

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO HRC

HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE



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HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE

We believe in achieving sustainable economic and social impact through high quality responsive education and training. We are:

- Partnered by employers;
- Defined by our communities;
- Enriched by our staff;
- Inspired by individual success

WELCOME

At Hertford Regional College our students are given the best opportunity to learn and develop their skills in our state of the art facilities. Our aim is to ensure that each student obtains the skills and qualifications they need in order to reach their chosen destination.

Our goal at HRC is to prepare all of our students for their future careers, whether that is straight after they finish College or after going to university. We believe that the experience they gain as a student at HRC is critical in order to ensure they have the necessary skills to get ahead of the competition and to get that dream job, apprenticeship or place at their first-choice university.

Our students learn in cutting edge facilities which have recently been updated and installed with professional equipment. They are taught by industry experts. They also have opportunities to meet and work with local employers to develop both their academic and high level technical and vocational skills. This unparalleled opportunity helps them improve their employability skills, the ones that employers tell us they value and that set the best applicants and employees apart from the rest.



Above all of this, our staff provide advice and support to help your child 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 in their lives 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 with your son or daughter's education. Your support makes a difference to your child achieving to their full potential, particularly with their progress in gaining an A*-C grade (grades 9 - 4 from 2017) in GCSE English and maths should they not have achieved this in school.

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

Tony Medhurst
Principal & Chief Executive

ABOUT HRC

HRC is a medium-sized further education college with two main campuses in Broxbourne and Ware. We have a wide range of full-time study programmes, apprenticeships, higher education, inclusive learning and part-time courses.

The learning experience at HRC is different from school because your child will have a chance 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 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 IMPORTANCE OF GCSE ENGLISH AND MATHS

As a parent it is really important that you support and encourage your child to achieve their GCSE English and maths when they are at school. Achieving a good standard of English and maths is important for young people to compete in today's labour market. Surveys repeatedly show that employers are dissatisfied with the literacy/numeracy skills of school and college leavers. Many use these qualifications as a filter in their recruitment processes.

It is now a government requirement that any student who has not yet achieved at least a Grade C (Grade 4 from 2017) in GCSE English and maths has to continue to study these subjects. Those who have achieved a Grade 'D' (Grade 3 from 2017) will be placed on a GCSE course, while others will have the option of following Functional Skills courses in English and maths at a level appropriate to them. Students will take these additional classes alongside their chosen vocational course. 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 HRC.

It is critical that your child takes their English and maths seriously and has good attendance in both subjects. Students who do not, will struggle to progress to their next level at the end of the year, even if they have done well with their vocational specialism.





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:

- We expect a minimum of 90% attendance on all elements of a student's programme of study.
- We expect students to fully engage with work experience opportunities to support their development.
- We expect students to aim to be the very best that they can be, and that their learning behaviours support this.
- We expect students to fully capitalise upon their time at College, its resources and the support available to develop the skills and qualities that they will require for progression and eventual employment.
- We expect students to fully engage with College life, ensuring they enjoy what they are doing.
- We expect students to own and reflect on their academic progress, seeking advice and support where necessary.
- We expect students to keep us informed of any circumstances that might affect their ability to learn.

LIFE AT HRC

Our two campuses at Broxbourne and Ware offer students exceptionally supportive learning environments.

Your child's studies are the reason why they are here but life at HRC doesn't stop at the classroom. Outside of lessons we have lots of activities that can make their time with us even more enriching. They can find out more about all of these added extras by talking to our Student Services Team.

STARTING THE DAY RIGHT

All full-time students and apprentices can enjoy a free breakfast at either campus, available Monday to Friday between 8.15am - 8.45am during term time.

THEIR OPINION COUNTS

Your child's views on life at College are important to us because every student helps shape the future of HRC. They can become a student representative or a member of the apprenticeship 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. All students can join the Broxbourne gym for just £30 a year or they could try out a whole range of activities during their lunch breaks. They can get involved with football, karate, badminton, basketball and many other sports and meet new people along the way.

