



**WAVERLEY
ABBEY**

ANCIENT SPARK NEW FIRES

Disability Policy for Students

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Disability Policy for Students

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1. Introduction

This policy explains how the College supports students who have a disability. It is underpinned by the *Statement of Vision, Values and Faith* which is available on the College website, [Policies and procedures - Waverley Abbey College](#). This policy should be read and understood in the context of that statement. 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 students with disabilities.

2. Our Commitment

2.1 **Commitment to equality of opportunity**

This Policy is intended to reinforce the College's commitment to ensuring the promotion of diversity, and equality of opportunity through its delivery of teaching and learning support with the aim of providing an exceptional experience for its student body.

2.2 **Personalised support**

While students may share similar experiences of disability, we recognise that each student is a unique individual and should be supported according to their specific requirements. The College will personalise support as far as possible and practical within the provision of the College.

2.3 **Protection from discrimination**

The Policy outlines the College's duties towards students with disabilities and is designed to protect them from discrimination 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 students with disabilities and encourage their full participation in all aspects of college life.

2.4 **A pro-active approach**

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

2.5 Staff training

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

3. The Legal Context

3.1. The Equality Act 2010

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

- promote equality of opportunity
- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- eliminate harassment of people with disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities
- encourage participation by people with disabilities 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

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 needs, 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.

3.2 Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are alterations to the environment, policies or procedures and delivery of learning and teaching, that are designed to mitigate disadvantages that a student might otherwise experience due to their disability. Reasonable adjustments are aimed at enabling students to reach their full potential.

3.3 **Information sharing**

The College will manage all personal data in accordance with GDPR 2018. Disclosure of a disability and LSP will only take place with the specific permission of the applicant or student, or where necessary, within the law.

Applicants and students are asked to sign a 'consent to share' statement included within the LSP. Access to disability related information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only and for reasonable adjustments to be made. Applicants and students may choose not to share information, but this will impact the provision of reasonable adjustments and support.

3.4 **Members of staff**

Members of staff have a responsibility to inform the Learning Support and Disability Tutor when a student discloses a disability. The member of staff should inform the student that they will take this action. This will enable Learning Support and Disability Tutor to take appropriate steps to provide support and fulfil the College's legal obligations. Members of staff have a duty to implement all reasonable adjustments as noted in a student's Learning Support Plan.

4. Applicants and Progressing Students

4.1. **Selection and admission**

The College welcomes applications from 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 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.

4.2. **Progressing students**

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.

5. Fitness to Practice and Placement Providers

5.1. Fitness to practice

A disability or specific learning need does not preclude an application to study on programmes with placements. However, applicants and students must be able to comply with the Fitness to Practice policies of professional bodies for their respective profession(s) and with the Fitness to Practice Policy of the College.

Applicants are required to declare to the College conditions that have a potential impact on their fitness to practise. Students who develop a disability whilst studying are required to declare to the College any condition that may impact their fitness to practise.

5.2. Placement providers

Placements are offered at the discretion of the placement provider. The College is not able to influence the provision of placements or adjustments that the provider may, or may not, be able to make. Where a placement is essential to the completion of the professional and academic requirements of a programme, applicants with disabilities are **strongly advised** to visit placement providers in advance of registration.

The applicant must assure themselves that they will be able to complete modules that require a placement. The applicant must check whether suitable and sufficient adjustments can be made by placement providers.

The College may ask the applicant to provide evidence that placement providers have been consulted, and are able to make suitable adjustments, before registering an applicant on a programme of study.

6. Making Reasonable Adjustments

6.1. Providing evidence of disability

A diagnosis is not necessary for a student with a disability to be entitled to reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act. Some adjustments may be provided without medical evidence (e.g. access to learning resources in advance, extended library loans). However, supporting evidence is required before adjustments relating to assessments are agreed, or to access support that requires additional costs. Advice in obtaining evidence and the appropriate types of evidence required can be obtained from the Learning Support and Disability Tutor.

NB: To access Disabled Students Allowance students may require a full diagnostic assessment of neurodiversity or medical evidence of a disability from their GP.

6.2. **Reasonable adjustments**

The College will make reasonable adjustments when a student is placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a student who is not disabled. Examples of reasonable adjustments may include making appropriate arrangements in activities such as teaching, lectures, seminars and practical sessions.

6.3. **Specific adjustments**

Adjustments may include:

- Adjustment to assessment practices
- Auxiliary aids e.g. lecture notes and handouts in alternative formats, permission to record lectures
- Providing access to facilities within the constraints of a Grade II* listed building
- Specific access issues such as the use of guide dogs

6.4. **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 Learning Support and Disability Tutor will convene a meeting consisting of:

- a member of the senior management team
- a member of the academic staff
- the Learning Support and 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 applicant or student can be identified, and that the College is able to meet those needs. The aim will be to identify the barriers to accessing facilities, teaching and learning so that appropriate adjustments can be made. This meeting will provide the basis of the development of the Learning Support Plan.

6.5. **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.

6.6. **Learning Support Plan (LSP)**

The Learning Support and Disability Tutor will develop an individual LSP 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 Learning Support and 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 Learning Support and Disability Tutor.

6.7. **Students with an LSP and/or a disability that fluctuates**

Students with a LSP may be given an adjustment that permits the option of submitting written assessments up to five calendar days late, without prior permission and without the grade being capped. This does not apply to, presentations, clinical practice, or other forms of assessment.

Where a student has a condition that may fluctuate worsen or become acute this will be noted in their LSP. Should a condition worsen or become acute, the student may apply for Extenuating Circumstances and use the statement within the LSP as evidence. Students should refer to the Extenuating Circumstances Policy for full details.

7. **Complaints**

7.1. **Admissions**

Complaints by applicants relating to their admission will be dealt under the Admissions Policy found on the College Website [Policies and procedures - Waverley Abbey College](#)

7.2. **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 Policy and Procedure, which can also be found on the College website.

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 (studentfinance@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk).

9. Monitoring and Review of the Disability Policy

9.1. **Review of the Disability Policy**

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

9.2. **Monitoring the operation of the Policy**

The Learning Support and 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.

9.3. **Student involvement in the review process**

The Learning Support and 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.

Middlesex University, Disability Support Policy

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

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