

## <Creative Academy>

# <Disability & Mental Health Support>

### Overview

Disability and mental health support policies in education, particularly within the UK, are designed to ensure equal access to learning through legal frameworks like the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014. These policies mandate that schools and universities make "reasonable adjustments" to prevent disabled students or those with health needs from being at a substantial disadvantage.

Key components of these support policies include:

#### **Legal Duties and "Reasonable Adjustments"**

- **Definition:** A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on daily activities.
- **Obligations:** Schools must not discriminate against disabled pupils and must proactively adjust policies, practices, and environments to meet their needs.
- **Examples:** Providing specialist equipment, modifying uniforms, using coloured paper for dyslexia, or adjusting timetables for anxiety or neurodivergent students.

#### **Higher Education (University/College) Support**

- **Disability Services:** Institutions have dedicated teams to facilitate reasonable adjustments like extra exam time or coursework extensions.
- **Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA):** This government-funded support helps with costs for specialist equipment, non-medical helpers (e.g., sign language interpreters, mentors), and extra travel.
- **Disclosure:** While not mandatory, students are encouraged to disclose disabilities to ensure they receive support.

#### **Whole-School Approach to Mental Health**

- **Policy Focus:** Highly-rated schools focus on building resilience and understanding the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour rather than only imposing sanctions.
- **Staff Responsibility:** Staff are trained to identify early signs of mental health issues and work with safeguarding leads.
- **Wellbeing:** Promoting mental health is deemed crucial for academic achievement, attendance, and long-term life outcomes.

#### **Key Policies & Acts:**

- Equality Act 2010: Prohibits discrimination in education.

## **Purpose of the policy**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the support services available to students with physical disabilities or mental health conditions at Creative Academy. We are committed to ensuring that disabled people are provided with equal access to their chosen course of study, and all facilities at Creative Academy.

Creative Academy recognises the social model of disability, whereby the individual is understood to be disadvantaged not by their disability, but by social barriers such as the physical environment, methods of communication and prejudicial attitudes. We are committed to working towards removing these barriers, and developing a fully inclusive learning and teaching environment for all students.

Creative Academy aims to anticipate the requirements of disabled students by integrating universal design into the curriculum and planning processes. We will seek to make reasonable adjustments where possible in order to enable disabled students to reach their full potential at university.

## **Who can be offered support?**

The Wellbeing team are committed to providing specialist, confidential advice to all student and staff on a range of physical and mental health conditions. Conditions we offer support with include, but are not limited to;

- Specific learning conditions, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADD and ADHD.
- Mental Health conditions, such as depression and bi-polar disorder.
- Long-term and chronic conditions, such as MS, cancer and HIV.
- Invisible or unseen conditions, such as diabetes, asthma and epilepsy.
- Sensory conditions, such as visual and hearing impairments.
- Physical impairments, such as arthritis and rehabilitated injuries.

## **What support services are available?**

All students are entitled to a range of support and reasonable adjustments that are available based on their individual requirements. Some examples of what may be available include:

- Information on disability support and reasonable adjustments at Creative Academy.
- Information on additional funding which disabled students may be eligible to apply for, such as Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs).
- Advice and information on arranging a diagnostic assessment for specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia assessments.
- Reasonable adjustments for examinations (for example, more time allocated)
- Assistance in arranging non-medical helpers (such as note-takers and mentors)
- A library service to provide books in alternative formats to disabled students who cannot access printed materials
- Emotional support and guidance to students, through Safe Haven.

- Organising referrals to other professionals, such as physiotherapists or counsellors, when required.
- Advice on a wide range of personal topics, such as nutrition plans, injury management and academic skills.

## **Registering with the Wellbeing Team**

All students are registered with the Wellbeing team at Creative Academy during the Induction and Enrolment week at the beginning of Semester 1. Students are asked, but are not required, to inform Creative Academy about health conditions and disabilities from day 1 of enrolment. (However, disclosure of such conditions would greatly benefit student's learning journeys.) All appointments with the Wellbeing team are voluntary, confidential and can be arranged by both students and their Personal Tutors.

Throughout term-time, students and their Personal Tutors complete 1-2-1 discussions to establish student's physical, emotional and academic wellbeing and create Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). Within these meetings, Personal Tutors may strongly recommend students engage with the Wellbeing team to improve their situation. Students themselves can arrange an initial appointment with any member of the Wellbeing team to discuss any issues. From there, Wellbeing staff may refer the student to another member of the team who specializes with their issue, or advise the student on what courses of action can be taken. To complete an external referral, the student must provide explicit confirmation before a referral takes place.

