to say;

•

The perspectives and ideas of students;

•

voice to be heard and that the opportunity to share and express opinions and views, is at the

core of the holistic learning experience.

1

• The individuals that Sense supports: Adults with deafblindness in receipt of an Educational

Programme, in this document are referred to simply as ‘students’.

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Senior Management Team

**Who is this strategy for?**

This strategy is for Sense College staff working with students funded by the ESFA (Education

and Skills Funding Agency), in addition to:

•

1

The Individuals

Sense supports

•

All College Staff and Volunteers, including Executive Principal, Principal and College

•

Parents

•

Governors

•

Stakeholders

**What is this strategy about?**

Sense College regards the process of student involvement as an essential strand in our

commitment to personalisation and is all about:

Part Six:

Part Seven: Impact and Benefits

Communication

Empower

Part Five:

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Appendix 1: Sense Cross College Student Forum Poster 2022

**Appendices and Forms**

**Conclusion**

**Quality Assurance**

Student Involvement Diagram

Part Eight:

Underpinning Philosophy

Part One:

**Practice:**

Principles

Methods of Involvement

**Principles:**

**Contents**

Involve

Part Four:

Consult

Part Three:

Inform

Part Two:

See that staff have the skills to encourage and respond positively to feedback.

**Principles:**

Our strategy and processes are based on the following guiding principles, incorporating the

college’s mental capacity policy:

•

Everyone is assumed to have capacity unless it is proved otherwise;

•

Staff must give all appropriate help before concluding that a student cannot make their

own decisions;

•

Staff must accept that people have the right to make what might be seen as eccentric or

unwise decisions;

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**Principles**

**Underpinning Philosophy:**

Sense College is committed to providing an outstanding learning environment which ensures

all our students have an opportunity to be involved and have a voice in the college

community.

Our provision is designed to support students with sensory impairment, complex

communication needs and additional disabilities to develop confidence and skills that will be

relevant and useful to them in their everyday lives.

The college views student voice as a means to promote true empowerment and engagement

that will encourage students to become active members of their learning community.

Sense College will do this by developing a culture where students are:

•

Motivated to give constructive feedback;

•

See their feedback is taken seriously;

•

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possible, as it impacts on their learning experience.

Empower and enable students to contribute to decision making processes wherever

•

The college curriculum is relevant and connects to young people’s lives;

•

The college’s decision making process is driven by assessing the impact on the student;

•

in that person’s best interest;

Any actions taken on behalf of a person who is deemed to lack capacity must always act

•

•

account.

•

**EMPOWER –** When students are empowered they can set the agenda for change. They

work together, organise themselves and have responsibility for decisions that affect

themselves and their peers.

**Part Two: Inform**

In order to embed student involvement the first category method includes:

process. Staff and students work closely together to ensure all views are taken into

Notice Boards

Notice and display boards in centres not only provide information to visitors and celebrate

achievement, they also are an avenue to demonstrate student voice and provide

opportunities to use graphics, larger font, audio and tactile information to inform students

and staff about college life and processes.

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**INFORM –** Staff regularly inform students about their rights and ways of participating

**Practice**

**Part One: Methods of Involvement**

To ensure information is shared and students’ views are captured, nurtured and shared, a

broad range of involvement methods are made available and encouraged. These fall into the

following categories:

•

within the college. This is a vital first step on the ladder of developing student voice. It

opens the door for wider student participation.

•

**CONSULT –** Taking a consultation approach encourages greater student involvement

than passing on information. It involves the college seeking the views of students and

providing feedback on any action taken.

•

**INVOLVE –** Involving students means that they contribute throughout the decision-making

•

**Meetings with Personal SEND Tutor / Education Coordinator (EC)**

While it is the responsibility of all staff to capture students’ views, the personal tutor/EC

will collate and analyse them and ensure they are shared with key education staff, circles

of support and incorporated into the student Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for future

development opportunity. These meetings will provide students with a forum to discuss

any issues, concerns or feedback on their learning experience and to include the learning

in planning the next steps.

•

The second category of methods to involve students includes:

**Student Questionnaires and Surveys**

The college has three main areas of survey. The *‘Transition In’* questionnaire which is

done during the first term of a students placement at Sense to ensure that the transition

process was successful and the learning journey at the college has been planned right.

An *annual survey* is undertaken every year (around June) to provide the opportunity for

students to feedback on how they feel about college and to raise any comments on their

placement at college.

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Each student has access to a personal tutor/EC who is identified during the transition

•

Personal and Social Development (PSD) Sessions

Sessions focussing on personal and social development provide opportunities to inform

students about a range of topics and strategies that can be used to help them develop as

an individual and building their confidence, independence and keeping safe skills.

