

# Disability Policy

## **Policy Statement on supporting persons with disabilities:**

Bird College is fully committed to disability equality and inclusion so that all people with disabilities feel included, valued and can study, work, and thrive. The College champions equality of opportunities and rejects all forms of Disablism. This Disability Policy reinforces our commitment to foster an inclusive and fair culture that promote success for all students and staff as defined in the Colleges Diversity & Inclusion Policy and our obligations under the Equality Act (2010). We are proud of the measure we are taking to ensure we move beyond simply being compliant and having the needs of people with disabilities rights and requirements met. We will focus on removing barriers and making reasonable adjustments to create an inclusive work and study environment for our staff, students and visitors, including alumni.

In addition to meeting our statutory requirements, under the Equality Act 2010, we will further demonstrate our commitment by making provisions for reasonable adjustments to all stages of employee and students experience. This includes, from application, onboarding and enrolment to their entire lifecycle at the College. The College holds the Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the highest regard to and will work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation of a person for a reason that relates to disability. We will strive to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups of people. The College is committed to following guidance from external agencies including the Equality Human Rights Commission (EHRC) who can take regulatory action against organisations that are found to have broken equality law.

The entire College community is responsible for applying anti-ableism principles to their policies, practice, and behaviours. We recognise our responsibility to provide guidance and training on disability related issues to both students and staff. We recognise the importance and sensitivity of the subject and will work closely with the Principal, Equity and Inclusion Officer and external experts who can provide practical assistance based on their lived experience to ensure compliance.

The Equality Act (2010) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long-term means it has lasted for at least 12 months, it is likely to last at least 12 months, or for the rest of the life of the person.

Disability covers a broad range of physical and sensory impairments, medical conditions, specific learning difficulties and mental health conditions that have a long-term and adverse effect on work and study. This can include, but is not limited to:

- A sensory (e.g. visual/hearing) impairment
- A mental health difficulty
- A mobility impairment
- A mobility and dexterity impairment
- Asperger syndrome or other autism spectrum disorders
- Chronic medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma)
- Chronic pain/chronic fatigue
- Specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)

The College welcomes our public sector equality duty to have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations.

The College will take steps to encourage staff, students, and visitors to:

- Treat others with respect at all times, and promote an environment free of all kinds of ableism, microaggressions and harassment.
- Actively discourage discriminatory behaviours and or practices.
- Participate in training and education opportunities that would enable them to adopt best practice.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to Ableism and address overt and covert discrimination, inadvertent discrimination.

The College is committed to taking action to enhance disability equality and inclusion, and to change unfair and discriminatory practices wherever they occur. Existing measures include but are not limited to the provision of hearing loops, lifts and ramps, modification of learning resources for students with SEND such as the use of coloured papers for printing, adapting to meet the needs of those with menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms.

The College will:

- Ensure that pre-emptive action is taken - as far as operationally possible to provide inclusive working, learning, teaching and assessment, and access to our facilities and services. This includes making reasonable adjustments for those requiring it.
- Ensure that reasonable adjustments are put in place for staff and students with disabilities.
- Critically evaluate our people management approach from end to end. Operate a fair and transparent procedure for the recruitment of staff and students which includes making provisions for staff and students with disabilities to bring their requirements to our attention and eliminate barriers to reporting.
- Ensure prospective and current staff and students and visitors with disabilities and are not discriminated against in their interactions with the College.
- Provide equality of opportunity for disabled staff and students in the recruitment, retention, attainment, development and progression of staff and students with disabilities.
- Promote a positive working and studying environment for disabled staff and students.
- Ensure its service providers regularly review individual barriers they have addressed to anticipate future need and embed inclusive practice into their service delivery, ensuring continuous improvement at the College.
- Commit to continual action through visible leadership and a willingness to transform.
- Publicise and raise awareness of our equality and diversity policy and related policies amongst staff and students, stakeholders and visitors.
- Provide fair and accessible opportunities for training and promotion for staff and students.
- Ensure fair and transparent procedures for student assessment, development and attainment of awards. Encourage the use of inclusive language and avoid the use of words or expressions which are discriminatory or exclusive in all College publications and communication.
- Creating safe spaces to talk, share experiences and learn from each other's lived experiences ensuring that communication is two way.
- Ensure any new or updated policies and or procedures are scrutinised for any adverse impact they might have on equalities, and take any necessary action to alleviate this. Use data to inform KPIs.
- Ensure a culture of the College is at all times inclusive and reflects its mission, vision and values.

### **Disability information, data protection and confidentiality:**

The College will manage any information about someone's disability or long-term condition in accordance with our Data Protection Policy, any relevant legislation and the common law duty of confidence. Whilst often your information will not be shared without your explicit consent, on occasion the College may share information without consent where there is an appropriate lawful basis and special category condition for doing so (under Articles 6 and 9 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) respectively). Where necessary, a Data Protection Impact Assessment will be carried out before any processing begins.

All staff and students are expected to promote a safe and supportive environment, so individuals feel able to share the barriers they experience and seek support.

### **Monitoring and review:**

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis and will be formally reviewed every 2 years or sooner if required.

### **Linked Policies:**

This Policy should be read alongside:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy

### **Reporting:**

Bird College Equity and Inclusion Disclosure Form offers staff, students and visitors a means of reporting concerns. This form should be used by Bird College staff, students, and visitors to submit a disclosure about an incident(s) of harassment, discrimination, violence or abuse pertaining to any of the 9 Protected Characteristics detailed in the Equality Act 2010.

The form can be found here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/CHtdTYi2iW>

Should you have any questions, please contact the Equity and Inclusion Officer or refer to the Equality and diversity Policy: [Stella.odusola@birdcollege.co.uk](mailto:Stella.odusola@birdcollege.co.uk)

This statement relates to:

- all members of the senior leadership team, including Trustees and Directors
- all staff, including members of the executive group
- all students
- all contractors, partners and third-party providers
- all visitors, volunteers and Alumni

## Definitions:

### Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

### Ableism

Ableism refers to discrimination based on disability.

### Anti-ableism

strategies, theories, actions, and practices that challenge and counter ableism, inequalities, prejudices, and discrimination based on apparent and non- apparent developmental, emotional, physical, or psychiatric (dis)ability.

### Disablism

Disablism is discrimination or prejudice against disabled people.

## Legal compliance:

### Equality Act 2010

Bird College acknowledge that racial inequalities arise from a variety of reasons, within and outside of the organisations (as identified in the McGregor Smith review) and seek to identify and address negative treatment and its impact when looking at the ethnic profile of the organisation.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies unlawful conduct as:

- Direct discrimination and less favourable treatment, born from overt discrimination, bias, prejudice and assumptions.
- Indirect discrimination, which is perhaps more covert; where an organisations' practices, standards and requirements create disadvantage without legitimate reason or where alternative criteria, or practices could be adopted which have less adverse racial impact.
- Harassment where there is a hostile and unwelcome work environment and unwanted conduct based on race, or even racially offensive language or conduct.
- Victimisation which provides protection against retaliation for those who speak up and raise concerns

## Document Control:

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