Students can discontinue their engagement with Wellbeing staff at any time. All Wellbeing appointments are recorded in notes by staff and kept securely for auditing purposes. Any medical evidence or personal documents are kept within student's folders and stored according to Slough Borough Council auditing procedures.

## **Disclosure and Confidentiality**

Creative Academy is fully committed to upholding the principles laid out in the General Data Protection Regulations (2018), Data Protection Act 2018 and Equality Act 2010. Under the Data Protection Act (2018), physical or mental health information is treated as a special category and considered as sensitive data. We therefore operate a confidential service within the Wellbeing team, which means that information you disclose to us is not passed on without your explicit consent.

However, the Wellbeing Team will need to disclose and exchange information in order to implement reasonable adjustments and support for you. This information will only be shared where necessary on a 'need to know' basis. We define 'need to know' as sharing sufficient information in order for us to be able to enable support and reasonable adjustments effectively and with people who are involved in that process. Examples of who we may share your information with may include (but is not limited to) academic staff, course leaders, examination staff, library staff, health, safety staff and professional & regulatory bodies. We ask the people with whom we share your information to respect your confidentiality and to not pass your information on to anyone else unless they are also involved in your support.

We will never share information about you with your parent/guardian or with other students without your explicit consent.

The Wellbeing Team and Student Services may need to share information without consent in the following exceptional circumstances only:

- If a student is considered to be at risk of harming themselves or others;
- if there is a legal requirement to do so;
- if there is a potential fitness to practice concern (for students on a professional course).

A decision to breach confidentiality in the circumstances set out above would be made by a designated Wellbeing Adviser in conjunction with the Creative Academy Manager.

## **Mental health support**

Personal Tutors are here to support students and signpost (see signposting support) those who experience mental health difficulties during their academic study. In conjunction to this, the team is committed to raising awareness and reducing stigma around mental health conditions in addition to encouraging all of our students to stay well. The team has a dedicated Mental Health Adviser who can offer a range of advice, information and support to students and staff on mental health issues and topics. Students with a diagnosed mental health condition can register with the team and may receive support through reasonable adjustments and where applicable, disabled student allowances (DSA). The team is also able to advise students who may not currently have a diagnosis of a mental health condition on how to take the step toward diagnosis and how to obtain medical evidence.

## **Disabled Students' Allowances**

Disabled students in higher education may be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA). Disabled Student's Allowance may be available to full-time, part-time, undergraduate and postgraduate students.

DSAs are government grants designed to contribute towards any additional costs a student may incur whilst studying due to their disability, long term medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty. They are not means tested, and you do not generally have to pay them back.

DSAs can help fund:

- specialist equipment and assistive technology
- non-medical helpers
- other general disability-related costs of studying
- extra travel costs because of your disability.

Once you have been assessed as 'eligible' to receive DSAs, you will need to arrange a Needs Assessment. This is an informal meeting between you and an assessor to decide

what support you need. You will then finally receive a letter of entitlement detailing exactly what support you are entitled to and how to order your equipment.

Students should make a DSA application to the appropriate funding body. Please visit the relevant website for more information on DSA and to either complete an online application or to download an application form.

For students living in:

- England: Student Finance England - <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas>
- Wales: Student Finance Wales - <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/undergraduate-students/new-students/what-financial-support-is-available/disabled-students-allowances.aspx#>
- Northern Ireland: Student Finance Northern Ireland - <https://www.studentfinancenir.co.uk/>
- Scotland: Student Awards Agency Scotland - [http://www.saas.gov.uk/forms\\_and\\_guides/dsa.htm](http://www.saas.gov.uk/forms_and_guides/dsa.htm)

The whole DSA application process can take up to 14 weeks, therefore we advise you to apply as early as possible so that support is in place for the start of your course. The team can advise and guide you through any point of the DSA application process.

Reviewing this statement or policy

This policy or statement will be annually reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose, up to date and effective. Student representation will be part of the process to ensure that it is fair and clear.

Any changes will be uploaded to the website, ensuring that it is accessible to prospective and current students. For general enquiries and/or complaints regarding this statement, please contact the Creative Academy using the information below:

- By phone - 01753 875400
- By email - [info@creativeacademy.org](mailto:info@creativeacademy.org)
- By post - Creative Academy, 73a Stoke Poges Lane, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 3NY
- By website - using the contact us page on [www.creativeacademy.ac.uk](http://www.creativeacademy.ac.uk)
- For complaints - please see the complaints process on the website