

Principles and Guidelines for Disability and Special Needs

Discrimination Act 1992.

The Act states that:

It is unlawful for a person who is a member of the staff of the college to harass another person who:

- a) is a student at the college or is seeking admission to the college as a student;
- b) has a disability; and
- c) has an associate with a disability

The College ensures that it meets its legislative obligation in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act. It ensures that all staff and others such as outside tutors, volunteers, and external providers are informed of the legal responsibilities related to Disability Discrimination, reporting and other relevant college expectations and are aware of their obligations and the process the college has in place in relation to reporting.

The College will not refuse to accept the enrolment of a disabled person, and will not discriminate against such a person in the terms or conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student. The student will have equal access with other students to any benefit provided by the College.

Learners with disabilities and special needs.

The College affirms the rights of all young people to a broad and balanced education in an inclusive, supportive environment. This policy recognises the diversity of learners and promotes the kind of engagement through which young people with disabilities may develop capabilities needed to be active participants in a changing world.

Access

The college is accessible by wheelchair, via automatic sliding doors opening from the street, and elevator access to the College at Level 6, 815 George Street, Sydney.

Discrimination

All students have the right to be treated with fairness and dignity, and to learn in a safe, supportive school environment that values diversity. Such an environment is to be free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and violence. To this end, discrimination is not tolerated within the school environment.

Curriculum Needs

Students with disabilities may require additional support in order to successfully achieve appropriate outcomes from their educational experiences. Such students may have physical, intellectual or sensory impairments and/or disabilities in communications and/or language, making them eligible for special education provisions. Through a process of discussion and negotiation an agreed plan of action regarding the student's curriculum will be developed. Teachers, curriculum area coordinators and senior management will participate in these discussions as appropriate.

The negotiations will focus not only on the content of the school learning but on how the student as a learner is able to access, participate and achieve in the learning environment. These negotiations and the particular accommodations and interventions required to achieve the outcomes will be documented in the individual student's negotiated Curriculum Plan.

This may mean, for example, changes in the way that assessment tasks are conducted, changes to classroom procedures (where this does not disrupt the learning of other students), allowing the audio recording of lessons, and teaching other students to be sensitive to, tolerant of, and helpful towards, any student with special needs.

In the particular case of non-English speaking background students, the college is already largely focussed on their needs in its capacity as an International college, and offers support in our intensive English college, Specialty Language Centre, operating at the same premises and under the same management. The students take subjects that are appropriate for their language abilities, namely Fundamentals of English and English as a Second Language. Students are screened either before they enrol in the Senior Secondary College, or as soon as they arrive on-shore, to ensure that their English language skills are sufficient to cope with the course of studies they will undertake. If necessary, extra language support can be arranged at any time.

If however it is evident at the time of enrolment that a student's special needs are unable to be met at the College, a recommendation will be made that the student attend another institution capable of supplying the special conditions required.

Physical Needs

The school will identify areas that have suitable access for any person with a physical disability. Organisers of functions and excursions associated with the school will ensure that the chosen venue provides suitable access to all people, including those with disabilities.

For learners with other types of disabilities, curriculum area coordinators and senior management will support teachers in working with students, caregivers, and agencies,

and make provision for particular interventions and support as required.

This policy operates within the framework of the Disabilities Services Act (1993), OH&S Act (2000), NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, Equal Opportunity Act (1995) and The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) which deals with discrimination in education, both direct and indirect, on the ground of disability.

Bullying and Harassment

Students with disabilities, like their non-disabled peers, may be subject to bullying and harassment at school. These students may also be responsible for the bullying and harassment of other students. Each situation, irrespective of whether the student has a disability or not, will be treated seriously and addressed immediately. Ignoring bullying behaviour towards or by a student with a disability is unacceptable.

Educational resources designed to educate students about recognising bullying behaviour will ensure that they account for the varying language ability, social functioning level, behaviour and emotional maturity of individuals participating in the lessons. For the majority of students with disabilities, very minor adaptation to the planning and delivery of programs will ensure all students can participate and benefit from anti-bullying events.

Some students with disabilities have difficulties with social and emotional development, and specific assistance in understanding 'what' bullying looks, sounds and feels like is critical to ensure that these students can independently manage social situations confidently and appropriately.

In relating to people with a disability, it is crucial to focus on the person from the outset and not on the disability. The words that are used influence and reveal attitudes, therefore language used should be accurate and respect all individuals, with or without a disability.

