



# PARENT/ GUARDIAN GUIDE



**src** Southern  
Regional  
College

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At Southern Regional College (SRC) our students are given the best opportunity to learn and develop their skills in our state-of-the-art facilities. We want to ensure that each student obtains the skills and qualifications they need to reach their chosen destination.

The College is an exciting and friendly place to study and socialise. Our students learn in cutting edge facilities and are taught by industry experts. All our students have the opportunity to meet and work with local employers to develop their technical and vocational skills. We help students improve their employability skills, the ones that employers tell us they value and set the best applicants apart from the rest. Additionally, our staff provide advice and support to help every student to succeed and, in so doing, we respect them and give them the encouragement and opportunities they need to grow as a person. We expect that our students will go on to achieve great things and we are proud to witness the successful careers our alumni have forged for themselves across all industry sectors.

We encourage you to be involved in your child's education. Your support makes a difference to them achieving to their full potential, particularly with their progress in gaining GCSE English and Maths (grades 1-4) should they not have achieved this in school.

This guide is designed to show you how we will support your child during their time with us and help them get the most out of their time at SRC. We firmly believe that the best education relies upon a shared commitment between teachers, students and supportive parents and carers.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF GCSE ENGLISH & MATHS

Achieving a good standard of English and Maths is important for young people to compete in today's labour market. Surveys repeatedly show that some employers are dissatisfied with the literacy and numeracy skills of school and College leavers, and many use Maths and English qualifications as a filter in their recruitment processes with a GCSE achieved at grade 4 - previously a grade C - being the standard aspired to.

It is a requirement that any student who has not yet achieved at least a Grade 4 - previously a grade C - in GCSE English and Maths has to be working toward this standard. Those who have achieved a GCSE grade 3 or D will study a GCSE course, while others with lower or no GCSE grade will follow Essential Skills courses in English and Maths at a level appropriate to them. Students will take these additional classes alongside their chosen vocational course with programmes timetabled in a way to support this progress. This means that students do not need to stay on at school to achieve the English and Maths grades required but can come straight to SRC.

It is critical that your child takes their English and Maths seriously and has good attendance in both subjects. As a parent it is important that you support and encourage your child on a pathway to achieve their GCSE English and Maths when they are at College. Students who do not, may struggle to progress to the next level at the end of the year, even if they have done well in their vocational specialism.

## ABOUT SRC

Southern Regional College offers first class education and training and an exciting learning environment for a wide range of further and higher education courses. The College straddles the two council areas of Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon and Newry, Mourne & Down in the southern part of Northern Ireland, offering courses from recreational hobby courses through to degree and post graduate level qualifications. We offer students qualifications which provide clear progression pathways, relevant for the workplace.

The learning experience at SRC is different from school because your child will have the opportunity to work in real-life environments, on real-life project briefs and be taught by experienced industry experts. They won't be in a classroom all the time; they might be in a studio, workshop or salon. Alternatively, they might be employed as an apprentice and be earning a wage while they gain qualifications at the same time.

Making the decision to study in a College is the first step on an exciting journey that will bring your child new opportunities and help prepare them for their future career.



# THE CHANGE FROM SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

College is a more adult environment which requires a more mature and independent approach. We expect a lot from our students including:

- Attending all their lessons.
- Fully engaging with work experience opportunities to support their development.
- Aiming to be the very best that they can be, and that their learning behaviours support this.
- Fully capitalising upon their time at College and making use of available resources to develop the skills and qualities that they will require for progression and employment.
- Fully engaging with College life, ensuring they enjoy what they are doing.
- To own and reflect on their academic progress, seeking advice and support where necessary.
- Keeping us informed of any circumstances that might affect their ability to learn.

## LIFE AT SRC

Our five campuses at Armagh, Banbridge, Lurgan, Newry and Portadown offer students exceptionally supportive learning environments. Your child's studies are the reason why they are here but life at SRC doesn't stop at the classroom door. Outside of lessons we have lots of activities that can make their time with us more enriching. They can find out more about all of these added extras by talking to our Student Services Team.

## THEIR OPINION COUNTS

Your child's views on life at College are important to us because every student helps shape the future of SRC. They can become a student representative or a member of the student council and have their say on all aspects of College life. They could even work their way up to become a Student Governor.



## GETTING ACTIVE

Sports and activities are a great way for your child to take a break from their studies and make new friends. They can get involved with football, volleyball and many other sports and meet new people along the way.

## SOAK UP SOME CULTURE

Your child can watch our Performing Arts and Music students showcase their talents at the theatre or check out the latest student exhibition on Campus or at a local gallery.



## JUST WANT TO RELAX?

Our student lounge areas are a great place to take a break when your child has free time. If your child wants some fresh air, they can head outside to enjoy our landscaped grounds.

## SUPPORT AT SRC

Our staff are here to help your child get the most out of their time at SRC and we have a team of people dedicated to making their College experience as enjoyable and productive as possible.



## JOIN OR START A CLUB

Your child can join an existing club or start their own! The opportunities are endless and all they need is a group of like-minded students to take part.



## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

We are able to offer a range of advice about bursaries and financial support should this be of benefit to you and your family.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What's the difference between SRC's courses & A-Levels or GCSEs?

BTECs and other vocational courses offer a mix of theoretical and practical learning versus A-Levels and GCSEs which focus predominantly on theoretical.

At College, students are often working in practical settings designed to be as much like real workplaces as possible. They are taught by lecturers who have industry experience and in many cases their work is set and assessed by local employers who work in close partnership with us.

