

Student Wheelchair User Assistance Policy

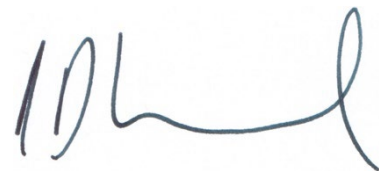
Overall responsibility:	Principal
Implementation:	College Management Team
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Endorsed and approved by Policy & Strategy Group

Date: February 2026

Jason Lancaster

Principal



Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. CONTEXT	3
3. PURPOSE.....	3
4. INTENT	3
5. RESPONSIBILITIES.....	3
6. MANUAL HANDLING & PERSONAL CARE CONSIDERATIONS	4
Appendix 1: EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	6
Appendix 2: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN	9

1. INTRODUCTION

Northampton College is committed to ensuring that all students have access to its curriculum, learning environments, facilities, and full college experience. The College recognises that some students, with physical, physiological, or cognitive difficulties, may rely on the use of a wheelchair in their everyday lives on a permanent or temporary basis, and therefore may require reasonable adjustments made for them to maintain equality of access, and remove potential barriers to a successful and positive College experience.

2. CONTEXT

Northampton College attracts a diverse community of students and is committed to meeting their individual needs, through reasonable adjustments and an array of supportive intervention strategies. The college has invested significantly in its estate, successfully producing accessible state-of-the-art facilities. However, it is recognised that some students may require additional consideration due to the nature of their disabilities, to enable them to achieve their qualifications.

It is also recognised that students may be issued with, or purchase wheelchairs of various types, which will require specific consideration depending upon the vocational nature of their course/study programme, and the learning environments and facilities that the student will need to access. Whilst the College is fundamentally an educational institute, with a responsibility to provide learning support, it is recognised that on occasion it may be required to provide physical assistance to student in wheelchairs where the relevant requirements are fulfilled (see section 5)

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the college fulfils its obligations in regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Equality Act (2010)
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations (1992)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice (2015)

4. INTENT

This policy intends to support the safety of students and staff. For students, this will be achieved through maintaining high expectations, and the ongoing promotion of independence wherever possible. For staff, the policy will ensure that the Corporation is fulfilling its obligations to its employees.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Curriculum teams must ensure reasonable adjustments are in place to enable parity of access to the classroom, curriculum, and site for users of wheelchairs. This may be in the form of lift access, adjustable furniture, or practical assistance etc.

5.2 The College will complete a full risk assessment in cases where the college is requested to assist in the pushing of wheelchairs. The College will agree to assist in the pushing of wheelchairs where the following conditions are fulfilled*:

- There is appropriate advice available that supports a genuine need for pushing, evidencing that the student is unable to use their wheelchair independently (sometimes referred to as the ability to 'self-propel'), issued by an appropriate health professional, e.g., G.P, consultant, occupational therapist, or physiotherapist etc. (It is acknowledged that some physical conditions requiring intermittent wheelchair use will not be evidenced by professional advice).
- The student is not already in possession of a medically approved and transportable electric wheelchair which can be used on College site(s), or there is evidence that the student is not eligible for one.
- The student is unable to secure assistance through their own social care/personal budget arrangements.
- There is a full risk assessment in place for the specific task of pushing a wheelchair.
- The staff involved have been provided with the relevant guidance on how to safely push wheelchairs, which must be documented and recorded.
- There is available funding for the human resources required to facilitate the role of 'pusher'. (Funding for adult students and those on University Level Courses must seek support from Adult Social Services)
- It is agreed that no one individual will act as a 'pusher' for sustained periods of time.
- Wheelchair users that require specialist equipment, e.g., belts/straps that restrict independent movement, will require full consideration (see section 6)

5.3 Curriculum teams must ensure that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is designed for wheelchair using students. This PEEP can be quality assured by the College's Physical Disability support Practitioner upon request.

6. MANUAL HANDLING & PERSONAL CARE CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Students with Personal Care Needs will have a personalised care plan completed which must be shared with the student and parent/carer. The plan will be approved by the relevant health/social care professional. All staff involved in delivering personal care and in the training of manual handling will have the relevant training, and this training will be refreshed in accordance with the relevant requirements.
- 6.2 The restraint of students outside of the College's discreet provision will be in line with the college's Restraint Policy. For students in Supported Learning, staff will be trained in positive behaviour management (see Supported Learning Manual Handling & Restraint Policy for further information).
- 7.1 The College will undertake risk assessments where there is a potential risk to students or staff due to the nature of the student's needs, this includes the assessment of specialist equipment, e.g. wheelchair belts/wrist straps which could potentially restrain students with disabilities. The College will ensure there is no deprivation of an individual's liberty (for further information refer to the relevant college policies on control and restraint)

APPENDIX 1 – EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
APPENDIX 2 – COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
APPENDIX 3 – WHEELCHAIR USER ASSISTANCE CHECK LIST

Appendix 1: EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This form should be used by managers and policy authors within their area of responsibility to carry out Equality & Diversity Impact Assessments (E&DIAs) in relation to protected characteristics, specifically: Age, Sex, Disability, Gender reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy & Maternity and Marriage & Civil Partnership.

