



WAVERLEY ABBEY
COLLEGE

Disability Policy (Students)

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1. Introduction

This policy explains how the college will work with students with a disability and is underpinned by the *Statement of Vision, Mission and Values* of the College, available on the College website, www.waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk, and within the policy documents handbook, and should be read and understood in the context of that statement.

2. Our Commitment

2.1 **Commitment to equality of opportunity**

This Policy is intended to reinforce the College's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and an exceptional experience for its student body. The College has a schedule of review for all its policies and procedures and will ensure that reviews take account of the legislative framework and the needs of its disabled students.

2.2 **Protection from discrimination**

The Policy outlines the College's duties toward disabled students and is designed to protect them from discrimination on the basis of their disability whilst studying with the College. It aims to ensure that they are offered equal access to higher education and equality of opportunity. The College will promote positive attitudes towards disabled students and encourage their full participation in all aspects of College life.

2.3 **A pro-active approach**

The College supports an anticipatory approach which requires pro-active consideration of disabled access to services and facilities to ensure adjustments are made in advance of individual disabled people accessing services. The College will also promote understanding and awareness of the ways in which curriculum, at the design stage, can be developed to enable students with disabilities to access facilities and learning.

2.4 **Staff training**

The College will train and support teaching staff and other staff as appropriate, to help them understand the needs of disabled students, to update them on the legal framework, and to equip them to support disabled students with their specific requirements.

3. The Legal Framework

3.1. **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on all Higher Education Institutions to promote disability equality. In compliance with the Equality Act the College will:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- eliminate harassment of disabled people
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate persons with disabilities
- identify and analyse potential discriminatory policies, practices and procedures in all aspects of the College's activities

3.2. **Definition of terms**

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as:

'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

This definition includes those with physical or mobility impairments, visual and hearing impairments, specific learning need, medical conditions, mental health difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, ME and unseen disabilities (eg asthma, epilepsy, heart conditions and diabetes).

The definition of '**day-to-day**' activities' includes mobility, manual dexterity, lifting, hearing, eyesight, speech, memory and the ability to concentrate, learn or understand. The Act defines '**substantial**' as being more than trivial and '**long-term**' as being more than twelve months or likely to last twelve months. An impairment which would substantially affect a person, but which is controlled by medical treatment or prosthesis, is still covered by the definition of disability.

4. Admission

4.1. **Selection and admission**

The College welcomes applications from disabled people with physical disabilities and those with specific learning needs. The college is committed to ensuring that applicants are recruited and selected on the basis of their academic merit and ability.

While there is no legal obligation for a disabled person to disclose a disability, the College encourages disclosure during the application process in order that awareness of entitlements can be made known to the applicant and reasonable adjustments can be planned and put in place prior to the start of term.

Where a student becomes disabled whilst studying, the College will provide support, as is reasonable, to enable the student to maintain their programme of study. Where a student takes a break from study due to their disability a programme of return to study, and any conditions which might apply, will be agreed with the student and academic staff.

4.2. **Placements and fitness to practise**

While a disability or specific learning need does not preclude an application to study on programmes with placements, applicants, and students who become disabled whilst studying, are required to declare conditions that have a potential impact on their fitness to practise. Applicants and students must also be able to comply with the Fitness to Practise policies of professional bodies for their respective profession(s).

5. Making Reasonable Adjustments

5.1. **Providing evidence of disability**

Any request for adjustments must be supported by medical or other evidence. Advice in obtaining evidence and the appropriate types of evidence required can be obtained from the Disability Tutor.

