Reasonable Adjustments Policy

1.Introduction

At Bird College, we are committed to creating an inclusive and accessible working environment for all employees, faculty, contractors and partners. This **Reasonable Adjustments Policy** outlines our commitment to ensuring that all staff members, regardless of protected characteristic, have equal access to employment opportunities, necessary accommodations and career progression.

This policy is designed to meet and exceed current legal requirements, including the Equality Act 2010, and reflects Bird College's dedication to fostering a supportive, inclusive and equitable workplace.

2. Objectives

- **Promoting Equity and Inclusion**: Ensuring that all staff members have equal opportunities for recruitment, career advancement and professional development.
- **Facilitating Access**: Providing reasonable adjustments and accommodations for all staff members to ensure that they can perform their duties effectively and comfortably.
- **Creating a Supportive Environment**: Ensuring that all employees feel supported and included, with open lines of communication and appropriate channels for reporting issues or seeking assistance.
- **Ensuring Compliance**: Adhering to all relevant legislation and exceeding legal standards to adopt a culture of accessibility and inclusion.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, faculty members, visiting artists and external partners working with Bird College. It covers all aspects of employment, from recruitment and onboarding to daily work practices and career progression.

4. Policy Framework

4.1. Recruitment and Onboarding

- Bird College is committed to inclusive hiring practices. Job descriptions, recruitment materials, and interview processes will be designed to be accessible to all applicants, regardless of disability or other characteristics.
- Reasonable accommodations will be offered throughout the recruitment process, including alternative formats for applications, accessible interview spaces and adjustments for candidates who require them.
- New employees will receive comprehensive onboarding, including an introduction to available workplace accommodations and support services.

4.2. Reasonable Adjustments

- Bird College will provide **reasonable adjustments** to employees, ensuring they can perform their duties effectively. