



**“Enabling Students to Accomplish their Academic Goal”**

## **Reasonable Adjustment & Special Considerations Policy**

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# 1 Introduction

Bellmont College is firmly committed to offering the best possible learning and teaching opportunities and student experience. This policy outlines the ways in which Belmont College addresses the needs of disabled students. It is designed to be read by prospective and current students as well as members of Belmont College staff.

Central to the Reasonable Adjustment & Special Considerations Policy is the intention to take account of individual need and to work with disabled students to find appropriate and practical reasonable adjustments to ensure that our learning and teaching environment is as accessible as possible.

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to harmonise and replace previous legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The Equality Act has strengthened particular aspects of equality law, and disability in particular. The Equality Act provides enhanced protection for disabled people from discrimination. The Act places a duty on Belmont College to make reasonable adjustments for students to help them overcome disadvantages resulting from an impairment.

The Equality Act takes the approach that employers and service providers must look specifically at the individual's disability and identify how, if practicable, they can ensure that the disabled person is treated as favourably as everybody else. The law is in place to promote equal rights and fair treatment.

## 2. Definitions of Disability

A person is disabled 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. These include, for example, using a telephone, reading a book, or using public transport.

- 'Substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'
- 'Long-term effect' is defined as lasting more than a year (12 months or more).

Bellmont College complies with this legislative definition, and it also defines disability as the loss or limitation of opportunities that prevent people who have impairments from taking part in the life of the community as equal, due to physical and social barriers.

### **The following are covered under this definition:**

- Physical and sensory impairments.
- Specific learning difficulties.
- Autistic spectrum conditions.
- Mental health conditions.
- Severe disfigurements.
- Anyone with a long-term health condition such as an HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis.
- Progressive conditions that affect normal day-to-day activities, including long term physical health issues.

Bellmont College is aware that not all impairments are covered by current legislation. Some students may have impairments which are not severe enough to adversely affect daily life, but which do affect learning, assessment or work. While fully complying with the relevant legislation, Belmont College will endeavour to provide full support to all such students.

### **3. The Legal Framework**

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.

Reasonable adjustments must be considered fully before any decision is taken to justify less favourable treatment towards a student or member of staff. 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.

#### **3.1 "Impairment"**

Covers physical impairments and impairments affecting the senses such as sight and hearing. It also covers mental impairments, including learning disabilities and mental illness where the condition is recognised by a respected body of medical opinion. If the impairment is controlled by medication or special aids the person is still considered as disabled for the purposes of the Act.

#### **3.2 People with Stress Related Illnesses and Conditions**

Such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome may be covered if there are long terms, substantial and adverse effects. Those with other long-term chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, upper limb disorders (e.g. Repetitive Strain Injury) or epilepsy may also have legal protection.

#### **3.3 "Substantial"**

Means more than minor or trivial and includes progressive conditions where impairment is likely to become substantial, such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and HIV infection. People with such conditions are covered by the Act from the moment there is a noticeable effect on day-to-day activities, however slight. HIV and cancer will be specifically included from 2004 once changes to the DDA are implemented.

#### **3.4 "Long-Term"**

Means effects, which have lasted for at least twelve months, or are likely to last for twelve months or more. Long-term effects include those which are likely to recur.

#### **3.5 "Day-to-day Activities"**

Are normal activities carried out by most people on a regular basis and must involve one of the following broad categories: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; the ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects; speech, hearing, or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; perception of the risk of physical danger.

#### **3.6 Severe Disfigurements**

Are treated as impairments, even though they may have no effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act, significantly extended our responsibilities in respect of educational and non-educational services provided to students.

In addition to the Act, the DDA lays upon Belmont College as a non-education service provider, the duty to make reasonable adjustments to policies and practices by providing extra help or aids and by providing the service in an alternative way.

For example, when Belmont College arranges conferences, it is liable under part 3 of the DDA to members of the public, as well as potentially to students under part 4 of the DDA. 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.

## **4 Disability Services**

Bellmont College provides student access to disability support teams and the Dyslexia Support Tutor through the Head of Academic and Pastoral Support, the Head of Academic Programmes, the Personal Tutor, Tutors or Module Leaders. These specialist staff endeavour to ensure that students receive the support they need to make the most of their studies at Belmont College and are enabled to participate fully in academic and college life.

## **5 Pre-application Information and Communication**

All students needing special considerations and/or requirements and considering whether or not to apply to Belmont College are encouraged to contact the College to find out about the range of services for such students. Students with a mobility difficulty are strongly advised to contact Belmont College's Head of Academic and Pastoral Care and discuss their requirements in detail with her, prior to application.

## **6 Admissions**

All applicants are considered equally. When an applicant declares an impairment, the admissions staff at Belmont College try to ensure that any support needs are identified at an early stage, but this should not involve unreasonable delays in processing such applications. Nor does it involve withholding an offer to an otherwise qualified applicant on the grounds of his or her impairment, except in the following cases:

### **6.1 Risk to Health and Safety**

Certain conditions may present safety risks, particularly in a Classroom & Computer Lab setting, despite all reasonable adjustments being made. Any less favourable treatment would be unusual and would only arise in limited circumstances.

### **6.2 The Need for Specially Adapted Accommodation**

The availability of such accommodation cannot be guaranteed to all potential applicants.

### **6.3 Physical Access Issues**

It may be the case that, despite all reasonable adjustments having been made, some key locations remain inaccessible to students with certain impairments. The criteria for admission to particular courses of study depend on whether Belmont College has the facilities to honour

this. Belmont College will ensure to not create unnecessary barriers to applicants who require special needs and considerations. In considering applications, Belmont College will assess whether, in the case of professional registrable qualifications, applicants meet the requirements for 'fitness to practise' in those professions. Applicants' academic suitability for the course is assessed independently of any disability they may declare, and the academic decision is not influenced by their health or disability.

