



Student Support Policy

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History of Changes

Version	Description of Change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Creation of new policy	B Brownlee	19 August 22

Statement of Inclusiveness

West Lothian College is an inclusive organisation and all policies, procedures, strategies, plans, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services are assessed to consider the impact on staff and students covered by the Equalities Act 2010 by the completion of an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). Protected characteristics are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. All college policies and procedures can be provided in an accessible format.

Please see end of this document for our Equality Impact Assessment of this policy.

1. Purpose

Our vision is to be a college which delivers a highly skilled, enterprising and resilient workforce.

We aim to achieve this by practicing our college values of being welcoming to all, putting students at the centre of everything we do and always striving for better.

This means that we will offer high-quality learning and skills opportunities, workplace experiences, and apprenticeships and support their progression on to further studies, and to secure positive and rewarding careers with potential for lifelong learning.

2. Scope

We will welcome all students to our college and ensure that we provide fair access for individuals from our communities. We will value and respect the strengths and experiences that our students bring and will build on those for confident and successful outcomes.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Students are continuously encouraged to seek support and this will be available at all stages of study, including the application stage.

Students will be active participants in the management of their studies, however, there may be cases where students are unable to participate fully on a temporary or more ongoing basis. In this case, the policy also allows for a third party to support the student with the student's permission where they are over sixteen years of age. Equally the student may be clear that they do not wish third party involvement. Where this is the case, we must respect this, unless we judge them to be in danger, in which case we must act on our duty of care to involve others

In exceptional circumstances, the college may deal with issues using written reports or statements where the student, or their representative, is unable to attend.

Delivery staff have an obligation to do whatever they can to encourage students to take support, whether from the lecturer, student support or the other support services across college. This includes liaison with named Student Support team members for their tutor group.

Student Support staff provide a wide range of services which are further detailed in this policy, as well as monitoring student attendance.

The Student Association also supports students to help them to access both internal and external support services and proactively seeks their views through representation and ongoing surveys of opinion to inform their campaigns.

In addition, Student Funds provide invaluable financial support.

Projects like TRUST seek to extend the support umbrella to our diverse student groups.

4. Key Principles

- Continued need to combat poverty and deprivation for inclusive growth
- Building a skilled workforce for a successful economy
- Increasing the capacity for enterprise and innovation for future benefit
- Embedding a trauma-responsive approach

The Student Support Policy supports the college Outcome Agreement targets, realising the targets within this and widening access for potential and existing students.

The college is committed to achieving its Public Sector Equality Duty (s.149 of The Equality Act 2010) and as such will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made so that the student journey is adapted to support individual success, but without compromise of academic standards.

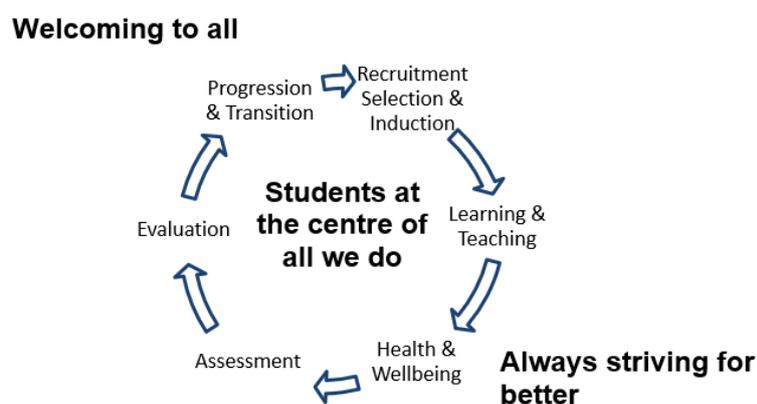
The policy will ensure that recruitment and selection of students is inclusive and does not represent a barrier to securing a college place or to attainment.

The policy will ensure that students are supported at pre-application, at application stage and for transition and progression so that the processes are fair and equitable.

The college is committed to supporting students throughout their learning journey and providing a range of learning and teaching practices which are inclusive and respond to a range of learning styles and individual needs.

The policy will ensure a parity of intake and outcome so that all students and potential students have an equal chance of successfully completing their course.

