



## Cambian Dilston College

*Specialist Further Education College*

- Mixed Gender • 16-25 Years
- Up to 52 Weeks Residential • Day Placements

### Welcome

Welcome to Cambian Dilston College, an independent specialist college providing a high standard of education and care for students aged 16 to 25 with moderate to severe learning disabilities. We successfully support students with a broad range of complex needs including medical needs and challenging behaviour.

Cambian Dilston College is situated in Northumberland, close to the towns of Hexham and Corbridge, with easy access to Newcastle City Centre. We offer day placements and up to 52-week residential placements.

We pride ourselves on our commitment to providing high quality and person-centred education and care using specialist approaches and individual learning programmes, utilising our

unique on-site learning, leisure and residential facilities. We support students to gain the skills and confidence they need to move onto the next stage in their lives, whether that is gaining employment, moving towards independent living or progressing to further study.

Following the key principles of 16+ study programmes every student has an individualised learning programme, designed to support their development and progression in line with their future aspirations. We look forward to welcoming you to the college.

Yours sincerely

*Nicola Moxon*

Nicola Moxon, Principal



Nicola Moxon  
Principal

Dilston Hall,  
Corbridge,  
Northumberland,  
NE45 5RJ

01434 632692

# Overview



## Enabling young people to lead active lives

Cambian Dilston College is a specialist provider of further education in North East England, offering day and up to 52-week residential placements for young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders, learning disabilities and complex needs.

We offer all students the opportunity to participate in a full and active extended curriculum: promoting, supporting and challenging them to make progress and achieve their fullest potential.

Our person-centred approach provides students with individualised learning programmes developed to effectively match their needs, personal decisions and aspirations, be the focus on daily living skills, vocational qualifications or independent living.\*

We are proud that all of our students gain important life skills and meaningful qualifications, evidencing our commitment to enabling increased choice, control and independence.

By providing a wide range of specialist interventions, tailored approaches and proactive options for students, we ensure that all the young people in our care have the chance to engage positively with staff and their peers.

Whilst with us, we encourage students to develop and pursue their interests and provide them with the support they need to consistently achieve their personal best. Our range of multi-disciplinary therapies is delivered by a highly skilled and passionate team who work together to provide a holistic care environment.



## Typical Student Presentation

- Moderate to Severe Learning Disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Down's Syndrome
- Developmental Disorders
- Communication Difficulties
- Challenging Behaviour
- A Broad Range of Complex Needs Including Medical Needs



\*Learning programs are determined by individual assessment of needs.



# Referral Route and Pathways



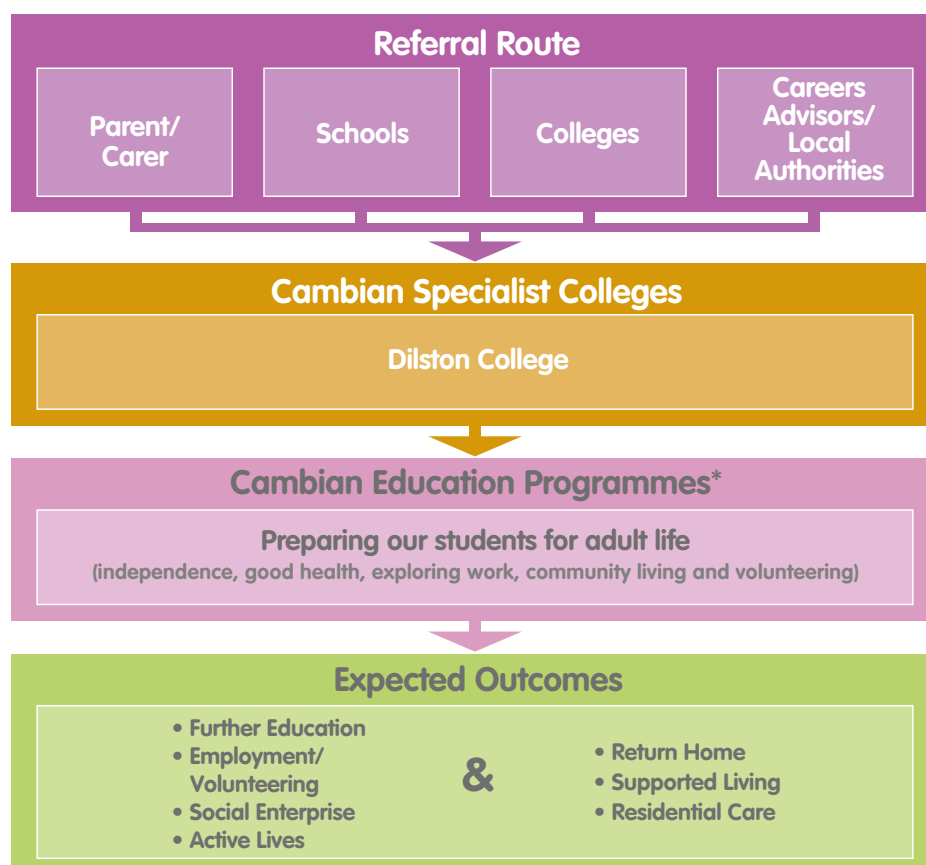
## Preparing our students for adult life

