



BIRKENHEAD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

LEARNING SUPPORT AND DISABILITY DISCLOSURE POLICY

Last reviewed:	16 September 2025
Due for review:	September 2026
To be reviewed by:	LGB
Ownership:	Assistant Principal – Student Support

Aim

To develop appropriate provision where all students have the opportunity to achieve their academic potential and personal and social goals, regardless of individual educational need or disability.

Objectives

To encourage a culture of openness where students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) feel able to disclose their disability to the College whereby appropriate reasonable adjustments can be anticipated and/or made during recruitment, assessment, on their programme and in the progression process.

To develop and maintain links with external agencies e.g. Wirral schools (including the partner high schools and Joseph Paxton Campus), Wirral Children's Services Department, Wirral Health Authority, Social Services and other agencies to ensure a rigorous assessment is undertaken.

To identify progression opportunities for students with SEND to training, employment, Further and Higher Education in conjunction with the pastoral tutor, careers advisers and the SEND Careers Link.

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1. Overview

This policy document outlines the College's commitment to students with a disability including the legislative framework, reasonable adjustments, confidentiality and disclosure, plus division of responsibility within College. The College will seek to encourage students to disclose a disability and to ensure that students with a disability are protected from discrimination and have access to the full range of College facilities and services. We endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment free from disability discrimination to work towards the social model of disability, thereby not focussing on an individual's disability or medical condition but ensuring their rights and requirements are met.

2. Statutory Requirements

2.1 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act places a positive duty on all public bodies, to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. The Act includes a public sector equality duty to ensure that public authorities, and those carrying out a public function, consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities.

2.2 The SEND Code of Practice 2015

The SEND Code of Practice works alongside the Equality Act to protect students and potential students from discrimination, putting obligations on educational establishments and local authorities to make reasonable adjustments to ensure students with SEND have the support they need to reach their academic potential.

The College will put in place procedures to ensure that all disabled students are treated fairly. Some adjustments can only be put in place if the College knows about a student's disability and are able to pass on relevant information to the members of staff who will need to know about the adjustment.

2.3 Definitions

Under the Equality Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Impairment covers physical, mental or sensory impairment.

Students who become disabled, or become aware of their disability during their time in College, should have every opportunity to complete their course through reasonable adaptations and support once they have disclosed their disability, and have given consent for information to be shared to relevant staff. The support they will then receive will be comparable to a student who disclosed a disability at the start of their course.

2.4 Disclosure

Once a student has disclosed their disability on their application form, a member of the Learning Support Team will interview the student to give them the opportunity to discuss any reasonable adjustments or support that they may need in College. Although students are not obliged to disclose their disability, the College fosters an environment and culture which encourages disclosure.

It may be beneficial for the college to liaise with the student's previous school in order to get information and paperwork, such as exam concessions reports, prior to them coming to College to ensure they are supported from their first day. Students will be made aware of this during the application process.

Some students might be reluctant to disclose their disability because they are worried that they may be discriminated against. The College will ensure that all students are treated equally and fairly and can feel confident in disclosing a disability. Students may also fear that, by disclosing details of a disability, this will become general knowledge. Students will be informed that their support needs will be shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis, and that all information is kept confidential.

Once the College is aware of the student's disability, reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure they have the same chance of success as their peers, regardless of need. However, if a student does not wish to give permission for their disability to be disclosed and shared with relevant staff, these adjustments may not be implemented. The student will be made aware of this, and will sign to confirm they understand (appendix 1).

3. Reasonable Adjustments

When a student has disclosed a disability, the College is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled students are not placed at a 'substantial disadvantage' as a result of their disability. These adjustments can include changes to the environment or how activities are undertaken, which may include using additional support resources, such as assistive equipment or technology, or making physical changes to environment. Head of Student Support or Learning Support Co-ordinator will ensure that relevant staff and tutors are made aware of the adjustments.

Decisions about whether an adjustment can reasonably be made will depend upon individual circumstances; resources of the College, the cost of adjustment, the practicality of any changes and the potential benefit of adjustment will be taken into consideration.

Evidence of special educational need or disability or medical condition will be required in order for College to make specific reasonable adjustments.

4. Confidentiality and Disclosure

The College seeks to encourage potential and existing students to disclose a disability by asking students to disclose on application and enrolment forms, by publicising the Additional Learning Support Offer, and by providing opportunities for existing students to disclose their disability in College. The additional support required by a student is entered onto the internal Sapien system with the prior consent of the student (see Additional Support Form – appendix 1).

If a student does not wish to give permission for their disability to be disclosed and shared with relevant staff, they will be asked to complete and sign the document (Appendix 1). This means that information will not be shared with relevant staff, and therefore will remain between the student and staff member. It should be noted that in withholding consent it may be difficult to implement reasonable adjustments.

