



DISABILITY EQUALITY
SCHEME

Revised March 2007

WOKING COLLEGE

Committed to Success

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

In accordance with
The Education (Disability Statements for Further Education Institutions)
Regulations 2006

INTRODUCTION

Woking College is a provider of non-selective post 16 education for students from over forty schools in the Woking area. Students come to the College because they want to achieve excellent results in an environment that promotes independence and confidence. The College aims to be responsive to the learning and development needs of all the students and staff, with the principle of Equality and Diversity embedded throughout the institution.

We insist upon an open commitment to Equal Opportunity, (including disability equality) towards all members of the College. This is regardless of a previous perceived ability or disability, gender, sexual or religious orientation, racial groups, nationality, social class or age. The College also aims to appreciate and value the differences between individuals in order to meet their academic, social and cultural needs.

The College is proud to have been assessed as “good for social inclusion” by the Ofsted Inspectorate. All appropriate facilities are made available to disabled students and staff and a designated tutor assesses students’ needs when they apply to College. As a result of this policy, Woking College has been accredited with the “Positive about Disability” certificate.

STATEMENT OF INVOLVEMENT

Both students and staff were consulted and involved in the drawing up of these statements. In the case of students, as well as formal interviews, regular informal reviews on the effects of the implementation of this policy are held through weekly personal files and termly progress reviews.

1. POLICY RELATING TO STUDENTS

- 1.1 Within the limits of available resources it is the policy of the Corporation of Woking College to ensure that all facilities are made available to disabled students. The Learning Support Manager has overall responsibility for initially assessing the needs of disabled students, and will act as the point of contact for those approaching the College to enquire about enrolment. The Head of Learning Support will advise on strategies for supporting agreed learning programmes.
- 1.2 The College has the 'Positive about Disability' symbol. It applies similar positive and open criteria in its dealings with students and members of staff. It welcomes applications from disabled students and will treat applications received from them in the same manner as those received from other prospective students. All applications will be considered on an individual basis and a key factor will be the ability of the prospective student, with appropriate support, to integrate within the community of the College and participate in mainstream classes. We welcome applications from people with disabilities for staff vacancies at the College. In all such cases people with a registered disability will be interviewed for the vacancy.
- 1.3 In Learning Support the concept is to try to promote one of a `scaffolding nature`. This, we feel, enables students to perform to their full potential alongside all other students. The drop-in center, where one-to-one and small group timetabled lessons place, is joined to the main Learning Resource Area of the college and this is available for our students to use throughout the week.
- 1.4 As a guide the College admits students who qualify for the courses we have an offer with little regard to any particular gifting or disability. These issues are addressed on an individual basis at a later stage.
- 1.5 The College predominately offers AS and A levels in a wide range of subjects and vocational courses in Business Studies, Information Technology, Health and Social Care and Sports Development & Fitness. The same Vocational courses are offered at Intermediate level as well as GCSE`s in English, Mathematics and Science.
- 1.6 In the first few weeks after the student has enrolled, we work with each student to develop the provision for their particular need. Many students come to the college wanting a new start and our aim is to offer the best provision which they will need to achieve their potential. Students in the main prefer this individualised support and, as a rule, support within the classroom setting is limited. When in class support is required, it would be best viewed as a second teacher, who is there to support all students within that learning environment.
- 1.7 At present, we support approximately seventy students whose needs include those categorized under: Visual Impairment, Dyslexia, Physical Needs, Study Skills, Dyspraxia, Aspergers, ESOL, Hearing Impairment and Klinefelter`s Syndrome. Woking College has adopted a policy of having an inclusive caring community and it deals with individuals on a personal level wherever possible.

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

- 1.8 The facilities allow for disabled students to participate fully in enrolment and admission procedures. A Transition interview will be conducted by the Student Support Counsellor to establish the support required to allow the student to integrate. The role of learning support will be explained and a visit to the Learning Support Centre will be arranged as part of the programme. Disabled students will be encouraged to maintain contact with the Head of Learning Support throughout their course of study.
- 1.9. During the Transition interview a disabled student will be asked to explain the nature and type of his or her disability. Students attending an interview should bring with them relevant documentation and be prepared to discuss the support (if any) received to date for their education. It would also be helpful if students were able at that interview, to provide the name of their support staff member at their current establishment. Sharing information at this stage is very important and will assist staff in deciding on the ability of the College to provide the required support.
- 1.10 An Admission interview conducted by a member of the interview team follows to enable the student to discuss chosen subjects. The Head of Learning Support is invited to the interview if, on a student's application form, they have made reference to any aspect of special needs, but any student or parent can request this arrangement.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND SUPPORT