Students follow either the Personal Progress route (PP) or the Skills for Independence and Work (SFIW) route depending on their needs, abilities and preferences.

All routes\* include the key features of 16+ study programmes, enabling students to develop their functional, vocational and personal skills and experience community living.

We have established strong links with local organisations and employers that support the college by providing community based learning, leisure, volunteering, social enterprise and work experience opportunities.

## Referral route, education programmes and expected outcomes



"People received very individualised support at the college that promoted their independence. They were supported to access a wide variety of learning and work experience opportunities in the local community during college times."

**Quote from  
Inspection Report  
2019**

\*Determined by individual assessments of need.

# Helping Achieve a Personal Best

Cambian Dilston College offers a wide variety of opportunities for external accreditation through the Qualifications and Credits Framework (QCF).

We provide flexible routes to full qualifications and offer units of study from pre-entry to level 2, leading to awards, certificates and diplomas.

The QCF is a key component in our work to help young people with a learning disability gain life skills. Self-esteem is essential to young people progressing into adulthood. By offering students the opportunity to undertake nationally recognised vocational qualifications, we help young people to gain confidence and lead socially active and engaged lives.

Basic literacy, numeracy, ICT and communication are embedded within the curriculum and in discrete sessions.

## **Vocational and practical learning opportunities at Cambian Dilston College:**

- ✓ Animal Care
- ✓ Art & Pottery
- ✓ Community and Leisure Activities
- ✓ Computers and ICT
- ✓ Conservation
- ✓ Creative Play
- ✓ Duke of Edinburgh
- ✓ English and Maths
- ✓ Forest School
- ✓ Gardening & Horticulture
- ✓ Independent Living Skills
- ✓ Kitchen & Bakery
- ✓ Media
- ✓ Music & Drama
- ✓ Science
- ✓ Workshop
- ✓ Work Experience

## **As well as internal courses in practical skills, externally accredited courses include:**

- ✓ Edexcel
- ✓ Duke of Edinburgh Award
- ✓ John Muir
- ✓ City and Guilds



# Volunteering and Work Placements

As part of their course, students are offered the opportunity to access work experience, supported by one of our dedicated job coaches.

Such opportunities offer students an insight into the world of work which may be one of their long-term goals, or may inspire them to think about seeking a work-related or ongoing learning placement once their college course is complete.

Our staff support students to access work experience in a variety of areas such as catering, administration and land-based work.


Work experience placements continue throughout the year, as opposed to the block placements traditionally run by schools. This allows students time to prepare and settle into their placement and apply learning from their college course to the work environment.

Students are also able to establish positive relationships with their employers, enabling them to develop meaningful and person-centred employment experiences.

Students can take the confidence gained and skills learned from their placements and transfer them, along with accurate employer references, to increase the work, further education or training opportunities available to them after college.

**Students have the opportunity to experience a wide range of work experience and volunteering opportunities including:**

- ✓ Land Base Activities
- ✓ Conservation
- ✓ Retail
- ✓ Catering and Hospitality
- ✓ Heritage
- ✓ Animal Care



Animal Care



# Developing Skills and Interests

An important part of helping our students to achieve their personal best is encouraging them to develop interests and participate in a variety of activities and environments.