5.2. **Making reasonable adjustments**

The College will make reasonable adjustments when a student is placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who is not disabled. Examples of reasonable adjustments may include making appropriate arrangements in activities such as:

- Teaching, including lectures, seminars, practical sessions
- Examinations and assessments

5.3. **Specific adjustments**

Adjustments may include:

- Specific examination arrangements
- Provision of additional support for learning
- Adjustment to assessment practices,
- Auxiliary aids e.g. lecture notes and handouts in alternative formats, audio recordings
- Accommodation arrangements

- Providing access to facilities within the constraints of a Grade II* listed building
- Specific access issues such as the use of guide dogs

5.4. **Applicants and students with a high level of support requirements**

While most support needs can be assessed through regular procedures of the College there may be occasions where an applicant or student has a significantly high level of support needs (e.g. severe visual or hearing impairment, or severe physical disability) in these instances the Disability Tutor will convene a meeting consisting of:

- a member of the senior management team
- a member of the academic staff
- the Disability Tutor
- the applicant/ student
- an advocate/friend of the applicant (non-legal)
- external agency (e.g. RNIB if appropriate)

The purpose of the meeting will be to ensure that the specific needs of the disabled applicant or student can be explored and that barriers to access and learning can be identified and understood. This meeting will provide the basis of the development of the study plan.

5.5. **Exceptions**

Waverley Abbey College campus is a grade II* listed building. The listing places constraints on the adaptations that can be made to the building, therefore there may be rare exceptions whereby the College will not be permitted to make a necessary adjustment. Should this occur the applicant or student will be informed as soon as this becomes evident.

5.6. **Summary of Adjustments**

The Disability Tutor will develop an individual study plan (Summary of Adjustments) in consultation with the student based on the medical evidence, educational assessments or other evidence provided by the student. The adjustments will take account of other provision through the Disabled Students Allowance or other disability support and benefits.

The Disability Tutor will follow up individual students to ensure that they are accessing and benefitting from the support available and keep adjustments under

review. Students will be encouraged to report any change in their condition or shortfall in support to the Disability Tutor.

6. Confidentiality

6.1. Maintaining student confidentiality

The College will maintain confidentiality of personal and medical information in accordance with the Data Protection legislation. Disclosure of a student's disability and Summary of Adjustments will only take place with the specific permission of the student, or where necessary, within the law. The Disability Tutor will inform students and members of staff on the purpose of collection and use of personal information.

7. Complaints

7.1. Admissions

Complaints by applicants relating to their admission and will be dealt under the Admissions Policy. The Admissions Policy is available on the College website.

<https://www.waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk/application-process/>

7.2. Provision of student support

Complaints about the level of support made available to a student by the College can be made using the relevant section of the Student Complaints and Appeals procedure, which can be found on the student portal and in the Programme Handbook.

7.3. Advice on making a complaint

Registry and Admissions staff and members of the tutor team are able to offer advice and guidance to applicants and students on accessing the appropriate complaints procedure.

8. Advice and Support

8.1. Disabled Student Allowance

The Disability Tutor or the Student Finance Officer can advise students on Disabled Student Allowance (DSA), which helps pay for additional costs incurred as a direct result of disability (registry@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk).

9. Monitoring and Review of the Disability Policy

9.1. Monitoring compliance with the legislative framework

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate policies and effective procedures are in place with regard to the College's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

9.2. Review of the Disability Policy

The Policy will be formally reviewed every three years unless changes to associated policies or legislation requires earlier review.

9.3. Monitoring the operation of the Policy

The Disability Tutor will monitor the effectiveness of provision on a continuing basis throughout the year and make adjustments, or respond to new legislation, as the need is identified. Records of Students who declare a disability will be maintained and data will be recorded to enable monitoring of the operation of this Policy and to record and monitor support provided to students.

9.4. Student involvement in the review process

The Disability Tutor will encourage involvement of students with disabilities in the implementation and effectiveness of this Policy.

10. Document References

This policy was developed with reference to the following documents:

Equality Act 2010.

Equality Act 2010: Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2014.

Equality Act - Implications for Colleges and HEIs; 2012.

Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2014. What equality law means for you as an education provider-further and higher education,

Managing Reasonable Adjustments in Higher Education, 2010.

OIA - The Good Practice Framework: Supporting Disabled Students, 2017.

QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (B3 and B3).