5 Division of Responsibility

The Governing Body of the College has overall responsibility for this policy. Managers, and in particular the College Principal and Senior Management Team, are responsible for taking the lead

in challenging discriminatory behaviour on the part of the managers, staff or students and creating a positive working environment and inclusive ethos. All staff have an awareness of the College statutory duties in relation to disability legislation, ensure that all aspects of College policy and activity are sensitive to disability issues. The College ensures that disability monitoring information is collected and analysed and the College ensures that marketing materials present appropriate positive and non-stereotypical messages of disabled people and non-disabled people.

The Learning Support Team is responsible for ensuring that all students with disabilities receive the necessary support. The Learning Support Team will liaise with staff to ensure that they are aware of the support needed, provide advice and guidance to staff and students and complete a Support Plan of the support needs to monitor and evaluate our service.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they contribute to a learning environment in which the dignity of every student is respected, that they inform the College of their needs in relation to any disability and give permission for this information to be passed to relevant staff as appropriate, that they declare any disability or medical condition which may put themselves or others at a Health and Safety Risk on the particular course of study that they are undertaking and that they respond appropriately to the support agreed and provided.

6 Additional Learning Support on Sapien.

Students with disabilities are interviewed by a member of the Learning Support Team. Once the student has given permission for their support details to be documented on the system, this information is placed on the student's Sapien page and is available only to staff relevant to the student, and includes any reasonable adjustments required, examination concessions and support needs of the student. The student can also access this information from home.

7 SEND Provision

In order to provide effective support to its students, the College will:

Work with SEND students, parents/guardians and their high school to ensure students are supported through the application procedure to disclose their SEND and provide appropriate support while in college to meet their individual needs.

Work with students, staff, parents/carers and schools to ensure the College Handbook and website are accessible and informative to students with SEND.

Circulate to relevant staff a Student Support Plan on Sapien for each SEND student, which will provide background information, details of the support required by the student and how their SEND impacts upon their learning.

Review and update the plan alongside the student, tutors, Learning Support Assistants (and parents/carers if appropriate) on a regular basis.

Raise the awareness of staff about the specialist support (including Exam Access Arrangements) available from the Learning Support Team and through appropriate staff development.

Link potential students into the College environment and sessions to smooth the transition process.

Liaise with the College Health and Safety and Facilities teams to ensure the college is accessible for students.

Regularly review and update the College's Disability Disclosure Policy.

Liaise with the College Examinations Officer to support exam concessions.

Continue to work with external mental health support agencies, such as CAMHS, to develop the support for students with mental health problems.

Evaluate the Learning Support provision and respond to subsequent issues

Engage with Local Authorities to support high needs students, including entering into consultation for those with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) to ensure the College can meet the required support provision of the student without impacting the efficient education of others.

Work alongside the Local Authority during transition from high school to college and in EHCP annual reviews.

The Sixth Form College – ALS initial assessment

Name

School

Person Completing the form

Nature of difficulty

- ☐ Social, emotional/mental health
- ☐ Specific Learning Difficulty
- ☐ Sensory impairment
- ☐ ASC/Social Communication difficulties
- ☐ Medical
- ☐ Other physical disability
- ☐ Medical
- ☐ ADHD

Support received at school?

Are you on the SEN register?

Exam access arrangements?

Specific Learning Difficulty

Reading

Do you re-read text in order to retain information? Do you find it easier to retain if text is read aloud to you?

Do you lose your place when reading?

Any difficulties reading out loud?

Writing

Problems with copying text or notetaking in class?

Is your writing legible to someone unfamiliar with it?

Do you use a word processor during lessons to take notes?

Spelling and Grammar

Spelling, grammar or punctuation problems?

Sentence structuring problems?

Problems with organisation and planning?

Difficulties getting ideas down on paper?

Difficulties with proof reading?

ASC

Social Communication Difficulties?

Problems with language/instructions?

Do you need to take rest breaks in lessons?

Any other comments regarding learning?

MENTAL HEALTH

Do you have a diagnosis?

What support do you currently receive or have had in the past?

Are you prescribed any medication?

Does your mental health condition impact on your learning?

MEDICAL/PHYSICAL

How does your condition effect you?

Do you require any reasonable physical adjustments?

ADD/ADHD

How does it impact on your learning?

Are you prescribed any medication?

Do you have any helpful strategies that you use at school?

Do you take any medication?

Do you have an EHCP?

Do you have any evidence of your difficulty/disability? If not, please can you forward this to cp@bsfc.ac.uk

Support at college

Support in class	Discrete class support	Support outside of class	Spld Support	Equipment	Other

Date