- 1.11 All the educational facilities of the College are available to disabled students. The student support and learning skills network set in place in the College, plays a pivotal role in assisting disabled students to make the best use of their time in the College and successfully complete their learning programmes. The College operates a personal tutorial system whereby the student receives continuous support during the course of their learning programme. Personal Tutors will be assigned to all disabled students as part of this system.
- 1.12 It is the policy of the College to employ trained staff capable of teaching disabled students. In the 2006/2007 academic year there are three members of staff trained to deliver specialist teaching as well as two Classroom assistants. As part of the staff development programme all staff are made aware of the general needs of disabled students.
- 1.13 Where a disabled student requires additional equipment, the College will endeavor to make the item available.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

- 1.14 The procedure for registering complaints and appeals is contained in the student charter copy of which is given to all students.

EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 1.15 The College is used to providing additional support to those who require special examination arrangements (e.g. extra reading time) and will undertake to meet the needs of all disabled students with the permission of the relevant examination board. Students who feel they may need special examination arrangements should approach the Examinations Officer at least four weeks in advance of the event.

GENERAL SUPPORT

- 1.16 All College students have access to the following support:
- Regular one-one tutorials with a Personal Tutor and with Subject Tutors.
 - Study skills workshops run by the Learning Support Department.
 - Annual Easter Revision conference held at the College.
 - Progression Guidance advice, including advice on Higher Education from the Careers Department and Personal Tutors.
 - Support from Surrey Connexions Personal Advisor who visits the College weekly to give individual consultations.
 - Confidential appointments with members of the College Counselling team.
 - Medical assistance from trained First Aiders within the College.

ACCOMMODATION AND ACCESS

- 1.17 The College occupies mainly single storey buildings with wide corridors and electric double doors. All floor areas are accessible by wheelchair bound students. There are four disabled toilets; one in the reception area, one in the centre of the main building, one in the Adult Education Training Centre and one in the Learning Resource Centre. A lift to the first floor of the main building was installed during 1998, for the specific and sole use of disabled students. This has enabled access to all area of the College for wheelchair bound and other disabled students. Ramps to facilitate access have been built and most of the internal double swing doors have been fitted with magnetic releases that operate when the Fire Alarm is activated. These devices allow the doors to be left open and thus provide easier access to wheelchair bound students.
- 1.18 The College can recommend local taxi firms who are experienced in the transporting disabled students. There are disabled car parking spaces at the College.

DATA MONITORING FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

- 1.19 Recruitment, retention and achievement data is available on an annual basis for students with a medical condition or learning difficulty. The Learning Support Department annually monitors and measures the level of improvement of those disabled students receiving learning support.

FUNDING

- 1.20. Individual funding records are maintained for all students who require additional learning support. Additional funding is provided by the Learning Skills Council to support the learning programmes of disabled students. Within the limits of its resources the College will seek to fund the needs of all disabled students. This funding will come from internal sources or from organisations that the College may approach on behalf of the disabled student.
- 1.21 Limited funds are available to allow mature disabled students access to further education.
- 1.22 The College Finance Manager will advise on other likely sources of funding.

CHANGE

- 1.23 There are no impending changes that have a bearing on the ability of the College to meet the needs of disabled students and staff. In planning any future changes due consideration will always be given to the needs of disabled students and staff.

2. POLICY RELATING TO STAFF EMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This guidance has been developed jointly to equip Colleges to meet their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the European Framework Directive 2000, and other relevant legislation.
- 2.2 The college undertakes as a minimum to recognise as disabled all those who fall within the definition given in the Disability Discrimination Act i.e. "A person has a disability for the purposes of this Act if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".
- 2.3 This guidance is based on the knowledge that disabled people are almost twice as likely as non-disabled people to be unemployed, that disabled workers are less likely to work full-time, and that 1 in 8 of the working-age population is disabled.
- 2.4 The 2005 Act extends the positive duty on employers to promote equality and good relations between members of different groups to cover disability as well as race. This document is intended to support Colleges towards achieving that end.
- 2.5 The College recognises that the Disability Equality Duty (as introduced by the 2005 Act) requires a proactive approach to mainstreaming disability equality into all decisions and activities.

