

Policy Number:
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DISABILITY POLICY

1. Policy Statement

The College aims to create opportunities for students and staff to achieve their personal, educational and employment goals.

To achieve this the College works to provide a learning environment, which supports the learning needs of all individuals including those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties and to explain what facilities and support is available to employees with disabilities.

This policy covers both staff and students but due to the differing procedures for each group the procedures will be listed separately.

2. Policy Context

This policy statement covers all staff and students on both campuses and other off site locations.

The College is committed to widening access to its programmes and facilities to under represented groups in Further and Higher Education and to achieving equality of opportunity for all people who study at the College.

The College has a duty to promote disability equality. The Education (Disability Statements for Further Education Institutions) Regulations came into force in December 1996.

The College seeks to be an employer of choice for motivated employees who will help the College be an excellent provider of educational opportunities. The College recognises that disability should not in itself be viewed as a barrier to employees' ability to provide good service to the College. These procedures apply to all staff.

The College is accredited with the Department of Work and Pensions 'Two Ticks' Symbol. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 also apply to the College.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Corporation

The Corporation has responsibility for approving the Disability Policy and Procedure under the Disability Statement Regulations.

3.2 The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that the College has a Disability Statement and that it is implemented across the College.

3.3 The Assistant Principal Learner Services

The Assistant Principal Learner Services is responsible for ensuring that issues arising from the implementation are brought to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team.

3.3 The Disability Officer

The Disability Officer is responsible for ensuring that the students have an anticipatory and responsive service to their needs.

3.5 The Estates Department

The Estates Department are responsible for ensuring that premises and facilities are accessible and meet the needs of students.

3.6 Staff

Staff have a duty to ensure that the needs of the students to access the curriculum are met.

3.7 Students

Students have the responsibility to inform the College of any needs they may have and for adhering to the policy.

4. The Procedure - Students

4.1 Admission Arrangements

On application and at enrolment all students with a disability are invited by the College to discuss individual needs and to establish how the College can support them during their programme of study.

4.1.1 Students must let the College know if they may need support.

4.1.2 If the student is on a full time programme they should:

- Complete a College application form indicating that support for the course may be needed.
- Inform the College at the entry interview and at enrolment if he/she has a support requirement.
- Contact the Access Ability Team direct on 0161 958 3425/3133.

4.1.3 If the student is on a part-time programme he/she should tell us at their entry interview if there is a support requirement.

4.1.4 If a support need is identified one of the following teams of the College will contact the student to arrange an interview to discuss support needs.

Access Ability Team: Support for Students with a Disability or Dyslexia. Tel: 0161 958 3425

ESOL Team: Support for Students for whom English is an Additional Language. Tel: 0161 958 3160

Learning Difficulties Team: Support for Students who have Learning Difficulties. Tel: 0161 958 3489

Mental Health Team: Mental Health Support Team
Tel: 0161 958 3144/3319

Guidance Team: Careers and Education Guidance
Tel: 0161 958 3142

4.2 Examinations and Assessments Arrangements

Examination Boards set the limits to the support and considerations which the College can make when taking examinations and other assessments. It is important that a student tells the College about any examination arrangements or considerations which they may have had in the past or about any that might be needed for their course. Students need to do this at the time their support needs are discussed and agreed. This will enable the College to show the Examination Boards that the support the student receives and their usual methods of working for the course will be the same as for examinations.

4.2.1 If tutors know that students need support or exam and assessment arrangements they should contact the AccessAbility team.

4.2.2 The type of support which can be arranged according to personal requirements includes:

- Extra time during the examination
- Appropriate rooming arrangements
- Individual room with a separate invigilator
- Person to read the questions to you
- Person to write down your answers
- Modified text
- Large print papers
- Braille papers
- Use of a computer or other assistive technology

4.3 Physical Access and Facilities

The College has a strategy to upgrade access to buildings and facilities.

4.3.1 The following are available:

- Ramped entrances to buildings
- Automatic doors into buildings
- Automatic doors into the library

- Talking lifts with tactile controls in multi-storey buildings
- Lift to the multipurpose hall
- Lift in the James Ross building
- Lift in the Greek Street building
- Accessible toilet facilities
- Facilities for personal care needs
- Car parking for disabled drivers
- Nearby access to major bus and train routes.
- Alarm system for deaf and hard of hearing students

4.3.2 Lift Access. The following buildings are not accessible to wheelchair users at present:

- Greek Street building - top floor
- TV Studio - basement Reuel Harrison building
- Students Union

4.3.3 Proposed future improvements

- Lift access in the Students Union

The College is also be willing to change its delivery locations to suit students with disabilities where appropriate.