•

Personal Tutorials and/or meetings with Education Coordinator (EC)

stage. At these meetings information will be shared with the student about college events,

progress made and advice on next steps.

•

Newsletters

Centre and college wide newsletters not only share the celebration of achievement and

participation, but also provide information on education topics, upcoming events and

further opportunities to engage with college life.

**Part Three: Consult**

**Part Four: Involve**

The third category of methods to involve students includes:

•

**Transition**

Students are involved in induction and transition planning via initial meetings with the

Education Transitions Advisor (ETA) and/or the centre Education Services Manager

(ESM), by completing the Transition Planning form with staff, by attending the Transition

In review meeting along with the Transition In questionnaire and completing the Transition

Out process with staff.

•

**Assessment**

Students are encouraged to take an active part in any assessment activity, including

sharing their own thoughts and feelings. The college sees assessment as a collaborative

information gathering exercise, rather than just a proficiency test.

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**Focus Groups**

Student surveys are a good source of information to help with college improvements and

as evidence in our annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR) which reviews all we do.

*Bespoke or themed surveys* can happen at any time and are usually part of a project or

particular subject for improvement. Surveys and comments received are collated and

used to impact the strategic planning and college processes.

•

Students have the opportunity to engage in discussions about certain topics and projects

via focus groups. These groups may meet to discuss centre specific issues – such as

planning enrichment events or changes to rooms, or they may evolve around college wide

issues to inform college processes.

•

**Webinars and Online Gatherings**

Students have the opportunity to join in different events via the use of TEAMs, Zoom and

other online platforms, to enable greater involvement with a wider range of staff and

college projects, but with the convenience of less travelling.

a voice about any issue that affects their time at the college. The agenda is student-led.

Students who are unable to speak for themselves are represented by their advocates or

personal tutors. There are two types of student forum – one is centre specific to where

the student attends and the other is a college wide forum where a representative from

each centre is nominated to attend on behalf of centre students. See **Appendix 1** for the

**cross college student forum poster.**

•

**Student Involvement with Governing Body**

The college invites a student from the college to sit on the college’s Governing Body. The

Governing Body are responsible for the governance of the college and meet three times a

year. The student representative will be supported by staff at the meetings.

The purpose of the student forum is to give students a platform from which they can have

•

**Student Involvement with Staff Recruitment**

The college encourages student input to staff recruitment by means of a meet, question

and answer session as part of the interview process. Students are able to ask and

answer questions with a candidate as well as feedback their views to staff.

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•

**Person Centred Reviews (including PCPs, ILPs, EHCPs)**

Students are central to the review process. Prior to the review meeting, discussions will

be held with the personal tutor/EC to determine what the student wants to cover in the

meeting and who to invite, as well as a review of the student’s progress, what is working

well, what changes may need to be made and planning for the next step. Students are

supported to produce their own presentation for use at the meeting, in a style and

communication method appropriate for them.

•

**Student Voice**

Student voice and feedback is encouraged across the college. For students unable to

feedback using formal communication staff are encouraged to record anything that could

be perceived as students commenting on the services the college delivers. Each centre

collates this information and it is discussed at staff meetings where student voice is a

standing agenda item, as well as being sent to the college Senior Management Team

(SMT) at the end of each month for analysis and review of processes where appropriate.

Student voice activity may also be reported to the governing body.

•

**Student Forums**

**Feedback – Compliments, Complaints and Ideas**

advanced. Advocates sometimes notice things that the student themselves may not, such

as through observation and can voice this on behalf of the student.

•

**Delegated Decision Making**

The college actively seeks students’ views and ideas on topics that affect them.

Wherever possible, opportunities for students to make decisions will be delegated to them

via centre or cross-college forums in the first instance, or via focus groups where relevant.

•

who speak on behalf of the student whose communication skills may not be formal or

Students are encouraged to feedback any compliments and ideas they have to staff, so

that good practice can be identified and student’s input captured for development. Sense

also has a complaints procedure which provides a valuable tool for people who wish to

raise any complaints or issues.

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recorded/actioned on the Individual Student Plan (ILP) and Person Centred Plan (PCP).

**Part Five: Empower**

The final category of methods to involve students includes:

•

**Person Centred Planning and Reviews**

All students are involved with their own planning and development. All needs, likes,

dislikes and areas of personal development, are captured and appropriately

These are regarded as ‘live’ documents where student views are rigorously monitored and

any changes notified and actioned. Students’ views are monitored throughout their

learning programmes where achievement is formally recorded and fed into the processes.

An evaluation of student progress and achievement is undertaken every month and

regular opportunities to capture student views in the lead up to evaluation are recorded

and fed into this process.