To pass A-Levels and GCSEs you have to sit final exams. BTECs and equivalents are still largely assessed through continuous assessment, based on coursework and practical assignments although there may be some exam-based element.

## Can my child still apply to university if they study at SRC?

Yes! Hundreds of our students go on to university every year after successfully completing their studies with us. Our courses provide UCAS points that support university applications - for example, a BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma is the equivalent of 3 A-Levels.

## What if my child isn't sure what to do for a career?

Many students aren't and studying a vocational course doesn't close down their options. Students follow a broad vocational study programme which meets their individual needs, whether their intended destination is employment, an apprenticeship or further study. Our Careers Advisers can also talk through all their options with them during their time at SRC.

## Why go to College to study these courses?

SRC is specifically designed to deliver top quality vocational education. We have the facilities, the expert lecturers and the links with employers. We know how to get the best out of young people who prefer a mix of learning styles, such as "hands on" learning, and like to express themselves through practical activities and exciting project work.



## What can I do to support my child at SRC and help them to succeed?

Some young people need more help than others to settle into College life. Here are a few tips that may help you to help them.

- Encourage them to attend and to attend on time. There is a direct link between attendance and achievement and so good attendance is crucial to your child's success. College differs from school as the start and finishing times may vary each day, so it is helpful to keep a copy of your child's timetable nearby to ensure they are on time for their College lessons.
- Help your son or daughter with their time management. The change to a less regimented schedule is sometimes hard to handle. You could ask if they are keeping their notes up to date and getting their assignments in on time.
- Give them space to study. The College has a Learning Resource Centre where students can use the computers and books, but if possible, a quiet place at home is a real benefit.
- Curriculum areas organise parents' evenings throughout the year to keep you up to date on your child's progress at College it is important that you attend these wherever possible.

- Sometimes part-time work interferes with College studies, so encourage your child to find the right balance.
- Encourage them to ask for help if the need arises. We have a range of support services available but asking for help is sometimes difficult.
- If your child feels they are on the wrong course, encourage them to contact us to discuss alternatives.
- Find out when exams are being held and help your child to plan a revision timetable.
- Ensure that your child is attending all parts of their study programme, especially English and Maths.
- Take an interest in your child's course and encourage them to achieve, especially if they are finding the work a challenge.
- Contact your child's tutor as soon as possible if you have any concerns that are, or will, impact upon their learning.

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

### Campus Services

- ✉ info@src.ac.uk
- ☎ 0300 123 1223

### Student Finance Information

- 🌐 www.src.ac.uk

### Careers Advice

- ✉ MAIL\_CAREERS@src.ac.uk
- ☎ 028 3751 2808

### Learning Support Enquiries

- ☎ 028 3025 9612

### Safeguarding

- ✉ safeguarding@src.ac.uk

### Counselling (Inspire Students)

- ✉ workandstudy@inspirewellbeing.org
- ☎ 0800 389 5362

## INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE (INCLUDING CAREERS ADVICE)

We have qualified Careers Advisers at SRC who can offer free, confidential and impartial advice to all full-time students. Students receive career tutorial sessions as part of their study programme as well as opportunities to discover the progression opportunities available to them through the College. We operate both a drop-in service and individual appointments. The team are available to support young people before and during their time at the College. Get in touch to find out more.

☎ 028 3751 2808 ✉ MAIL\_CAREERS@src.ac.uk

## WELFARE & COUNSELLING

For all Southern Regional College students who are struggling with a personal concern, counselling support is available in partnership with Inspire Students. This counselling service is independent, confidential and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Common personal concerns include relationship difficulties, grief, difficult life circumstances, anxiety and depression. People often find it useful to get support from a qualified counsellor who will work within strict professional guidelines and can help with whatever difficulty they are facing. Our experienced Safeguarding Officers are available to support your child with any learning and personal issues.

✉ [safeguarding@src.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@src.ac.uk) or

✉ [workandstudy@inspirewellbeing.org](mailto:workandstudy@inspirewellbeing.org)

## PROGRESS REVIEWS

As a full-time student at SRC your child will participate in group professional tutorials that give them opportunities (through themed topics) to develop their personal, social, learning and employability skills. These are in addition to one-to-one meetings to review their progress. The sessions offer individual advice and direction to help your child get the best from their course.

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS

Our Student Engagement Officers are here to help your child make the most of their time at SRC. They can help provide a programme of sports, volunteering, fundraising and recreational activities.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

As a student at SRC, your child will undertake meaningful work experience which is directly related to their vocational specialism wherever possible. This gives them valuable experience of the work environment and helps develop their skills for success, enabling them to apply learning from their course to real life situations.

## LEARNING SUPPORT

The College aims to provide a safe, supportive and friendly learning environment for all students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Learning Support is additional support to assist students who might otherwise be unable to access a programme of study or who, by reason of their learning difficulty or disability, may require specific support beyond that normally provided by the College. This support will assist students with disabilities, learning difficulties or medical conditions to realise their full academic and personal potential. Examples of difficulties include specific literacy difficulties, Autism or Asperger's Syndrome, mental health difficulties or mobility difficulties.

SRC have a team of Learning Support Coordinators available across all campuses to provide information, support and guidance on learning support available at the College.

## SAFEGUARDING

We are committed to the safeguarding and welfare of our students. We provide and maintain a friendly and safe learning environment for all our learners. We act immediately on any concerns that a student might have in relation to bullying, abuse, neglect or harassment. SRC's Designated Safeguarding Officer and Adult Safeguarding Champion is Lorraine McKeown who you can contact.

✉ [safeguarding@src.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@src.ac.uk) or by calling

☎ 078 4197 0692