All students follow an individualised programme of practical life skills developed within real life supported living and community environments.

## Learner Voice

Cambian Dilston College offers all students the opportunity to participate in a full and active extended curriculum: promoting, supporting and challenging them to make progress and achieve their fullest potential. The ethos of the college ensures that our approach is inclusive and holistic, offering everyone an equal opportunity to express their views, make choices and be included.

### **This policy is key to our commitment to the development and promotion of student involvement:**

- Students are involved in a comprehensive assessment process (pre-entry, initial, baseline)
- Students complete a thorough induction programme designed to help them settle in to their new routines
- Students are fully integrated into community living through an extended curriculum and extra-curricular activities
- 'Learner Voice' is captured in many different ways: accommodation meetings, individual tutorials, person centred plans/reviews, individual therapy sessions, student council meetings & differentiated resources within a total communication environment
- Support structures are comprehensive and clear and designed to give students quick access to key staff with whom they can share concerns e.g. keyworker and personal tutor
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award supports our commitment to enhance outcomes for all students
- Students are supported to make choices about their timetable by participating in an 'options' process
- Learner choice and participation is promoted and monitored via operational meetings, tutor meetings and accommodation meetings
- For students with more complex needs, Learner Voice is focussed upon enabling them to make simple choices about their daily lives both in and outside of college. Students are supported to develop their communication skills within our total communication environment and are given opportunities to make choices and develop independence through the innovative use of technology and specialist resources

**The core curriculum is complemented by a range of enrichment activities that enable students to develop new friendships and interests. They can choose from a variety of activities and clubs including:**

- ✓ Arts and Crafts
- ✓ Basketball
- ✓ Bowling
- ✓ Cycling
- ✓ Dance
- ✓ Drama
- ✓ Duke of Edinburgh
- ✓ Football
- ✓ Gym
- ✓ Indoor/Outdoor Games
- ✓ Keep-Fit
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Photography
- ✓ Pottery
- ✓ Rambling
- ✓ Swimming
- ✓ Visiting Places of Interest
- ✓ Woodwork





# Therapy

We provide a wide range of specialist interventions and tailored approaches for our students. We ensure that all young people in our care have the chance to engage positively in college, daily life and with staff, peers and the local community.

## Speech and Language Therapy

Speech and language therapy promotes inclusive communication and accessible information. It supports communication-friendly environments; develops the communication skills of those working with and supporting people with learning disabilities; and promotes and creates accessible information so it can be shared in ways that everyone can understand.

Cambian Dilston College offers a total communication environment. This encourages the use of all communication methods to support understanding and use of language, including:

- **Speech**
- **Vocalisations**
- **Body Language**
- **Facial Expression**
- **Gesture**
- **Makaton**
- **Written Words**
- **Symbols**
- **Objects**
- **High-tech Communication Aids**

The Speech and Language Therapist works in a number of different ways at college:

### During transition - supporting students to start at college

The Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) will use information from previous placements and initial observations of the student to form a communication profile. The communication profile outlines key information about a student's communication and any strategies that staff need to be aware of when supporting them. This might happen before a student comes to us, or when they first start at the college.

### Universal Service (which all students are able to benefit from)

The Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) works with the whole college team to ensure that all staff have the knowledge, skills and tools to support students' communication and interaction.

There are a number of environmental therapeutic approaches which are accessible to all students in college. These include the following:

- Accessible displays and documentation
- Symbols used regularly throughout sessions
- Learn and do boards in classrooms which act as a visual schedule for the sessions
- Meal planning and daily chores visuals in student accommodation

### Our therapy team consists of:

- ✓ Speech and Language Therapy
- ✓ Occupational Therapy
- ✓ Mental Health Practitioner
- ✓ Clinical Psychologist
- ✓ Students may access NHS Services such as Physiotherapy, Mental Health Services etc.
- ✓ Additional private support may be sourced as required e.g. Art Therapy



## Targeted Input

Some of our students have bespoke communication tools/approaches/strategies which are specific to their needs. These include:

- Now and next boards
- Individual visual timetables
- Choice boards relating to specific parts of the day
- Social stories

These are implemented by the Speech and Language Therapist and used/monitored by the education and care staff who work with the students on a daily basis. Progress and effectiveness is regularly reviewed by the SLT.

