

## **Disability Policy**

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Disability Officer: Mr Anwar Hussain

Whitechapel College appreciates that any student, staff member or visitor may be subject to disability so it is essential to establish a disability policy. Whitechapel College is committed to the provision of equal opportunities for all, as outlined in the College's Equal Opportunities Policy. This Disability Policy sets out the College's commitment to both potential and existing employees and students with a disability or pre-existing medical condition, and provides a framework to ensure that the College offers a supportive environment for any such employee or student. The College also recognises the need to provide such resources as may be necessary to support the employment of job applicants and employees with disabilities and to support disabled students, and undertakes to identify resources wherever possible.

First, it is necessary to identify those students with a disability. The application form contains questions inviting the applicant to give details of the disability, so that the College can make advance preparation to support and assist that student.

Certain disabilities are already addressed such as wheelchair access and disabled parking. However, there are potentially other disabilities to be addressed such as dyslexia, which may require special teaching and special support.

Any staff or student wheelchair user will be timetabled only to take classes located on the ground floor of the campus and a ground floor toilet has been designated for use by wheelchair users.

To this purpose, the College has appointed a Disability Officer, to be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010. This Officer will review any disability pre-notified by the student applicant and, after appropriate consultation with the Academic Director, President and the Student Welfare Officer, will arrange appropriate support in advance of the student's first attendance at the College. Examples of such disability that may require attention are: dyslexia, myopia, deafness, epilepsy, and migraine. This list is by way of example and is not exhaustive.

Relevant support can take various forms depending on the nature of the disability such as extra writing time in the examinations or tapes of recorded lectures. Where necessary an appropriate support tutor will be engaged to advise as to how to address the disability.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 states that no disabled job applicant or employee will be treated less favourably than a non-disabled person, for a reason related to their disability, unless the employer has a material or substantial reason for doing so. The Act defines a person with a disability as somebody with:

“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Employers must take reasonable steps to overcome any substantial disadvantage to a disabled job applicant or employee caused by premises or working arrangements”.

The Act sets out a new duty to promote disability equality. Private sector organisations are statutorily required to have due regard for the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably.

### **Recruitment**

The College undertakes to review and develop its recruitment procedures to encourage applications from persons with disabilities and to ensure that any such applicants are not discriminated against.

When a short listed applicant advises the College of a disability, arrangements will be made at the interview stage to meet any additional needs of the applicant wherever possible and reasonably practicable.

The College recruitment panels will make selection decisions on the basis of the qualifications, experience and skills of applicants in relation to the post, regardless of any disability. Wherever possible, the College will make such reasonable adjustments as are required to enable a successful applicant with a disability to take up a position.

### **Training and Career Development**

Wherever possible, training and development opportunities will be available to staff regardless of any disability. Staff undertaking training programmes where additional needs in relation to access, equipment or facilities are required, adjustments will be made wherever possible in order to enable full participation in any such programme.

### **The Environment of Working and Learning**

The College will do its best to ensure that the environment for work and study does not prevent persons with disabilities from taking up or continuing in employment or study.

### **Monitoring**

The College authority will maintain records of staff and students who declare a disability and record data on applications for employment or study, to enable monitoring of the operation of this policy across all areas of employment and learning provision.

### **Students and Staff with Disabilities**

The College follows the Disability Policy. The Policy sets out the College's commitment to students and staff with disabilities or pre-existing medical conditions and provides appropriate help and support. A student or a member of staff requiring advice and support in relation to a student with a disability should seek assistance from the Student Welfare Officer.

The College is aware of its duty of care towards students and invites potential students to list any disabilities or relevant pre-existing medical conditions on the application form. The College accepts that it may not be able to give appropriate support to all types of disability and undertakes, where possible, to recommend more suitable colleges to such applicants. A similar policy will be applied to dyslexic student applicants.

### **Criminal Convictions**

Subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation, all job applicants will be asked to declare if they have any criminal convictions. Applicants declaring a conviction will be asked to provide details of it. This will be considered by a panel consisting of senior management and a member of the academic team after giving proper consideration to the severity of the offence and the appropriate Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation.

### **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010. The Act covers the same 'groups' that are protected by existing equality legislation including disability. These 'groups' are now called 'protected characteristics'. The Act now makes it much easier for individuals to bring complaints of discrimination if they feel their employer has treated them unfairly.

Existing Equal Opportunities and Bullying & Harassment policies will need to be reviewed to make sure they are compliant with the new law. Particular areas to consider are how we address disability issues to ensure we do not inadvertently discriminate against staff. Other policies will also need to be reviewed including recruitment and sickness absence to make sure the policies do not discriminate against individuals, particularly those with disabilities.

The Act extends protection from indirect discrimination to disability, introduces a new concept of 'discrimination arising from disability', harmonises the thresholds for the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and makes it more difficult for disabled people to be unfairly screened out when applying for jobs.

### **Responsibility**

The Student Welfare Officer has responsibility for ensuring that disabled students are being adequately supported on campus.

The President and the Disability Officer have responsibility for ensuring that disabled staff are being adequately supported at work.