



MANCHESTER LEARNING ACADEMY

DISABILITY POLICY

REVIEW DATES:-

15/01/2014

15/01/2015

Manchester Learning Academy

Disability Policy

1- INTRODUCTION

The college is committed to ensuring that all students and staff are treated equitably and it has a long tradition of supporting students with a wide range. However, recent legislation has required us to improve yet further upon our provision and reappraise all our practices to ensure that they are not unintentionally discriminatory or present unnecessary barriers to disabled students and to staff.

This Disability Policy sets out the College 's commitment to disabled students and staff and provides a framework to ensure that the college offers a supportive environment for all members of the college community.

2- THELEGALFRAMEWORK

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people, or people who have had a disability, without justification. Indirect discrimination where a provision, criterion or practice presents barriers is potentially as unlawful as direct discrimination. Discrimination is only lawful for 'substantial and material' reasons and in limited prescribed circumstances outlined within the DDA. Legal protection extends to the post-employment relationship for disabled staff, e.g. with references.

The Act defines disability as "a physical or mental impairment", which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Under the legislation, discrimination is defined as:

- Unjustifiably treating someone less favourably for a reason relating to his or her disability.
- Failing to make a reasonable adjustment where any arrangement or physical feature places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage.

Since October 1999, there has been a duty on service providers to alter any practices, policies or procedures that make it impossible, or unreasonably difficult, for disabled people to use the service and to provide auxiliary aids or services which would enable disabled people to use a service. There has also been a duty to overcome physical barriers by providing a service by a reasonable alternative method.

3- POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: STUDENTS

Student recruitment and Admissions

The college **Disability Statement** provides a summary of the services, facilities and site accessibility for disabled students. The Statement is flagged in the prospectuses; it is distributed at recruitment fairs and available at Open Days and it is sent to all enquiries declaring impairment on their application form. The statement is also available on the student hand book and on the web in a version designed for visually impaired.

All applicants to the college are considered equally. Where an applicant declares an impairment we try to ensure that any support needs are identified at an early stage but this should not involve unreasonable delays in processing such applications.

Accommodation

We have specially-taken care to ensure that the accommodation request from disabled students meet their needs.

Teaching and Learning

A number of materials are available to support members of staff in working with students with disabilities (Teaching, Learning and Assessment). The materials have been designed to be searchable in two ways: by types of disability/impairment and by teaching and learning contexts. Also included are some practical 'tips' in respect of teaching delivery, some of which help students with some impairment, others of which help all students whether they have some impairment or not. There are also a number of support arrangements from the use of tape recorders in lectures and seminars to extra time in examinations.

Staff Development

The implementation of a college-wide disability strategy has significant implications for staff development. The key areas have been incorporated into a Staff Development Programme in respect of disability issues.

In addition to the activities detailed in the programme, disability awareness will be included in all staff induction activities and the Disabilities and Learning Support Coordinators will continue to advise individual members of staff on supporting disabled students in the teaching and learning environment.

Communications

Effective and accessible communications are a key requirement for both disabled staff and students. Application forms, instruction booklets, handbooks etc, can be modified on request and most documentation is published on the website and can be made available on disk to convert to Braille.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The principal convenes a Working Group the student support unit which oversees the college's Disability Strategy, Project level playing Field, from which this Disability policy is derived. The Student Support Unit maintains statistical data on disabled students and also elicits regular feedback from students through surveys and questionnaires.

Discrimination and Non-Compliance

All students are expected to treat disabled colleagues, staff and visitors with the same dignity and respect as their non-disabled counterparts.

Any form of harassment of a person with a disability on account of their impairment is unacceptable behaviour and is potentially unlawful under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Protection from Harassment ACT 1997.

All students are required, by virtue of their registration, to become familiar with and understand the contents of the College's Equal Opportunities Policy.

4- POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: STAFF

Recruitment

The college has published guidelines for applicants and disabled job applicants are given the opportunity to request any reasonable adjustments to the application process (e.g. large print or Braille application form). Only those selection criteria which are necessary for the job should be specified and care must be taken not to use criteria which may unjustifiably place a disabled applicant at a disadvantage in the selection process.

The essential criteria should be the minimum criteria needed to carry out a job. All candidates will be assessed on their abilities, experience and suitability for the post according to objective criteria.

Selection

Consideration will be given to interview arrangements to ensure that a disabled person is not at a disadvantage compared to other applicants. Disabled applicants will be offered to reasonable adjustments in relation to the interview process, such as sign language interpreters, adjustments to any presentations, etc.

During the interview process, selection panels will be encouraged to assess how any disabled applicant can meet the requirements of the post, considering any reasonable adjustments which may be necessary and appropriate. Any assessment methods must be adjusted for disabled applicants where appropriate, allowing oral presentation, use of technology etc.

Reasonable Adjustments

The college will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace and to the employment arrangements to ensure that a disabled person is not at any disadvantage when compared to a non-disabled person.

In all cases the person concerned must be consulted on the reasonable accommodation of his or her needs. The employee is expected to co-operate with any arrangements subsequently agreed. Advice and financial contribution in certain circumstances is available from the Government's Access to Work scheme, which can be accessed via Job Centre Plus. Occupational Health can arrange for ergonomic assessments, technical reports or Occupational Psychology assessments to be carried out where needed by Job Centre Plus.

Training, induction and support

Training events and information sessions on disability awareness and on recruitment and selection are run regularly by the Staff Development Unit. The College has a programme of induction training for all new staff.

Disabled staff will not be disadvantaged in their opportunities for training and development. Where appropriate, specialist training will be made available in order to allow them to develop their skills and career opportunities.

Discloser and Confidentiality

In accordance with the Data Protection Act information regarding a person's impairment provided to the college is treated in confidence. All information collected for monitoring

purposes will be kept in confidence, and all existing staff and applicants will be told that the information will be used only for Equal Opportunities monitoring purposes.

Working Environment

The colleges is committed to making buildings and sites accessible, where this is reasonable possible, although it is recognised that there may be difficulties with some established college buildings and external environs, owing to listed/Heritage status.

Where practicable the college will make adjustments to the immediate working environment of a disabled person. Disabled people may need special provision to enable them to make proper use of information technology. The college provides the relevant IT support on an individual basis to disabled employees.

Health and Safety

It may be necessary on occasion to make special arrangements to ensure that a person's impairment, or any effect of it, does not increase the risks, either for themselves or for others. Where a conflict arises from completing legislation the college will try to accommodate the requirements as fully as possible.

Units are responsible for organising local 'Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's)' for disabled staff. In all cases, individual staff will be consulted about their individual needs. Staff should make themselves familiar with any specialist equipment/procedures that may apply to them.

Disability arising during employment

When employees become disabled during the course of their employment, all reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate the effects of their impairment by making adjustments to their existing employment.

The Director should discuss the options available with the individual after taking appropriate advice from Personnel/Occupational Health and after any external assessments have been carried out at Occupational Health's request. Each case will be considered individually, taking into account all the relevant circumstances.

The college will endeavour to assist all employees who become disabled in making contact with appropriate organisations which may be able to provide them with information and continuing support.

Discrimination and Non-Compliance

All employees are expected to treat disabled colleagues, students and visitors with the same dignity and respect as their non-disabled counterparts.

Any form of harassment of a person with a disability on account of their impairment is unacceptable behaviour and is potentially unlawful under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

The college regards incidents of harassment very seriously and as possible grounds for disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal.

All staff is required, by virtue of their terms of appointment, to become familiar with and understand the contents of the College's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Monitoring and Review

This policy and any action plans arising from it are monitored by the Equality and Diversity Committee who meet once per term.