If an applicant with special needs and considerations is rejected on grounds other than academic, a record of the decision and the reasons for it will be kept. To facilitate an alternative choice of course/institution Belmont College will give feedback to the applicant, or relevant body.

## **7 Accommodating mobility difficulties onsite**

Some of the estate and physical environment of Belmont College is not fully accessible to students who are wheelchair users or who have difficulties with stairs. The Admissions Team alongside, must therefore ensure that certain procedures are followed when considering applications from these students. This is to ensure that access and emergency egress routes are established before a student arrives. If reasonable adjustments to buildings and procedures cannot be put in place it is essential that an applicant is informed in a timely manner.

Admissions staff who make an offer to a student with restricted mobility must notify the Head of Academic and Pastoral Support and the Head of Academic Programmes as soon as practically possible.

## **8 Emergency Egress**

It is the responsibility of the Health & Safety representative of the College and the relevant programme administrator, to arrange that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan is completed for all students who may have difficulty making their way out of buildings in an emergency (most likely to be students with restricted mobility or sensory impairments).

## **9 Becoming Impaired While Studying at Belmont College**

If a student becomes disabled while registered at Belmont College or becomes concerned that an illness or other condition is having a disabling effect, they are advised to contact the Head of Academic and Pastoral Support, their Personal Tutor or any member of Belmont College Staff as soon as they possibly can.

## **10 The Library and Computer Rooms**

The library is equipped with assistive technology, including ***Text Help Read and Write software*** on all PCs, as well as adjustable chairs and desks, lamps and a scanner.

## **11 Teaching and Learning Support**

Belmont College will promote awareness and understanding of the ways in which curricular and other provisions may be accessible or inaccessible to disabled people, and accessibility will be regarded as a core value in the design and delivery of courses and programmes of study, and in other provisions made for students.

A number of materials are available to support members of staff in working with students with disabilities which is available upon request (Teaching, Learning and Assessment). The materials have been designed in two ways: by types of disability/impairment and by teaching and learning contexts. Also included are some practical pieces of advice in respect of teaching delivery, some of which help students with some impairments, others of which help all students whether they have impairments or not. There are a number of support arrangements from the student's use of recording devices in lectures and seminars to extra time allotted to disabled candidates in assessments which are timed or restricted in time, such as online tests.

The Belmont College Admissions team liaise with the Head of Academic and Pastoral Support and the Head of Academic Programmes to make recommendations for anticipatory reasonable adjustments to course programmes. Where individual reasonable adjustments are required, a summary of support needs is agreed by the Head of Academic and Pastoral Support and the Head of Academic Programmes with the individual student. This document is then sent to the Head of Academic Administration and relevant academic staff, in line with the confidentiality agreement made with the student.

Bellmont College is committed to continuing to embed accessibility into the curriculum.

## **12 Assessment**

Bellmont College has a policy of providing additional assessment arrangements, where necessary, for students with special needs and considerations. The purpose of changes to assessments is to compensate for any disadvantage created by the assessment task as it impacts on the student's disability, without affecting the validity of the assessment.

These arrangements may include additional time in timed tests, the use of examinations support workers such as readers or amanuenses, separate rooms, and the provision of examinations in appropriate formats e.g. large print. Students who believe they may be entitled to additional examination arrangements are advised to contact the Head of Academic and Pastoral Support and/or the Head of Academic Programmes as soon as possible.

Procedures for Agreeing Alternative Modes of Assessment which may entail for example, substituting an unseen examination with an extended essay or substituting oral presentations for written assignments may also be considered.

Students with dyslexia are required to have a prior assessment of any additional needs they may have in examinations.

All applications for additional assessment arrangements must be supported by appropriate medical or other evidence agreed with both the Head of Academic Programmes and the Head of Academic and Pastoral Support. The team requires 6 weeks prior notice of such adjustments for any assessment.

## **13 Communications**

Effective and accessible communications are a key requirement for both staff and students who require special considerations and needs. Application forms, instruction booklets, handbooks etc. can be modified on request.

## **14 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Head of Academic and Pastoral Support has responsibility for monitoring the College's provision for students with special considerations and needs and receives the Annual Reports. The Head of Academic Administration maintains statistical data on such students and elicits regular feedback from students through surveys and other student voice vehicles. All reports are overseen by the Head of Quality.

## **15. Discrimination and Non-Compliance**

All students and staff at Bellmont College are expected to treat colleagues, staff and visitors with special considerations and needs with the same dignity and respect as counterparts without such requirements.

Any form of harassment of a person with special considerations and needs 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. It should be noted that any intentional breaches of the legislation on equal opportunities or of the College Policy may lead to disciplinary action. Individuals should also note that they may be personally liable under law



<b>Bellmont College Reasonable Adjustment &amp; Special Considerations Policy</b>					
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Amendments</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Next review</b>
1	March 2023	EWV	New Document	Advisory Board	October 2024
2	February 2024	EWV	Revised no update or changes made	Advisory Board	October 2024
3	October 2024	EWV	Revised Document	Advisory Board	October 2025

<b>Document context</b>	
This document relates to:	
<b>Document/Policy</b>	<b>Date/version</b>
Bellmont College Quality Assurance Handbook	October 2024 v3
Bellmont College Student Handbook	October 2024 v3
Bellmont College Employee Handbook	October 2024 v3
Bellmont College Equality and Diversity Policy	October 2024 v3
Bellmont College Reasonable Adjustment & Special Consideration Policy	October 2024 v3
Bellmont College Health and Safety Policy	October 2024 v3
The Equality Act	2010
The Disability Discrimination Act	1995/2005
The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)	2001