The SLT also works directly with teaching and care staff to enable them to meet students' communication needs and know how best to support them.

## Specialist

The SLT carries out a number of direct interventions with students based on their needs, including the following:

- Social skills group
- Social thinking group - teaching students how to consider things from someone else's perspective
- 1:1 work with students who use communication aids, to enhance their skills in using the device
- Specific work tailored to individual student's needs e.g. working on how to deal with change, how to understand and express emotions, how to deal with anxiety around a specific situation etc.

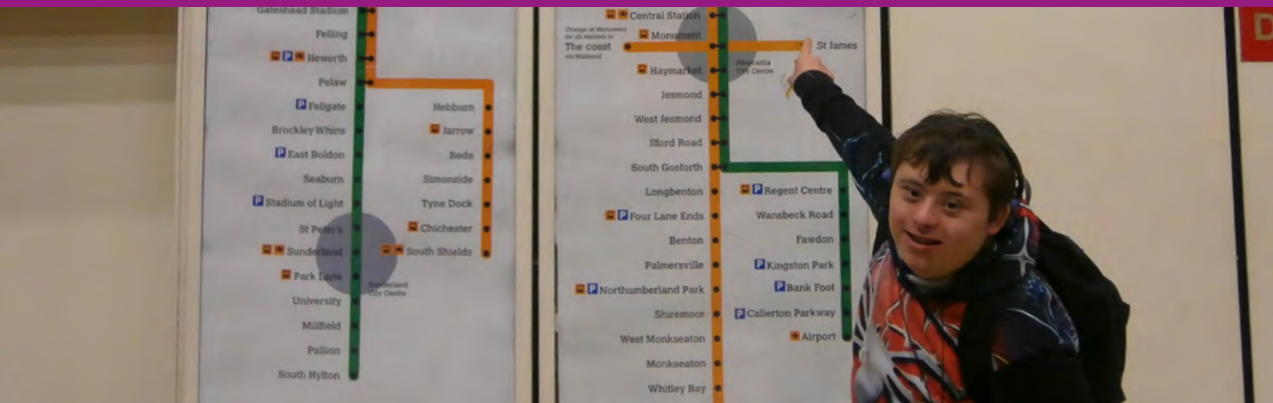
Universal and targeted approaches remain in place across the full 52 weeks of the year, ensuring that students have access to their communication support tools at all times and have appropriately trained staff who are aware of their communication needs. Specialist interventions take place during term time, for 38 weeks of the year.

We help students to:

- Tell people what they want and need
- Understand what other people say
- Know what is happening in their day
- Make choices and decisions
- Tell people how they are feeling
- Improve their social skills and develop friendships



# Occupational Therapy



Occupational therapists support people with all types of learning disabilities to help them continue with life skills, work and leisure activities as independently as possible. They will:

- Work with individuals, families and support workers so they understand the importance of taking part in everyday activities
- Help people with learning disabilities to get involved in activities around the home, such as cooking
- Help people to live independently
- Encourage use of public transport so people with learning disabilities can access community facilities
- Support people into mainstream voluntary work or employment.

**The Occupational Therapist (OT) works in a number of different ways at college.**

## **During transition- supporting students to start at college**

The Occupational Therapist will use information from previous placements and initial observations of the student to ensure the college provides a suitable environment to meet students' physical and sensory needs.

## **Universal Service (which all students are able to benefit from)**

The OT works across the whole college team to ensure that all staff have the knowledge, skills and tools to support students with their daily activities, independence skills and sensory needs.

There are a number of environmental therapeutic approaches which are accessible to all students in college. These include the following:

- Low stimulus environments
- Sensory room and therapy swing
- Safe space
- Outdoor gym
- Classroom seating arrangements
- Movement breaks



## Targeted Input

Some of our students have bespoke approaches/strategies which are specific to their needs. These include:

- Adaptive equipment e.g. specialist cutlery, shower seats
- Sensory equipment e.g. multi-sensory boxes, fidgets, wobble cushions, gym balls etc
- Sensory circuits i.e. physical activities which are used to alert, organise and calm students
- Sensory strategies

**These are implemented by the OT and used/monitored by the education and care staff who work with the students on a daily basis. Progress and effectiveness is regularly reviewed by the SLT.**

The OT also works directly with teaching and care staff to enable them to support students with their education sessions, daily activities, independence skills and sensory needs.