•

**Peer Support / Advocates**

Advocates are individuals (could be another student, member of staff or external buddy)

observation process, as well as for improving teaching and learning;

support qualifications) and a programme that continues to develop the understanding and

Ongoing comprehensive training and development (including specialist teaching and

•

facilitate active communication;

A problem-solving approach for identifying and sourcing assistive technology tools to

•

specialist skills of learning support staff.

Embedded monitoring of the quality of support for active communication within the

•

communication skills and to apply these in a range of settings;

Planned space and opportunity within the learning programme to promote active

•

Regular review of communication processes and strategies for individual students;

A full range of learning resources and communication strategies are utilised to capture the

student involvement, which may include:

•

Photographic evidence

•

Picture cards

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•

an understanding;

A conception of communication as dialogue – i.e. a social interaction which aims to reach

•

environment include:

The key elements that need to be in place to create and sustain an active communication

exercising choice and expressing their opinions in all aspects of their study programme.

successful in helping students to develop their active communication skills in addition to

Sense College promotes an active communication environment. The college is very

**Part Six: Communication**

Expertise in the development of different communication strategies and interactive

approaches; including sign language, picture communication systems, minimal spoken

language, electronic communication aids and objects of reference;

•

Empathy with students springing from an insight into the challenges associated with those

communication difficulties, including autism and sensory impairment;

•

Staff understanding of the connection between communication and behaviour;

•

Staff ability to use the relevant communication strategies skilfully for each student;

•

•

Withdrawal from an activity.

•

have a problem with something that they are doing);

Challenging behaviour (for example if a student throws something, it may mean that they

•

Facial expressions;

Key documentation to support the communication process is embedded across the

that they have a problem);

Body language (for example if a student covers their face with their hands, it may mean

•

involvement through:

Staff at the college also recognise the importance of identifying communication and student

Sequencing boards

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Review Reports Documentation

•

Lesson Plans

•

Individual Student Plans (ILPs) / Study Programmes

•

Communication Guidelines

•

curriculum and will feature in the:

•

TACPAC, Communication through touch

•

Video/DVD

•

Sign Language

Intensive Interaction

•

Braille

•

ILT, ICT and symbols software

•

•

•

Student Forums

•

Text

•

Moon

Personal Tutor / EC meetings

•

Student questionnaires and surveys

•

Raising issues and concerns

•

**Part Seven: Impact and Benefits**

The impact of student involvement and engagement creates a more responsive, more

engaging, higher quality offer that empowers students in shaping their own experience.

Student involvement is central to providing outstanding learning experiences and college

continuous improvement.

**Student Benefits**:

•

Increased participation in lessons and the college community;

•

Increased progression and achievement;

•

Greater resilience, confidence and independence;

•

Students can help to shape learning experiences for current as well as future students.

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•

•

Forum Meeting Minutes

•

Student Surveys/Questionnaires

•

Complaint Forms

•

Achievement Forms

Student Voice Forms

•

Student Response to Activity Forms

All staff have the responsibility to ensure that every opportunity is given to promote student

voice and involvement and to use the full range of teaching and learning strategies at their

disposal.

Student involvement will be on the agenda of Core Education Team meetings. Staff

meetings are held regularly to ensure the policy is being followed, the policy’s principles are

being promoted and it is remaining effective.

Groups

Activities and

Reviews

Community

Forms

Termly

Feedback

Feedback

Lesson

**Involvement**

Interviews

meetings

**Student**

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Greater Student Confidence and Independence

Staff

Reviews

EHCP / PCP

Improved Education Experiences

College Quality Improvement

**Student Involvement Diagram**

**Part Eight:**

Increased participation, retention, progression and achievement for all.

•

Better decisions about resource allocation and investment;

•

data, to improve quality;

Better quality of information about students’ perspectives, which can be used with other

•

**College Benefits:**

Surveys

Tutorials / EC

Personal

Forum

Body

Questionnaire

Annual

College

on Governing

Transition In

Cross

Student Rep

*Date Live:*

**Lynne Kendall, Head of Performance Management and College Improvement**

*Quality Control:*

**Management and College Improvement**

**Gary Hyndman, Principal and Lynne Kendall Head of Performance**

**August 2025**

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*Review Due:*

**August 2022**

•

improve their practice.

confidence, independence and achievements, as well as supporting staff to develop and

can significantly enhance the quality of provision by raising standards, increasing student

Sense College believes that an effective system of embedding student voice and involvement

**Conclusion**

3 yearly.

Following feedback on the documentation;

•

As the need arises;

•

This strategy will be reviewed:

development to ensure student voice is embedded, as well as overall college improvement.

assurance to ensure consistency, fairness, accuracy, sharing of good practice and overall

The Student Involvement Strategy and processes follow various elements of quality

**Quality Assurance**

*Author:*

**Sense College Student Involvement Strategy V06**

*Policy/Procedure:*

*For Quality Assurance Use only:*