3. OUR COMMITMENT

- 3.1 The College celebrates and values the diversity brought to its workforce by individuals. It believes that the College will benefit from employing both disabled and non-disabled people at all levels of responsibility, and across all areas of work. This will also provide role models for a variety of students in whatever area of the curriculum they are interested in. The

College is committed to equality of treatment for all employees regardless of whether they have a physical or mental impairment. This will apply to the operation and implementation of all its employment policies. The College will treat all employees with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a positive working environment free from disability discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

- 3.2 The College will seek not only to eliminate disability discrimination, but also to create a working environment based on good relations between disabled people and non-disabled people. To this end, the College undertakes to provide diverse images in any material which it produces, including positive images of people with a range of disabilities. The aim is to create a positive inclusive ethos with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing stereotyping, prejudice and disability discrimination, to respecting diversity and difference, and to encouraging good relations between disabled people and non-disabled people.
- 3.3 The College acknowledges that the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) must be developed by involving those with disabilities.
- 3.4 The College will work towards the elimination of prejudice and discrimination, whether overt or covert, and will seek to ensure that all staff have equal access to the full range of college facilities.
- 3.5 Most of the detail of this policy relates to those staff who have declared a disability. However, the college will seek to fulfil its duty of care to those staff who do not declare a disability, but who the college as employer could reasonably have been expected to know of the existence of a disability.
- 3.6 Where information is divulged in confidence, every attempt will be made to respect this.
- 3.7 The college will accept all recommendations made after an assessment carried out under the Access to Work Scheme, and will make all the required contributions towards the cost of providing the recommended reasonable adjustments.

4. OUR LEGAL DUTIES

- 4.1 The College undertakes to fulfil all the legal duties put upon it by:
 - The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the associated Guidance and Codes of Practice, especially “The Code of Practice for the elimination of discrimination in the field of employment against disabled persons or persons who have had a disability” and “The Duty to Promote Disability Equality – Statutory Code of Practice”. This means there will be no discrimination against staff on grounds of disability in access to employment, training, working conditions, terms of employment, treatment at work, promotion or dismissal. The College undertakes to fulfil its duty to make reasonable adjustments to enable staff to do their work, and not to treat staff with a disability less favourably than those without.
- 4.2 The College agrees that there are six inter-related legal requirements to the “general duty” or “disability equality duty (DED)”. The College in carrying out its functions, agrees to have due regard to the need to:

Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people

Eliminate unlawful discrimination
Eliminate disability-related harassment
Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
Take account of people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others.

- 4.3 In line with the specific duties required under the DDA 2005, the College agrees to:
Publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES)
Review the Scheme every three years and amend where necessary
Involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme
Monitor and publish a summary of steps taken under the action plan contained within the Scheme on an annual basis.

5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 5.1 The College will not discriminate on grounds of disability in the way it recruits and selects staff.
- 5.2 The College will ensure that:
- 5.3 Job descriptions will be drafted to ensure they do not exclude people with disabilities.
Recruitment materials will be fully accessible, and made available in a range of alternative formats.
- 5.4 Interviews will be fully accessible, and reasonable adjustments will be made to allow candidates with a disability to attend the interview without being placed at a disadvantage.
- 5.5 Impairments will not be used to excuse the non-recruitment of candidates who meet the minimum criteria.
- 5.6 Where candidates have particular needs, consideration will be given to the adaptations needed to enable the candidate to do the job, assuming they meet the essential criteria in the person specification.
- 5.7 The College undertakes that:
- Every effort will be made to redress any under-representation of disabled people by positive action
 - All advertisements will include a proactive commitment to equality and include a reference to a short listing guarantee
 - All applicants for a vacant post who indicate on their application form that they have a disability, and who meet the essential criteria in the person specification shall be guaranteed to be short listed as stated in the advertisement.

6. APPOINTMENT

- 6.1 If a candidate is considered suitable for appointment the College will follow the advice given in the Employment Code of Practice under the DDA to enable a new appointee to carry out the job, providing some reasonable adjustments are made.

The college will pay due regard to the reasonable adjustments set out in 6[3] of the DDA, by considering, for example;

Adjusting the premises

Allocating some of the duties to another person

Altering working hours

Allowing time off for treatment

Making College materials available in the preferred format

Acquiring or modifying equipment

- 6.2 The college will discuss with the new appointee and relevant experts what reasonable adjustments are needed. If there is not sufficient expertise available in the college to deal with a particular reasonable adjustment, the college will seek the advice of the Disability Employment Adviser under the Access to Work scheme.
- 6.3 Where adaptations are to be introduced that affect other employees, notification will be given to those employees and their union representatives, and the most suitable arrangement for all parties will be reached.

7. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 All employees shall have equal rights to training, promotion and other aspects of career development. Special employment needs will not be used to justify a failure to promote or train any employee.
- 7.2 The college undertakes that all the training and staff development that it provides will be fully accessible to all, including venues, materials and provision of support staff if required.
- 7.3 An appropriate manager or the line manager of staff who have declared a disability will ask such staff at least once a year if their needs have changed, and if any steps need to be taken to ensure that their development needs are met.