## Specialist

The OT carries out a number of direct interventions with students based on their needs, including the following:

- Increasing independence skills e.g. personal care, dressing, household tasks
- Enabling safe travel e.g. assessing and managing risk, use of buckle safes and harnesses
- Emotional wellbeing including managing feelings
- Supporting students to access education

**Universal and targeted approaches remain in place across the full 52 weeks of the year, ensuring that students have access to their communication support tools at all times and have appropriately trained staff who are aware of their communication needs. Specialist interventions take place during term time, for 38 weeks of the year.**





## Supporting Positive Behaviour

Cambian Dilston College uses a Positive Behaviour Support approach. We understand we need to work together to find out the meaning behind behaviours, so that we can support the student's needs in better ways to improve their quality of life. We focus on proactive strategies to reduce the situations in which challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and teach new skills and coping strategies. Students have a Behaviour Support Plan which identifies their individual behavioural needs and how staff can work with them.

## Supporting Mental Health

Cambian Dilston College aims to promote positive mental health and wellbeing among all of the students. We strive to promote mental wellbeing by creating an environment where young people feel safe and happy and feelings are recognised and talked about. Staff consistently support students to develop strategies for coping with their feelings.

We also identify and support students who might have a particular mental health need and require specialist support, liaising with local mental health services. The college works with students and external professionals to help manage mental health needs.

## MAPA

The College uses MAPA (Management of Actual or Potential Aggression). The MAPA programme is a behaviour management system designed as a safe, non-harmful approach to assist staff in the management of a wide range of disruptive, challenging, aggressive, and violent behaviours, including the most acute behavioural disturbances and high risk behaviour. The focus is on verbal de-escalation, prevention, and early intervention. Within the MAPA programme touching, holding or physical restraint skills (physical interventions) are used as a last resource to manage risk. The MAPA philosophy enables us to meet Standards, Regulation and Legislation for Care Homes.

# Support Dog

Tansy the support dog is very much part of the Dilston team and loves being around our students. Tansy is used as part of our animal care sessions to help demonstrate and teach responsible pet ownership and husbandry. The ability to participate in training enables the students to practice communication skills, co-ordination, giving instructions and commands. Tansy also acts as a form of therapy for students either as part of walks or to fulfill sensory needs.



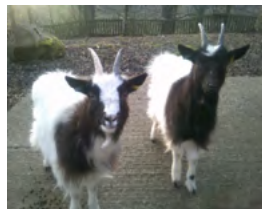
## Animal Care

At Dilston we care for a range of animals which currently include; sheep, goats, canaries, hens and quail. Animals are a valuable learning tool; our students participate in practical tasks as well as classroom-based sessions.

Students benefit from:

### Cognitive skills such as:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses
- Attention-sustained/selective/divided
- Memory-short term/long term
- Logic/reasoning
- Processing-visual/speed



### Confidence/independence:

- Increased confidence
- Increased independence
- Reduced anxiety/depression

### Life skills:

- Communicating
- Making Connections
- Critical Thinking
- Taking On Challenges
- Engaged Learning
- Numeracy
- Literacy

### Work skills:

- Practical skills
- Strong Work Ethic
- Positive Attitude
- Communication Skills
- Time Management Abilities
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Acting as a Team Player
- Self-Confidence
- Health and Safety

### Sensory Processing:

- Touch-Stroking/Holding/Textures
- Grooming/Weighing/pressure/ safe/correct
- Visual-animal colours/movement observations/ health checking
- Smell-signs of good/ill health
- Sounds-animal vocalisation
- Verbal-speak to animals/instructor/peers/family

### Dexterity/balance/motor skills:

- Improved fine motor skills, improved balance
- Handling animals, tools and equipment to complete practical tasks.
- Complete animal linked written work, art, records and charts etc



# Our Environment



## A home away from home

We understand that residential colleges can never replace home but we make every effort to create a welcoming, family environment where students feel safe and comfortable.

Our accommodation provides the necessary step between leaving home and community living that most young adults take during their transition to adulthood.

