



Bexhill College

**DISABILITY
EQUALITY
SCHEME**

POLICY NUMBER: PG8

Reviewed & Approved by Personnel Committee: **NOVEMBER 2009**

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME



INTRODUCTION

Bexhill College aims to provide an inclusive environment where diversity is encouraged and where access to and participation in education is promoted. The policy of the College is that difference is respected and all students are treated fairly, respectfully and without prejudice. There is respect for the dignity and worth of each individual.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, (SENDA), establishes legal rights for disabled students in pre- and post-16 education. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Disability Equality Duty (DED) Code of Practice requires all Public Authorities including FE colleges to adhere to anti-discriminatory duties and to prepare a Disability Equality Scheme. The Act gives people the right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of their disability.

This means the College must have due regard for the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled students and staff and other students and staff.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Eliminate disability related harassment.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled students and staff and disabled people in general.
- Encourage participation by disabled students and staff in College life.
- Take account of disabled people's disabilities.

SPECIFIC DUTY FOR THE COLLEGE AND PURPOSE OF SCHEME

There is the specific duty to develop and publish a scheme showing how the College is meeting its new duty in narrowing the gap in inequality between disabled and non disabled people. The new duty covers staff and all service users, including contractors and visitors, as well as learners.

This document constitutes Bexhill College's Disability Equality Scheme and will be reviewed, revised and published every three years and made accessible to all.

The purpose of the Disability Equality Scheme is to embed College policy and ideals into the College culture by finding out the barriers that are faced by disabled people, involving disabled people in contributing ideas on how to improve access. It will set out a three year action plan, monitoring and reporting each year. There is a legal obligation to involve disabled people in the drawing up of the scheme.

The Scheme's focus therefore is on removing barriers within policies or services which have a negative influence of the lives of disabled people. The Disability Equality Scheme further embeds the core values and ideals of Bexhill College.

CURRENT PROVISION

Bexhill College responds positively to the duty to promote disability equality. The College is co-located with the post 16 section of Glyne Gap Special School and is strongly committed to promoting equality. Students with disabilities of all kinds are welcomed and are supported in order for them to achieve their learning potential.

Every year we enrol students with many differing needs. A increasing proportion of students declare some form of disability or learning difficulty. Examples include:

- Mental health difficulties.
- ADHD.
- Emotional behavioural difficulties.
- Diabetes.
- Epilepsy.
- Moderate and severe learning difficulties.
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Haemophilia.
- Dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia.
- Disabilities affecting mobility.
- Students requiring reading, writing and numeracy and English language support.
- Hearing and visual impairments.

The College aims to provide an environment where students feel safe and sufficiently secure to disclose a disability and to be able to discuss the level of support they need.

Currently support is provided which will encourage independence and autonomy and ensure success and progression. Support is dependant on a detailed assessment of needs using information from the student on the application form, from parents and carers, previous schools where available and from the interview process.

Strengths in present provision include the following:

- Applicants are encouraged to disclose their individual needs throughout the interview process.
- Specialist individual assessment and guidance on enrolment by the Additional Needs Coordinator.
- Provision of teaching assistants.
- Strong tutorial support.
- ILPs and one to one support encourage the development of personalized learning.
- On site access to testing for exam concessions.
- Arrangement of examination concessions and special consideration.
- Wide range of support services including Personal and Senior Tutors who offer progression advice, Connexions Advisor, and Student Services where students can get advice and guidance concerning financial support and general welfare issues.
- Good links with local, national and regional support agencies in the Community which are called upon for advice and support.
- A range of equipment and technological support is available including lap-tops, scanner facilities, specialist computer software, height adjustable tables and special chairs, keyboards adaptors, hearing loops.
- Physical Accommodation and access: The College is fully accessible to wheelchair users. There are easily accessible car parking spaces and toilet facilities.

Areas for development:

- The involvement of disabled staff and students.
- Focus Groups with both students and staff, disabled and non-disabled to review impact of policies to review impact of policies.
- Stronger profile for the Equality and Diversity Committee.
- Training for staff to become more skilled in working with students with additional needs.
- Incorporation of equality and disability awareness in staff and student induction/tutorials.

DISABILITY EQUALITY VISION

Bexhill College aims to create a culture where being disabled is not the same as being disadvantaged.

The College acknowledges its responsibility to its disabled employees and learners and accepts that being disabled is a social issue because of the barriers that people face.

Specifically the College will aim to:

- Improve the quality of the College experience for disabled students and staff, and any other disabled people using our facilities or services.
- Reduce the discrimination and remove the social and attitudinal barriers that disabled people currently face.
- Reduce environmental barriers and make all college facilities accessible.
- Create an inclusive culture where people feel safe to declare their disability and each person's contribution is valued.
- Act as an example of good practice to other colleges and organizations.
- Work together with disabled people to achieve equality of opportunity.
- Maximize the contribution that disabled people can make to the College and promote the right of disabled people to be valued, included and involved in decision making.

The scheme will be linked to the College's Equality and Diversity Policy and be integrated into planning, policy and self-assessment. Progress against the plan will be monitored as part of the College's Quality monitoring processes and action plans incorporated into Development and Strategic Plans.

A variety of means will be used to raise the awareness of the vision and scheme including bulletins, staff training on DDA and disability equality, student tutorial programmes and inclusion in the induction for new staff and students.

INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS AND STAFF WITH DISABILITIES AND ORGANISATIONS FOR THE DISABLED

The College will involve a variety of disabled and non-disabled learners, employees and representatives from disability organizations in the local community in its scheme.

The following means will be used:

- Focus Groups (Staff, students, other representatives).
- Senior Students which include a representative from Glyne Gap.
- Information Consultation Forum.

Feedback to disabled people will be provided on the outcomes of their involvement and the changes that have resulted, through personal contact, progress reports and feedback thorough the equality and diversity group.

MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

The Disability Equality Scheme has the commitment of both the Corporation and Senior Management Team to meet the College's legal duties. The SLT will be instrumental in ensuring that disability equality is seen as an organisational priority and that there is a whole organizational approach.

In particular:

- The Corporation and Senior Leadership team will have overall responsibility for the Disability Equality Scheme.
- The Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for ensuring the scheme is put into action and aligned with strategic plans.
- There will be a senior manager with specific responsibility for overseeing the scheme and reporting to a member of SLT and ultimately the Principal.
- All Managers and members of staff and colleagues in the organization will play a role in helping to meet our duty to promote equality for disabled people and in the provision of a fully inclusive teaching and learning environment.
- Training and Updating on all Disability issues will be a part of the College's Staff Development Programme.

The arrangements below will ensure that the work involved in putting the scheme into practice is co-ordinated:

- The College Management Team is responsible for ensuring effective implementation of Equality & Diversity policies.
- The Information & Consultation Forum will have a role in reviewing policies and procedure. This is made up of management, and staff. This will be extended to include students, Member representation and external representatives as required to ensure effective action is taken to promote equality and reduce disadvantage. Key reports and plans will be discussed by the Senior Leadership team and reported to the Corporation.
- We will establish Focus Groups if required, which will offer advice on implementing the scheme and help review policies and procedures. It will be a major way to involve disabled people. This Group will report to the Equal Opportunities Committee.

DATA GATHERING

The College already holds data on students and staff as follows:

Students:

- Information on students who have elected to declare a disability or degree of learning difficulty and their retention and achievement rates. These will be compared with National benchmarks.
- It can also access information on attendance data, Value added data, destination and progression data and information on particular success of disabled students.

This information will be collated into an annual report and fed into the SAR. This will enable detailed analysis of performance of disabled people to take place and for the appropriate actions to be taken. Reports will also be used to inform decision making by Senior Management concerning strategic planning. This will enable the continued improved performance in disability equality.

Information will be held recording complaints from disabled people, including any instances of bullying. These will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team annually.

Where relevant, information and data will be collected and monitored by impairment type as learners may have very different experiences according to their impairment type. The data will be routinely disaggregated by disability or learning difficulty and the information used to inform the self-assessment report and development plan.

Staff:

- Information on the recruitment of disabled staff.
- Information on the development and retention of disabled staff.

These reports are presented to the Corporation's Personnel Committee annually.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Bexhill College will carry out an impact assessment on all its policies and procedures in terms of equality for disabled people. This process will take place over the first three years of the plan as policies and procedures are reviewed.

In doing this, Bexhill College will ensure that

- The college's activities do not inadvertently disadvantage disabled students, staff or service users.
- Opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity are identified.

The impact assessment will be the responsibility of the senior manager who has leadership for that area as outlined below. The process will include seeking the views of disabled people through the Senior Students if related to students and/or Information Consultation Forum if related to staff.

Progress in each area will be reported annually to the appropriate committee of the Corporation.

ACTION PLAN

The Equality and Diversity Action Plan encompasses all activities relating to the development of these goals as we move toward the Single Equality Duty.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE SCHEME

The member of Senior Management Team responsible for monitoring will be the Student Support Manager who has a remit for Equality and Diversity issues.

The three year action plan will be monitored termly and updated annually by the Student Support Manager. Reports will be made to Senior Leadership Team and the Corporation.

The Scheme will be incorporated into the overall Quality Management of the College and will therefore be included in all formal and informal review processes including student satisfaction surveys, complaints monitoring, course reviews and self assessment documentation, strategic plans. It will also form part of the cross college audit process.

Staff development will be planned and reviewed at annual appraisals. Annual appraisals will also enable staff to reflect on the ways that practice has improved concerning disabled people.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

The definition of a person under the Disability Discrimination Act covers a wide range of impairments and disabilities:

- Physical or sensory.
- Mental health e.g. depression.
- Recognised medical conditions such as cancer or arthritis.
- Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia.

The impairment must be such that it has an adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out everyday activities and be likely to last more than 12 months.

Conditions not covered by the act include lifestyle choices such as addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine or any other substance other than one being subscribed.