SOAK UP SOME CULTURE

HRC is a great place to experience culture with the Michael Morpurgo Theatre at Broxbourne and the David Gentleman Gallery at Ware. Your child can watch our Performing Arts and Music students showcase their talents at the theatre or check out the latest student exhibition at the gallery.

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. A great example of this is the introduction of the Anime Club, new for 2016, which was created by our own students.

GAIN AN ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATION FOR FREE

If your child is a full-time 16-18 year old student they can study for a free qualification to boost their CV, including:

- First Aid courses
- Sports Leadership Award
- Young Leaders in Badminton
- NCS (National Citizenship Service)

JUST WANT TO RELAX?

Our student lounges are a great place to take a break when they have free time. They can play pool, table tennis or table football or grab a bite to eat from the canteen or coffee shop. If your child wants some fresh air, they can head outside to enjoy our landscaped grounds.

SAVE MONEY

Every student at College can join the National Union of Students (NUS). If they sign up for an NUS card they can get thousands of discounts on high street brands exclusive to students. Visit www.nus.org.uk for more information.

BRAVO

HRC's students all live by the BRAVO code which ensures the College remains a safe and comfortable learning environment for everyone. This focuses on the following important themes:

- **B** Be Safe
- **R** Respectful
- **A** Always polite
- **V** Visible ID while on our campuses
- **O** On time

SUPPORT AT HRC

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

INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (INCLUDING CAREERS ADVICE)

We have a qualified careers adviser at HRC who can offer free, confidential and impartial advice to all full-time students. Students also receive career tutorial sessions as part of their study programme as well as opportunities to discover the progression opportunities that are available to them through the College.

PERSONAL PROGRESS APPRAISALS AND PROFESSIONAL TUTORIALS

As a full-time student at HRC, 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 personal progress appraisals to review their progress and offer individual advice and direction to help your child get the best from their course.

WORK EXPERIENCE

As a student at HRC, your child will undertake meaningful work experience which is directly related to their vocational specialism wherever possible, giving them valuable experience of the work environment, developing their Skills for Success and enabling them to apply the learning from their course to real life situations.

ADVICE & COUNSELLING

We have professional counsellors who work in the College offering confidential advice and counselling for students. Our experienced Student Welfare Advisers are available to support your child with any learning and personal issues.

STUDENT LIAISON OFFICERS

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

LEARNING SUPPORT

HRC welcomes students with learning difficulties and disabilities and aims to provide the most appropriate support to meet specific needs. We have teams providing various kinds of support including:

- Visual Impairment Support Services
- Specialist Specific Learning Difficulties Tutors
- Deaf Support Team
- Learning Support Workers

We can also help your child to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, enabling them to achieve on their vocational programme of study.

SAFEGUARDING

We are committed to the safeguarding and welfare of our students. We provide and maintain a friendly and safe learning environment for all of our learners. We act immediately on any concerns that a student might have in relation to bullying, abuse, neglect or harassment. All of our staff are trained in safeguarding.

FAQs

What's the difference between HRC's courses and 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 experience of working in industry 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 HRC?

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 adviser can also talk through all their options with them during their time at HRC.

Why go to college to study these courses?

HRC 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 HRC and help them to succeed?

Some young people need more help than others to settle into College life. On the next page there follows a few hints 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 and 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.

Is there any financial help available for my child?

We can help with a range of financial support including support for travel expenses and free meals. For more information contact the financial support team on **01992 411396** or **financialsupport@hrc.ac.uk**

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Information Team

info@hrc.ac.uk, 01992 411411

Financial Services

Broxbourne - 01992 411396

Ware - 01992 411961

Careers Advice (via appointment) - 01992 411400

Learning Support Enquiries - 01992 411846

Visual Impairment Support Service - 01992 411768

Apprenticeships - 01992 411572

Hearing impaired students can contact us by Fax - 01992 411885