Students live together in small groups, where they are supported to develop their skills for independence, such as personal care, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry, supported travel training and community awareness.

*Some students may also live individually to meet their needs.*

Students will be allocated accommodation for their time at the college, this will either be in the main hall or one of the four cottages situated within the college grounds. Designated staff teams will provide support within these accommodations.

We encourage our students to personalise their bedrooms with posters, photos and personal belongings. Students will also be supported and encouraged to take ownership of their bedrooms; keeping it clean and tidy.

All bedrooms have Wi-Fi access between the hours of 06:30 and 22:30.

### Other onsite facilities include:

- ICT Suites
- Sensory Room
- Outdoor Gym
- Animal Care Facility
- Café
- Bakery
- Workshops for Art, Pottery and Woodwork
- Outdoor Classroom and Teaching Space
- Horticultural and Estate Management
- Vocational Learning Kitchen
- Forest School

### Off-site facilities:

- Sports activities at local leisure centre
- Opportunities for shopping and entertainment in the nearby town of Corbridge, Hexham and Newcastle
- Lunch Clubs
- Visits to local heritage sites and places of interest

# Curriculum Overview



At Cambian Dilston College, we:

- ✓ Offer a broad and individualised curriculum for each student, tailored to meet their developing needs
- ✓ Facilitate the development of independent living skills through a practical and community based curriculum
- ✓ Develop students' functional communication skills within a total communication environment
- ✓ Enable students to develop self-awareness and interpersonal skills which underpin successful community living and working
- ✓ Offer a wide range of vocational curriculum choices to stimulate and challenge students on all levels
- ✓ Encourage students to become active participants in their local communities through a programme of enterprise and involvement
- ✓ Equip students with the most appropriate and relevant accreditation for their chosen destination

## Core Curriculum

**The core curriculum offers three distinct routes:**

Personal Progress, Skills for Independence and Work and Workskills; all routes encompass the key principles of 16+ study programmes. Subject areas include:

- ✓ **Independent Living Skills**
- ✓ **Literacy and Numeracy**
- ✓ **Vocational Skills and Experience**
- ✓ **Personal Development**
- ✓ **Community and Leisure Activities**
- ✓ **Work Experience**
- ✓ **Enrichment Activities**

## Personal Progress route

1

Students working up to Entry Level 1 will follow a Personal Progress route tailored to their individual needs. Students work towards qualifications designed to develop their life skills in a variety of different contexts. The curriculum content is constructed around the development of communication skills, community awareness and integration, social communication and behaviour, development of independent living skills and introductory activities in vocational areas.

## Skills for Independence and Work route

2

Students working at Entry Level 2 will follow a SFIW route enabling them to develop a range of skills within chosen vocational areas and access core sessions.

## Work Skills

3

Students working at Entry Level 3 and Level 1 follow a Workskills route designed to equip students with the essential skills needed to progress into employment post-college.





## Curriculum overview

Within all our curriculum options, we effectively teach the skills that underpin successful learning and relationship building; promoting emotional health and wellbeing.

The curriculum options we offer provide our students with the opportunity to practice new skills in an environment where they feel safe, are able to try new things and learn more about themselves.

### Independent Living Skills Curriculum

The Independent Living Skills curriculum is designed to develop students' readiness for independent or shared community living. This is achieved by focusing on the skills required to live as independently as possible and to make a successful transition out of college. For all students, this will involve identifying long-term transitional aims to ensure that the skills they develop can be successfully transferred into their post college placement.

### Communication and Behaviour Curriculum

Our autism specific curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students with complex communication and behavioural difficulties. This is a highly structured and experiential learning programme which develops and reinforces students' adaptive behaviours, communication, social awareness and functional skills. The curriculum is based upon a total communication philosophy, with the utilisation of a wide range of tools and methods to develop students' understanding and help them to be understood.

### Work Experience

Students have access to a variety of work experience placements through the wide range of connections Cambian Dilston College has with local employers. Job Coaches work closely with students to help them identify work related targets, reflect on their work experience placement and plan for their next step.