8. RETENTION

- 8.1 The College undertakes to make every effort to ensure that an employee who becomes disabled and who wishes to remain in employment is enabled to do so.
- 8.2 An employee who becomes disabled and declares this to the college should have the right to a meeting with their line manager, their union representative, and a member of personnel staff. At this meeting, the needs of the employee should be discussed and agreed. Medical advice might also be sought about the employee's needs, which might include a period of

paid disability leave to adjust to changed circumstances [the amount of time to be agreed at the meeting] adaptations to the work environment, job redesign or training.

- 8.3 An employee who requests a transfer to part-time work, or lighter duties, on the grounds of disability, whether on a short-term or permanent basis, should have their request sympathetically considered.
- 8.4 If an employee develops an impairment which makes it impossible for them to do their existing job, but they wish to be redeployed to a job they can do, the college undertakes to make every effort to redeploy them, including providing training where necessary.
- 8.5 Paid time off for medical appointments/treatment will be granted at all times. Employees who can control the timing of their appointments/treatment should consider the needs of the college.

9. DISMISSAL

- 9.1 The College will ensure that there is no disability discrimination in relation to dismissal of staff. In particular, should a redundancy situation occur, it will ensure that disability is not a factor in the selection of those to be made redundant. For staff who have declared a disability, sick leave shall not be used as a criteria for selecting for redundancy. For more details see The Redundancy Handling Procedure.

10. HARASSMENT

- 10.1 Disability harassment is viewed by the College as a very serious offence, which if proven may in certain circumstances lead to the dismissal of a member of staff, or, if an employee is harassed by a student, the expulsion of that student. For details of handling harassment claims, see The Harassment Policy.

11. ENSURING EQUALITY BETWEEN DISABLED PEOPLE AND NON-DISABLED PEOPLE

- 11.1 The College is committed to work to eliminate prejudice and discrimination in employment practices, as well as to encourage changes in individual behaviour and attitudes, and ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for disabled people and non-disabled people.
- 11.2 The College recognises that, despite legislative attempts to achieve equality, disabled people in society are still subject to discrimination, lack of opportunity and social injustice. They are still disproportionately unemployed, found in lower-paid employment, concentrated into a narrow range of jobs, and under-represented in management jobs in society generally.
- 11.3 The College will try to mitigate the effects of these social trends by taking positive action within the law to employ a proportionate number of people with disabilities and monitoring its staff profile in terms of recruitment, promotion and training.
- 11.4 If the result of staff monitoring shows that there is an under-representation of disabled people at any level within the college, it will review its recruitment, promotion and training practices to ensure they are free of bias, contain no barriers to disabled people and consider advertising in publications more likely to be read by people with disabilities.

- 11.5 The College recognises that many of the problems experienced by disabled people are due to lack of knowledge of their needs by those around them. The college undertakes to provide disability awareness training to all its staff. This will include examination of the appropriate use of language.
- 11.6 The College will ensure that its publications and publicity material promote positive images of disabled people in both language and illustration.

12. PART-TIME WORKING

The College recognises that a disproportionate number of its part-time workers are likely to be disabled people. The College therefore accepts that any unequal treatment of part-time workers is likely to have more adverse impact on disabled people than on non-disabled people. To avoid disability discrimination, the College resolves to adhere closely to The Employment of Part-Time Employees Policy.

13. DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

- 13.1 In line with the DDA 2005, the College agrees to draw up a disability equality scheme to monitor progress towards achieving equality between disabled and non-disabled people.
- 13.2 The College will immediately take steps to begin implementing the actions set out in the DES with a view to having implemented all actions by the end of the three year period.
- 13.3 The College will proactively seek the active involvement of disabled people in the development of the DES. For example this may be achieved by establishing a disabled user's group, a majority of whose members will be disabled staff and students and on which relevant stakeholders such as recognised staff unions and the students union will have a seat.
- 13.4 The Scheme will contain the monitoring data and positive action targets described in section 13 and any other information considered relevant.
- 13.5 The College will publish a report annually on the Scheme which will be made publicly available.