This policy aligns with the college Corporate Parenting Policy, the Admissions and Enrolment Policy, the Attendance and Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures, the Carers Policy, the Equalities and Widening Access Policy and the Equality Outcome Action Plan. This policy has been constructed around the student journey as follows:



5. Student Support - General

Student support will include:

- Advice and Guidance
- IT (Information Technology) Support
- Group Support
- Adapted Learning and Teaching
- One-to-one support and coaching (extended learning support)
- Counselling
- Mental Health Support
- Needs Assessment
- Assistive Technologies
- Other individualized support such as communication support

The college is committed to providing positive learning experiences and to supporting all students to access college, remain at college and achieve qualifications with high levels of satisfaction throughout.

Students will be encouraged to declare support needs at several points in the student journey and the college will respond as quickly as possible. Ongoing work helps to identify risk factors and to offer service/support proactively in anticipation of an articulated need or experience.

Experience would suggest that support is most effective when provided in small groups within classes and on a one-to-one basis out with class. Since 2020, we have provided support either in person or via Microsoft Teams or telephone, to suit individual students' needs. Every full-time course has a dedicated Course Tutor and Student Support member of staff allocated to them.

Most of the resource allocation will be directed towards group and one-to-one support/coaching depending on evaluation of performance indicators (PIs) on an annual basis.

The majority of this support is delivered by the college Student Support team. In addition, our Trust Project provides additional wrap around support for identified students.

The policy covers Student Support for:

- Full and part time students, existing and potential
- School pupils, including those who are home schooled
- Candidates in the workplace
- Students in the most deprived 10% postcode areas
- Students from protected characteristic groups
- Students who have disclosed they are care experienced

- Students who have disclosed they are young carers or who have significant caring responsibilities
- Students who have declared a disability
- Students who have declared an educational need including lower levels of literacy and numeracy, as long as the student is working on these at the correct level for their course

We aim to offer every student (who declared a support need at application) a support/assessment interview before the start of their course. The intention is to customise the learning experience and to avoid founding planning on assumptions of homogenous requirements.

Support is offered in different ways to the following groups:

- Assisted Programs students (support given by course tutors and care assistants)
- Schools pupils (support given in school)
- Trust Project students (initial support given by skills coaches, peer navigator, course tutor and external partners)

Students on English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) courses can receive all kinds of Student Support, apart from where it is important that the student demonstrates their own written and spoken English language skills, for example, not with proof reading.

6. Third Party Involvement

College is mainly an adult environment, although we proactively support school delivery in West Lothian and beyond with a range of school-college partnership courses. However, there is a significant difference to how we speak to students compared to the relationship they have with schools, namely that if they are over 16, we will only speak to third parties, e.g. parents, carers or other representatives if we have permission to do so from the young person.

In some cases, it is appropriate that third parties continue to be in active communication with college and in this case, a Third Party Mandate form is provided (Appendix 2) to be used in the case that this is required and to ensure that everyone is clear about this.

Where students do not want third parties to be involved, we must respect this, unless we judge them to be in danger, in which case we must act on our duty of care to involve others

7. Student Support at Pre-application Stage

The college will advertise programs in keeping with principles of equality, diversity and widening access to encourage applications from the widest range of potential students. Advertising and advice will promote non-traditional gender career choices in keeping with our college Gender Action Plan.

We will aim to facilitate access to the college and to support individuals prior to and during the application stage. In specific terms:

- The college will offer all individuals the opportunity to discuss any aspect of learning before coming to college when considering a course of study.
- We will offer a visit to college (or staff to meet potential students at school or transition meeting), to facilitate a discussion of need, and/or options for study.
- Schools will be encouraged to contact us when individuals are considering college if there are any support needs.
- The college Marketing Plan and our school's liaison staff will focus on attracting applications from SIMD 10% postcodes and from the Schools for Higher Education Program which operates in West Lothian and related local authority areas as Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS).
- We offer several courses under the Scottish Widening Access and Participation (SWAP) to provide routes into Higher Education for adults with few or no qualifications, or whose qualifications are out of date.
- The college is in discussion with West Lothian Council and other local authorities and Who Cares Scotland? as to how care experienced young people can be best supported.

8. Student Support at Application Stage

The college will strive to remove barriers (and perceived barriers) within the application process. Selection will be fair and equitable and selection decisions will be informed by clear objective selection criteria. Work in this area is informed by the college's Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure.

Principles of reasonable adjustment will be applied at the interview when requested.

In specific terms:

- The college will encourage students to declare a need for support at the application stage.
- The college will continue to offer supportive early intervention at application and interview following disclosure of any additional need.
- The college will ask schools and/or parents/carers for transitional information for applicants who require additional support.
- Appropriate support will be offered to all applicants and will be available at interview.
- We will establish before or at interview if a student has support needs and/or if a needs-assessment is required.
- All students who identify a need at the application stage will be offered an assessment interview, following an offer of place, and before the start of the course.

9. Student Support at Induction

Induction is an important introduction to study and college life. Staff will encourage students to seek out support proactively and to access college services. In particular:

- Students will be encouraged to declare any support needs at induction, through enrolment form and through discussion with course tutors, lecturers and/or Student Support team members.
- Student Support staff will see every full-time and part-time group as part of an induction to promote services and encourage discussion/disclosure.
- Staff will promote availability of support to all students, as will the Student Association.
- Students will be encouraged to provide data on protected characteristics (with an acknowledgement that they also have a right not to provide data).

10. Student Support On Course

The college will deliver an inclusive and supportive curriculum in keeping with the Curriculum policy. A range of learning and teaching methods will be deployed to meet a range of individual learning requirements. Delivery staff will provide adaptive teaching methods and materials to engage students with more specialist support, as long as this is reasonable and proportionate. We will invite all students who have disclosed a need to discuss and agree what is involved before starting their course so that everybody is clear and prepared in advance.

In particular:

- All students who have disclosed an additional support need through the admissions process or at induction will be written to with the offer of a meeting to discuss extra support.
- We will provide drop-in guidance support for any student needing extra help or access to information, advice, or support services.
- We will ensure availability of one-to-one and small group support in all programs who need this.
- We provide study skills support for all students to help with areas like – using IT, preparing for assessments, essay and report writing, referencing, numeracy and mathematics.
- Provision of additional specific support needs using assistive technologies.
- We will create a more inclusive environment for all students through IT which permits materials to be fully accessible
- We plan to make appropriate referrals to external agencies and specialists for additional support.
- In some cases, additional risk assessments will be required.
- All students who declare themselves as carers or care experienced will be offered an interview to establish if they have additional support requirements.

(The college has a Corporate Parenting Plan and a Carer's Policy and work closely with the local authority and other partners to fulfill these).

- The Student Association will encourage students to access support and promote availability.

11. Staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Staff development will be provided to all staff in relation to promoting equality, diversity and widening access. Delivery staff will be supported to gain teaching qualifications and to develop their skills in adapting classroom practice. Staff development needs are revised annually. CPD activity will include:

- specific support for teaching staff and frontline staff in relation to specific areas – autism, dyslexia, mental health.
- the participation of relevant staff in on-going staff development through CDN (College Development Network).

12. Bespoke Programs

The college provides a range of “group 5” programs within the college, in various community venues, and in conjunction with a large-scale employer. These programs cater for the needs of students who experience a range of mental health issues and/or issues of cognitive processing, autism or learning needs. Partnership agreements with key specialist agencies will support the needs of each individual on these programmes.

13. Partnerships

The college works in close partnership with the local authority and schools and is well represented within the community planning partnership (CPP) at operational and strategic levels. The college also collaborates with NHS primary and secondary care in relation to Mental Health Services. The college has partnered with SMILE counselling to receive ongoing mental health and wellbeing training and will also refer age-appropriate students to them for support. There are additional partnerships with a number of third sector organisations in West Lothian and beyond, including Children 1st, Action for Children and Access2Employment.

14. Digital Services

It is acknowledged that technology can play a role in improving the student experience. The college operates a Microsoft environment which has good accessibility and is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) on all websites and applications.

15. Monitoring, Reporting and Review

The following monitoring, reporting and review processes will be addressed:

- The policy will be reviewed annually in relation to protected characteristics and disadvantaged groups and key performance indicators within the college Outcome Agreement.
- Student satisfaction surveys will be taken as a measure of success.
- Use of distance travelled as a measure of success.
- Liaison and communication with the Student Association.
- Use of program team evaluation, the Induction Survey, the Support, Partnership, Alliance, Representation, Knowledge, Learning, and Evaluation (SPARKLE) survey and the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES).
- Data on outcome agreement key priorities and commitments.
- The college will analyze data on protected and other student characteristics and adapt services to support optimal success for all.

The college has been improving information gathering and tagging within Information Systems, this will support:

- Better quality analysis of data
- Identification of risk factors to inform proactive interventions
- Identification of correlations between life circumstances and withdrawal/partial success.