4.4 Current Support

4.4.1 There are designated members of staff throughout the College who hold the First Aid at Work qualification. Stepping Hill Hospital is close by should there be more serious emergencies.

4.4.2 The College also has a range of staff with relevant background, expertise and / or qualifications who are able to provide support in the following areas:

- Moderate learning difficulties
- Severe learning difficulties
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Mental health problems
- Dyslexia
- Physical disability
- Disability arising from a medical condition
- Deafness

- 4.4.3 The College is further developing support for students who are blind or partially sighted.
- 4.4.4 The College has an established agreement with the Educational Service for Sensory Impairment and the Educational Psychology Service who are able to provide specialist assessment, advice and guidance.
- 4.4.5 Other specialist agencies are consulted, including.
- Skill: National Bureau of Students with Disabilities
 - Royal National Institute for the Blind
 - Royal National Institute for the Deaf
 - The Dyslexia Institute
- 4.4.6 Support on a student's learning programme may be one or a combination of the following:
- One-to-one support sessions
 - Working in smaller groups
 - Supported learning programmes
 - Specialist assessment
 - Advice / support to course tutors
 - English, Maths or Language Support
- 4.4.7 Individual support may include a support worker who will:
- Read to the student
 - Write down what the student says for coursework and examinations
 - Take notes in lectures
 - Communicate using British Sign Language, Sign Supported English or will lip speak
 - Provide mobility assistance
 - Help with personal care needs
 - Help with coursework practicals
 - Prepare course handouts, texts and other materials in the preferred format.

4.5 Equipment and Technological Support

The College will provide a range of equipment and technical aids to support students.

- 4.5.1 Computers - for word processing, spreadsheets, desktop publishing and for finding information. As well as machines in the Learning Centre students will find computers in learning centres across College.

The StAR Centre at the rear of the Learning Centre in the Town Centre Campus and opposite the Information and Advice Centre at the Heaton Moor Campus can offer support in using the programmes listed below.

- Scanner facilities
- Kurzweil - screen reader
- Text help Read and Write - text to speech feedback
- Inspirations - mind mapping and revision tool
- Zoom text - Text enlargement and speech feedback
- Jaws

4.5.2 The College has a range of assistive technology and equipment which includes:

- Minicom facility
- Induction loop system -Lecture Theatre Robert Brown Building
- Two portable induction loop systems for classrooms
- Two portable neck loop systems
- Electronic keyboards for note taking
- Seven laptop computers
- Dictaphones
- Alternative keyboards, Bigkeys, Intellikeys
- Perkins Braille Machine
- A Braille to text / text to Braille computer system and embosser.

4.6 The College Charter

The College Charter for students explains what students can do if things go wrong. It outlines the College procedures which enable a student to take action if difficulties or problems arise. It also tells students where to get more detailed information about how to use the following College procedures:

- Complaints procedure
- Appeals procedure against an assessment or examination decision
- Complaints procedure for harassment

4.6.1 The Equality & Diversity Committee monitors equal opportunities issues arising from complaints.

4.6.2 Students can seek confidential advice about making a complaint from Learner Services, the Equal and Diversity Co-ordinator, Disability Officer or from the Students Union. They will act in an advisory capacity and will not be involved in making judgements.

- 4.6.3 Support is available if students need help to use the complaints and appeals procedures. A student may, for example, need help with communication or the help of an advocate. Please contact Learner Services.

4.7 Other services and support are available

- 4.7.1 The College Welfare Support Team can help with information and advice about student support funds, benefits, grants, educational mainstream awards, trust funds and help with fees.
- 4.7.2 The College Careers Guidance Team can provide impartial advice to help students to plan future careers and to explore course options at Stockport College and elsewhere.
- 4.7.3 The Disability Employment Adviser at the local Job Centre can advise about employment opportunities and about extra help available.
- 4.7.4 The College Counselling and Personal Support Team can help if personal problems interfere with a student's studies. The College Counsellors are available to talk on an individual basis in confidence and are able to offer support. Our Mental Health Support Team can offer help and support with practical and emotional difficulties.
- 4.7.5 Catering facilities: the Refectory, Caspers Fast Food Bar and JB's Deli Bar at the Town Centre Campus are open to all students and accessible via the ground floor. Catering facilities at the Heaton Moor Campus are also available on the ground floor. Hot and cold food is provided including vegetarian and healthy food choices. Students with specific dietary requirements need to contact the Catering Manager by letter.

4.8 Higher Education Student Support

The Disabled Students' Allowances provide funds to meet the costs of any support needs on a Higher Education course. The student should apply to their Local Educational Authority for these allowances. Their Local Education Authority will usually require an assessment of support needs from an approved assessment centre.

The College AccessAbility team can give you information, help and impartial advice about applying for the Disabled Students' Allowances.

- 4.8.1 The College AccessAbility team will advise and help students to put in place any support arrangements approved by their Local Education Authority.

4.9 Links to other Organisations

The College liaises with Social Services Departments, Health Trusts, the Local Education Authority and Community groups in a number of ways including:

- Stockport MBC Social Services Department for organisation of transport to and from College for students under the age of 19 who have learning difficulties.
- Stockport MBC Education Division for Educational Psychologists Services and Educational Service for the Sensory Impaired for assessment and advice and Stockport English Language Service for language development.
- Stockport Health Partnership
- Joint Project for Youth Workers in College
- Community Based Employment, Education and Leisure Activity Project
- Education Link Group - collaborative community group exploring opportunities in education for people with Mental Health problems.
- Community Alcohol Team
- Alcohol, Drugs and Abstinence Service
- Further Education Counselling Consortium

5. The Procedure - Staff

5.1 Recruitment and Selection (for all appointments including promotions)

5.1.1 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

All job vacancies have a job description and person specification. Recruitment and selection will be based upon candidates' ability to meet the person specification for the particular job they are applying for and all the essential criteria.

5.1.2 Guaranteed Interview Scheme

All job applicants are requested to complete the Fairness in Employment Monitoring Form. This form is used to identify those staff who have a disability and are eligible to be included under the guaranteed interview scheme. To be eligible, a disabled job applicant must satisfy all the essential criteria on the person specification. Human Resources & Organisational Development will highlight those applications where the guaranteed interview scheme applies.

In addition the form is used to provide anonymised quantitative data on groups of people applying for jobs at the College.

5.1.3 Job Offer and Staff Induction

All staff will also be asked at the job offer stage if they have a disability and require any support. Those staff who declare a disability at this stage will then be asked what they consider their own support needs to be. In addition, Job Centre Plus's Access to Work scheme may be used to provide a workplace assessment and additional support for the member of staff.

Adjustment may include:

- Adjustments to workstations eg provision of specialist chairs
- Adjustments to working patterns eg alteration of standard hours
- Adjustments to work duties

- Provision of specialist equipment eg provision of large screen monitor
- Provision of support workers eg BSL interpreter

5.2 Staff who become disabled while in employment

Staff who become disabled and declare it during their period of employment at the College will have the opportunity of a meeting with their line manager, the relevant Senior Human Resources Adviser and a trade union representative or work colleague to discuss what adjustments may be required. The College will seek to help employees remain in employment on becoming disabled.

5.3 Staff Development

Staff development opportunities are available for staff based upon the requirements of their job. No discrimination will take place due to an employee's disability.

Adjustments may be made for disabled staff in respect of:

- Seating eg near the front of events for those staff who are hard of hearing
- Materials eg may be supplied in larger font for those who have visual impairments
- Travel arrangements for external events eg car mileage may be paid where train fares would usually be paid.
- signing arrangements for staff with a hearing disability

Disabled staff will have the opportunity at their appraisal to discuss what needs to be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities.

5.4 Consultation with Disabled Staff

Staff will have the opportunity to attend a Principal's 'Listen and Learn' session twice a year which will be specifically for disabled staff to raise issues relating to disability.

A Disabled Staff Forum will be set up in 2007 to allow disabled staff to meet together and work with the College on the monitoring and updating of the Disability Equality Scheme.

Articles on disability will appear from time to time in Flagship which will ask for feedback from disabled staff.

5.5 Staff Data

Data will be recorded on the declared disability status of short-listed job applicants and employees. This data will be analysed to provide management information on recruitment rates, staff development participation, promotion and retention rates of disabled staff. In addition staff disciplinary, grievance and capability procedures will be monitored to ensure that disabled staff are not discriminated against.

5.6 Impact Assessment

A cycle of assessments on the impact of all policies, procedures and processes on disabled staff will take place over a three year period. The cycle itself is detailed in the College's Disability Equality Scheme.

5.7 Complaints

Should a member of staff be unhappy with any outcome from this procedure they have the opportunity to discuss the issue informally with their line manager. Should an employee not be happy with the outcome of such an informal discussion the Staff Grievance Procedure should be used.

6. Location and Access to the Policy

This policy will be held on the College intranet and on the College web site. It can also be accessed through the AccessAbility team and you can request these in the following formats: Large print, Disk, Tape, Braille.

You can contact the AccessAbility team in any of these ways:

Telephone **0161 958 3142**

BT Type talk **18001 0161 958 3536 (deaf)**

... .. **18002 0161 958 3536 (hearing)**

Fax **0161 958 3384**

Minicom **0161 958 3536**

Email **admissions@stockport.ac.uk**

Email **accessability@stockport.ac.uk**

Internet **http://www.stockport.ac.uk**