# Living Well



## Health and well-being

**Students are encouraged and supported to develop and maintain healthy lifestyles, with a focus on positive social and emotional well-being.**

Our Living Well approach aims to:

✓ **Promote healthy eating and lifestyles**

Students take an active role in planning the weekly menu for their accommodation. Strong emphasis is placed on giving students the knowledge and support to make food choices which contribute to a healthy diet. Shopping for food is an integral part of the practical life skills curriculum that gives students the opportunity to learn about food labelling and to select healthy options when out in the community.

Our catering team also provide balanced healthy meals and snacks, served in the dining room.

Our health and well-being supporter plays a key role in making sure students' health needs are supported appropriately and that students, through specific programmes, are increasingly encouraged to manage their own medical needs, as much as they are able.

Students are supported to take part in a choice of physical and sporting activities, these include a wide range of personal interests such as swimming, gym classes and football. On site students have access to an outdoor gym and trampoline as well as the grounds to walk around.

After lunch each day students are encouraged and supported to participate in the daily mile, this provides an opportunity for exercise and socialising.

✓ **Increase health and well-being awareness**

'Tutors ensure that learning is stimulating and is focused on improving students' independent living and work skills. Consequently, a high proportion of students achieve their personal goals and have a greater awareness of how to care for themselves.'

(Ofsted 2017)



# Case Study

## Jake's Story

Jake came to Dilston with complex needs. He began his college course with aims of improving his communication which is mostly non-verbal and for him to be able to safely access the community.

Jake now seems to be a quite happy and enthusiastic young man who appears to be thriving in his placement.

Jake now takes part in several safe off site activities, such as trampolining, hydrotherapy and sensory sessions. He also uses the outside space at college and has visited the beach, supported by his staff.

Jake's ability to be around others and to communicate with them has greatly increased since coming to Dilston. His use of symbols has developed and he now makes choices using these. He thrives in the company of staff he knows well and spends much less time away from people than he did previously. Jake's ability to let staff know what he wants has improved and he is developing firm relationships with staff in the team who work with him.

**“Since Jake has moved into Dilston, he has made great progress to now being able to enjoy a range of activities, with the support from staff, which he previously struggled with. The support he receives from staff is fantastic.”**

**Jake's Mum**

\* Photo for illustrative purpose only. Individuals names have been changed to protect their identity.



## Andrew's Story



Andrew is a young man who started at Dilston with aspirations to gain skills that would help him get a job, to develop relationships with friends and to improve his independence skills. Andrew has a real love for animals and wildlife and hopes to work in this area.

Andrew's willingness to try new things and his positive attitude have been recognised in his recent work experience placement at a local library, where he came up with new ideas of his own, to create promotional displays. They commented ; "it was his imagination and ability to think beyond the instructions he was given that made his contribution to the work we do here outstanding".

Andrew has now moved onto another work experience placement in a local supermarket, where he is working more independently.

**"Since starting at Dilston College I have watched Andrew's confidence grow as he has gained skills and the focus to utilise them"**

**Andrew's Mum**



# Transitional Support



Transition is central to our college offer; we take pride in supporting students to achieve their goals and aspirations. At Cambian Dilston College we have a dedicated team that, alongside the students' circles of support, develop person-centred plans focusing on life after college.

## The transition team:

- ✓ Liaises with students' future service providers to facilitate smooth transitions
- ✓ Identifies opportunities in the community with students
- ✓ Supports students to visit their new homes and communities
- ✓ Liaise with key external stakeholders



"My son had a very positive experience at Cambian Dilston College. His self-confidence, personal skills and abilities that developed during this time have helped him to become a happy, competent young man.

The staff were wonderful at supporting him to ensure he achieved his full potential. He also made many new friends. The transitions team gave lots of good advice, guidance and assistance to ensure that his wishes were accomplished.

They organised work experience, appointments, and helped him to view potential placements before he finished his course and were always quick to respond to questions from me, ensuring I was fully informed."

## Parent of a Dilston Student



# Enrolment Process



For any enquiries please call **01434 632692**

Following an enquiry, the Admissions Officer will arrange for you to visit the college. Prospective students are invited for an extended visit, which includes an overnight stay for potential residential students. Following a successful extended visit a placement offer would be made in writing.

Enrolment can take place at any time during the year, and once a student referral is made our dedicated transitions team provide a fast and free person-centred Transition Plan.