Data across many years indicates that students who engaged with Student Support remained on courses and achieved success in keeping with their peers. This would appear to evidence that additional support is at least providing a level playing field through reasonable adjustment.

The college undertakes deep level analysis of data and uses this to inform planning of proactive and targeted services. The data analysis will seek to identify causal factors underpinning withdrawal from programs and factors which lead to partial success. It is intended that the interrogation of data will seek to explore the interplay between a range of factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic background, disengagement from education and experienced poverty of aspiration.

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or when required by legislation and governance changes.

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Before carrying out an EIA, you should familiarise yourself with the College's EIA Policy Statement and Guidance, along with further information and resources which are available on Sharepoint.

EIA covers **strategies, policies, procedures, plans, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services**, but will be referred to hereinafter as 'policy/practice'.

Policy/Practice (name or brief description):	Student Support Policy v1
Strategy/Policy includes Equalities Statement of Inclusiveness? Yes/No-	<p>Text to be included in strategy/policy:</p> <p>Statement of Inclusiveness</p> <p>West Lothian College is an inclusive organisation and all policies, procedures, strategies, plans, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services are assessed to consider the impact on staff and students covered by the Equalities Act 2010 by the completion of an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). Protected characteristics are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p>
Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (choose from the following options):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed new policy/practice • Proposed change to an existing policy/practice • Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice • Other (please give detail): 	<p>Creation of a new policy (converted from existing Access and Inclusion Strategy)</p>

Person responsible for the policy area or practice:	
Name:	Beth Brownlee
Job title:	Head of Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources
An Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if the policy/practice:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affects operational or strategic functions of the College • is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance) 	
Why the EIA is being carried out	<p>The policy underpins the core strategic and operational work of the college in attracting, enrolling, retaining and promoting the success of all students on their chosen studies.</p> <p>The policy is highly relevant to the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion and has the purpose of fostering good relations among students and staff.</p>
Equality Groups	
Relevant to the Policy/Practice, identify which of the undernoted equality groups are impacted upon:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • race (including ethnicity and nationality) • religion or belief • sex • sexual orientation • gender reassignment • pregnancy and maternity • marriage or civil partnership 	Relevant to all protected groups

Record your assessment against the following statements:

Statement	Equality assessment
Detail the evidence of the needs of the identified equality groups and any gaps in information	No specific group identified. The policy ensures all staff are aware of the support available to students to best encourage successful completion of their course regardless of individual differences.
Will application of this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups?	No
If yes, how will the policy/practice be changed to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity	
State how this policy/practice will foster good relations:	The policy will promote openness and transparency around disclosure of student needs and thus support good relations with all protected groups. It also helps towards creating a culture of inclusiveness and will help students to thrive and succeed.
Will the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?	No
If yes, how will the policy/practice be changed to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity	
Which equality groups or communities have been consulted in the development and review of this policy/practice?	None specifically, but the Student Association gave their feedback.

Equality Impact Assessment Outcome	
Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision. (Delete the options that do not apply):	
<p>Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.</p> <p>Option 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.</p> <p>Option 3: Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be</p>	No change required

mitigated	
Option 4: Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated against.	
Monitoring	
When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?	August 2025 or as required by changes in policy or legislation
Publication of EIA	
Can this EIA be published in full, now? Please state Yes or No If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:	Yes
Sign-off	
EIA undertaken by Name: Date: Accepted by person responsible for the policy/practice named above: Name: Date:	Virginia Toyi 2 September 2022 Beth Brownlee 7 September 2022
Referred by Equalities Committee Date:	Yes/No

Appendix 2: Third Party Authorisation Mandate

THIRD PARTY MANDATE

Full Name of Representative: _____

Representative's Contact Details: _____

Student's Name: _____

Student Reference Number: _____

Student Course: _____

To be completed by the student, I agree that my representative may communicate with West Lothian College staff in the following departments as follows (tick below where contact is allowed, not allowed or required):

Service/Staff	Allowed	Not Allowed/ Required
Student Support		
Student Funds		
Information Systems (Student Records)		
Course Tutor		
Lecturers or other delivery staff		
Faculty manager		
Other college manager		
Other – please write in:		

I agree that West Lothian College may make any enquiries to my relative/representative concerning my attendance and progress at college. This includes requests for further information/evidence (for example, reasons for absence, wellbeing concern, safety, progress reports).

_____ Signed (student):

_____ Date: