

Document owner:	Principal
Document version:	V1
Document status:	Approved by SMT
Date:	February 2009

Disability Equality Scheme (including public duty) – Notes and Procedures

1. Our Commitment

Northbrook College celebrates and values the diversity brought to the College engaging staff with disabilities and helping to support students with disabilities and learning difficulties. Our commitment to the Disability Equality Duty, which came into force on 4 December 2006, is strong.

2. Our Statutory Duties

The College is legally bound by the following laws and codes of practice which have a direct bearing on aspects of disability.

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Education Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2006
- Corporate Manslaughter & Homicide Act 2006
- Statutory Code of Practice for Disability in Post 16 Education
- Statutory Code of Practice for Access (Goods and Services)

- Statutory Code of Practice for the Disability Equality Duty
- Statutory Code of Practice for Trade & Qualification
- Impact Assessment Code & Guidance
- Definition of Disability Code & Guidance

3. Meeting Our Duties – Our Commitment

We will have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
- eliminate disability-related harassment
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

We acknowledge that the duty covers all functions and activities, not just employment and service delivery, but budget setting, procurement, regulatory functions and setting the framework within which the organisation will deliver services.

4. Supporting Disabled People

The definition of disability is that used in the Disability Discrimination Act and applies to a wide range of conditions (including for example people with Alzheimer's and arthritis, and those with learning disabilities, depression, diabetes, cancer etc). It is acknowledged that different definitions of disability may have been used by different authorities for specific aspects of their work and for funding purposes.

5. The social model

We accept that the duty reflects the social model of disability. This takes the approach that what stops or hinders a disabled person from doing something are barriers that society has put in place or failed to remove rather than their impairment.

We recognise the negative impact on disabled people of a society designed for non-disabled people and will strive within the limits of reasonableness to take active steps to promote equality for disabled people.

6. Disability Equality Scheme – detailed affirmations

The Duty requires the College to make affirmations that the College is complying with specific requirements. These affirmations are set out below:

- disabled people have been involved in developing the College's Disability Equality Scheme. They have attended the Disability Forum and have been consulted extensively by the Head of Learner Services, course leaders, tutors, Health & Safety Manager. They have also attended student inductions and been given printed information on equality.
- the Action Plan is set out below and includes the revised disability statement and the arrangements for gathering information about performance of the College on disability equality
- arrangements for assessing the impact of the activities of the College on disability equality are through the Disability Forum and feedback from the Head of Learner Services.
- the information gathered will be used to ensure the effectiveness of the College's Action Plan and preparing subsequent Schemes. This will be enabled by the Equality Adviser and Head of Learner Services working together to monitor all aspects of provision.

7. Acting on the Disability Equality Scheme

This Disability Equality Scheme (DES) is published and is available on the Staff Intranet and for students, in the libraries and at site receptions. Notices on the equality notice boards will inform students where the DES is located.

Action plans will be regularly reviewed to ensure their effectiveness in regard to a range of aspects such as: recruitment, facilities, accessibility, attitudes, behaviours, access to learning and social life.

A report on the implementation of the Scheme is to be published annually – covering in particular the steps taken as set out in the Action Plan, the results of the information gathered and the use to which it has been put. The College will review and revise the Scheme every three years.

We will, within the limits of reasonableness, champion equality for people with disabilities and learning difficulties in the following ways:

- Provide responsive and accessible services for all employees and learners
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Promote inclusion for disabled people through all College policies
- Take account of people's disabilities, even where that involves treating some people more favourably than others – in accordance with the Post 16 Code of Practice and Disability Equality Duty Code of Practice.
- Challenge and eliminate all forms of discrimination and disability- related harassment
- Aim for a more representative workforce and student body which reflect the diversity of the population in the area
- Encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life, including the Disability Forum.
- Promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities

By building on the good practice already established through the Equality and Diversity Policy, Disability Policy and Disability Statement we are striving to continually develop our positive approach in promoting disability equality for all people and are determined to embed Disability Equality as a key aspect in all strategic planning.

8. Impact Assessment

We recognise that all College policies and procedures need to be reviewed in light of the Disability Equality Duty to ensure that they are designed with disabled people in mind. Impact assessment is a method of reviewing policies and practice to evaluate their effectiveness and to eliminate discriminatory practice. This work will be carried out by the College Equality and Diversity Advisor in consultation with learners and staff with disabilities.

A number of policies will be subject to early impact assessment, relating to:

- Student Admissions
- Additional Learning Support & Care & Support
- Administration of Medicines (within Care & Support)
- Disability
- Student Discipline
- Staff Discipline and Grievance

- Academic Misconduct (where applicable)
- Staff Competency and Capability
- Family Emergency, Maternity, Paternity
- Staff Training and Development

9. Information and Data

The College will gather and report on a range of information relating to staff and learners with disabilities. The information will be evaluated by the Equality and Diversity Committee and compiled into an annual report by the Senior Manager responsible.

The report will include an analysis by specific disability to determine whether the needs of the learner have been met. The recommendations of the report will feed into the College Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan.

Following review by the Equality and Diversity Committee the annual report will be presented, via SMT, to the Board of Governors.

College Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) will be defined and updated annually and where appropriate will include specific items relating to Disability.

The range of information to be gathered will include:

Student:

- Participation
- Retention
- Achievement
- Success
- Attendance
- Access to Additional Support
- Progression
- Student surveys
- Complaints and Compliments.

Staff:

- Recruitment
- Promotion
- Training
- Career Progression
- Absence
- Retention
- Staff surveys.

10. Disability Statement

The College Disability Statement has been revised. In 2008/9 and is placed as an annex to these notes and procedures. The Statement itself is being distributed across the College and a précis of it will be made available to all applicants to the College – students and staff.