Behaviour within the school is constantly monitored by teachers and other staff to ensure that no discrimination occurs. Any incidents that may arise are to be dealt with immediately, in accordance with the College's Discipline Policy.

A. Disability provisions for students undertaking literacy and numeracy tests

Policy

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Disability Standards for Education (2005) require the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) to ensure that students with a disability are able to access and respond to an examination.
- The College Principal may approve, and will advise BOSTES, of the College's disability provisions for the optional online literacy and numeracy tests if a student has a permanent or temporary disability that would, in a normal test situation, prevent him or her from:
 - reading the test questions; and/or
 - communicating his or her responses.

B. Disability provisions for the Higher School Certificate examinations

Policy

Disability provisions in the HSC are practical arrangements designed to help students who couldn't otherwise make a fair attempt to show what they know in an exam room.

The provisions granted are solely determined by how the student's exam performance is affected. Provisions may include Braille papers, large-print papers, use of a reader and/or writer, extra time or rest breaks.

Procedure

- (a) Disability provisions application forms and information guides are available to schools from Schools Online for students who intend to sit for the Higher School Certificate examinations.
- (b) Students who wish to apply for disability provisions should see the College's Principal. The Principal will complete the application form. In doing so, the Principal will:
 1. Indicate the provisions for which the student is applying. In doing this, it is important to refer to the case students, which gives examples of the provisions that BOSTES considers most appropriate

- for a particular disability.
2. Indicate how the disability affects the student's work in the classroom and in examination situations.
 3. Supply evidence of the student's disability. A guide to the various types of evidence required and possible provisions is provided in Guidance for schools.
 4. If the student is unable to obtain an appropriate diagnosis, then other detailed information will need to be submitted to establish the existence of a disability. In this case it is necessary to provide: details as to why the student cannot obtain relevant documentation and diagnosis, a reasonable history of the student's difficulty and needs (including previous and current in-school support), and detailed teacher comments which indicate the impact of the student's condition on their classwork and in examinations.
- (c) It is important that the school submit the completed application to the Board of Studies by the due date. The due date is always the last day of Term 1, except for applications based on chronic fatigue syndrome, post-viral syndrome, Ross River fever or glandular fever, which should be submitted in July of the examination year, with teacher comments and medical documentation, also dated July.

If all the necessary information is not provided, some requested provisions may be declined due to insufficient evidence.

- (d) Once BOSTES has received the application, a letter acknowledging receipt is published on Schools Online. The application is processed at BOSTES.

BOSTES has a Panel of Specialists that includes medical practitioners, educational psychologists, and consultants for the visually or hearing impaired. The category of the disability and the evidence presented will determine who reviews the file.

When a decision has been made, a decision letter listing the approved and/or declined provisions is published through Schools Online, with a copy for both the Principal and the student.

Appeal procedures

Should a student wish to appeal the decision to decline a provision, the appeal must be submitted through the school within 14 days of receiving the disability provisions decision letter. The appeal must state the reason why the decision is considered unacceptable, making reference to the evidence supplied in the original application.

The appeal must include new supportive evidence, such as a further medical report, which clearly states why the student needs the provision, or additional reading, writing or

spelling test results.

BOSTES will conduct an independent review and a decision will be made within 21 days. The outcome of the appeal will be advised to the school and to the student via Schools Online.

A note to parents

If parent(s)/guardian are concerned about whether disability provisions apply for the student, the parent/guardian should contact the school Principal.

The application form must be submitted by the student's school as it requires specific information about the difficulties the student may experience in a classroom or examination situation. This does not mean, however, that the parent/guardian should not be involved in the application process.

Who can apply for disability provisions?

Any HSC student with a disability recognised in the Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005.

The definition of 'disability' in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) includes:

- physical
- intellectual
- psychiatric
- sensory
- neurological, and
- learning disabilities, as well as
- physical disfigurement, and
- the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms.

SPECIAL NOTE:

- a) The disability provisions apply only where the disability is such that a practical arrangement is required to reduce disadvantage in an exam situation
- b) Disability provisions also apply to temporary and emergency-related disabilities. A typical example of an 'emergency' is where a student breaks their writing arm a week before an examination.
- c) Students who become ill during an examination period may be eligible to make an illness/misadventure appeal rather than a disability provisions application.