14. MONITORING AND POSITIVE ACTION

- 14.1 The monitoring process will be used to ensure that disabled staff and non-disabled staff are treated equally.
- 14.2 To inform the setting of targets [as required by the Learning and Skills Council Equality and Diversity Impact Measures] and the measurement of progress in achieving them, the College will collect and analyse the following information about disability:

Disability profile of employees by grade/salary scale and type of work [e.g. management, teaching, support, childcare, buildings]

Job application and selection success rates

Type of contract (permanent, temporary agency)

Training/Staff Development

Staff recruitment, development and promotion
Grievances, disciplinary and capability proceedings
Satisfaction Surveys and Exit Interviews.

- 14.3 The College undertakes, once the results of monitoring are available, to consider targets to reduce any disadvantage suffered by disabled employees and the targets will be published annually in an Action Plan.
- 14.4 The College acknowledges that disabled people are to be actively involved in the monitoring process.

15. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 15.1 All colleges are required to carry out impact assessments. All relevant college policies, procedures and practices will be assessed for their impact on different groups of disabled and non-disabled staff and students.
- 15.2 The purpose of impact assessment is both to ensure that a Colleges decisions and activities do not disadvantage disabled people, and also to identify opportunities to actively promote equality, including consideration of where the different parts of the disability equality duty can be actively built into those policies, procedures and practices.
- 15.3 The College agrees to set out a timetable for assessing the impact of its policies, procedures and practices over the period covered by the Disability Equality Scheme. Priorities for action should be established with the involvement of disabled people and published within the DES.
- 15.4 Information published from impact assessments will be available in an accessible format.

16. DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- 16.1 Governors are recommended to try to ensure that the membership of the Corporation includes disabled people.

Governors are responsible for ensuring that:

The College's strategic plan includes a commitment to disability equality
Equalities training features as part of the College's strategic plan
They are aware of the Corporation's statutory responsibilities in relation to disability
legislation as an employer
They receive and respond to the disability monitoring information on staff
The college's Disability Statement includes reference to employment matters.

- 16.2 The Management Team are responsible for ensuring that:
- The College Principal/Chief Executive and Senior Management Team are responsible for taking the lead in challenging discriminatory behaviour on the part of the managers, staff or learners and creating a positive, inclusive ethos
 - They are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to disability legislation
 - All aspects of College policy and activity are sensitive to disability issues

- Disability monitoring information is collected and analysed
- The procedures for the recruitment and promotion of staff enshrine best practice in equal opportunities
- Targets are set on the recruitment and promotion of staff based upon the analysis of disability monitoring information and best practice
- The College's publicity materials present appropriate positive and non-stereotypical messages about disabled people and non-disabled people
- Appropriate training and development is provided to support the appreciation and understanding of diversity.

16.3 Staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- They are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to disability legislation
- Their schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of diversity
- They challenge prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, whether witting or unwitting, by learners, work placement providers, outside contractors or other members of staff whenever practicable
- They respond positively to the needs of disabled staff and students who they come in contact with in the course of their work.

17. PUBLICISING THE COLLEGE'S POLICY AND PROGRESS

17.1 To the public (including learners, work placement providers and staff)

17.2 Our commitment to disability equality will be highlighted in our prospectus, annual report and annual financial statement

17.3 A summary of the results of our monitoring information will be included in our annual report and annual financial statements, where this does not breach individual confidentiality.

17.4 To staff:

- All staff will receive a full copy of the policy as part of the Staff Handbook
- The staff induction programme will highlight the College's commitment to disability equality, action to be taken by staff who suffer discrimination and the action to be taken against any perpetrators of such discrimination
- A summary of the results of our monitoring information will be included in the appropriate College publication (e.g. newsletter). Any published information will have due regard for individual confidentiality.

18. COMPLAINTS

- 18.1 The College will seek to provide a supportive environment for staff who make claims of discrimination or harassment.
- 18.2 Acts of disability discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation or abuse will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.
- 18.3 Staff who feel they are being discriminated against on grounds of disability by other members of staff should raise the matter under the Grievance/Harassment Procedure, which will, if the accusation is upheld, be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.
- 18.4 If, in the course of their work, College staff suffer disability discrimination from members of the public, the College will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support.
- 18.5 Any discriminatory behaviour directed against staff by students will be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure.

19. REVIEW AND CONSULTATION

- 19.1 This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with the three year action plan and the whole policy will be reviewed in October 2009 towards the end of the three year cycle.
- 19.2 As part of the review the Equality & Diversity Group will seek and take into account the views of stakeholders including the consultation/negotiating arrangements within the College.

20. IMPLEMENTATION

- 20.1 The College, working in partnership with the recognised trade unions and employee representatives, will seek to ensure that all staffing policies and procedures (e.g. Recruitment and Selection Procedure) are non-discriminatory, and that monitoring and positive action processes are regularly reviewed and monitored.