The word 'policy' is taken to include strategies, policies, procedures, and guidance notes; formal and informal, internal and external.

The Impact Assessment may be carried out on any policy, service, function or plan you are engaged in, or are about to commence. All policies should be clearly stated. However, in reality, some policies are built into everyday procedures and customs, therefore not all policies are open to inspection and review. Any assessment of a policy should include these customs and practices as well as the formal written policy. 'Functions' means your duties and powers and includes internal and external functions, including service delivery.

1. Name of policy

Wheelchair User Assistance Policy

2. What is the aim(s), objective(s) and/or purpose of the policy?

This policy intends to support the safety of students and staff in relation to the assistance of students who use wheelchairs. For students, this will be achieved through maintaining high expectations, and the ongoing promotion of independence wherever possible. For staff, the policy will ensure that the Corporation is fulfilling its obligations to its employees.

3. Who is the policy lead?

Thomas Goodridge

4. Which of the following groups could be affected by this policy? (Tick all that apply)

Learners Staff Wider community

5. Team

Names and position of Impact Assessment Team (min of 3 preferably from areas across the College):

Name	Position
Mark Owen	Assistant Principal, Student Services
Helen Butcher	Curriculum Manager, Childcare and Health & Social Care
Thomas Goodridge	Assistant Principal, School of Academic & Vocational Support

Date E&DIA undertaken: 19/10/2022

E&DIA undertaken as a result of:

Procedure

Date of last E&DIA (if applicable) n/a

6. Complaints?

Have complaints been received from anyone with one or more protected characteristic about the service provided? If yes, then please give details. No

7. The Impact

Four possible impacts should be considered as part of the assessment:

Positive impact – Where the policy might have a positive impact on a particular protected characteristic.

None or little impact – Where you think a policy does not disadvantage any of the protected characteristics.

Some impact – Where a policy might disadvantage any of the protected characteristics groups to some extent. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals with protected characteristics is likely to be greater than on another.

Substantial impact – Where you think that the policy could have a negative impact on any or all of the protected characteristics. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that the negative impact on one particular protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.

Using the guidance provided above, complete the following table:

Sex/Age	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
Women		✓		
Men		✓		
Age		✓		

Disability	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
Visually impaired	✓			
Hearing impaired	✓			
Physical disability	✓			
Specific Learning difficulties	✓			
Global learning difficulties	✓			
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	✓			
Any other disability – various	✓			

Race	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
White		✓		
Other minority groups		✓		

Other Protected Characteristics	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
Religion and Belief		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		
Gender Reassignment		✓		
Pregnancy & Maternity		✓		
Marriage & Civil Partnership		✓		

Please comment on any areas where some or substantial impact is indicated. Any resulting actions must be added to the attached action plan.

Not applicable

8. Is there anything that cannot be changed?

What cannot be changed?	Can this be justified?	If so, how?
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Please list the main actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment in your area of responsibility. (Continue on separate sheets as necessary)

Not applicable

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ACTION PLAN FOR INCLUSION IN QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Area for Improvement and expected impact (linked to Corporate Objectives) N/A

SMART actions/activities N/A

Staff development or Resources required N/A

Timescale including Milestones N/A

Success Indicators and evaluation N/A

DISTRIBUTION: Copies of the final E&DIA should be sent to:

Jan Hutt - Director of HR, Patrick Leavey - Deputy Principal – Teaching, Learning & Success

And to those whom this Impact Assessment will cause to have further work to do in either changing processes or re-writing the policy(s) concerned.

All actions recorded here should be carried forward into your QIP, so that actions can be monitored and evaluated to measure the impact. There will be random sampling of action plans through the Equality & Diversity Forum

Appendix 2: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

TITLE OF COLLEGE POLICY:	DATE APPROVED BY
Wheelchair User Assistance Policy	Date:

AUDIENCE (select appropriate with ✓)				
Managers		Curriculum teams		Business Support teams
All staff	✓	Suppliers		Partners
Other - Students				

CHANNEL (select appropriate with ✓)				
Policy & Strategy Team (PST)	✓	Quality Improvement Network (QIN)		Marketing team
Meeting	✓	Meeting	✓	NC Update Intranet Website
Individual team		Suppliers		Partners
Document Library Noticeboards Team meeting Email	✓	e.g. Letter or email Meeting		e.g. Letter or email Meeting
College Management Team (CMT)		JCNC		CORPORATION
Meeting	✓	e.g. Meeting Email		e.g. Meeting Email

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN ACTIVATED BY:		
Name: Thomas Goodridge Department: School of Academic and Vocational Support	Job title: Assistant Principal, School of Academic and Vocational Support	Date:

Part C – To be completed by Northampton College

Employee Declaration for staff involved in Wheelchair assistance

Staff involved in pushing wheelchairs on a regular and consistent basis for this student must confirm acknowledgement of the following:

Employee Name	Manual Handling Training Complete (✓)	Wheelchair Assistance Guidance issued (✓)	Viewed risk assessment for task of pushing wheelchair (✓)	Employee Signature	Date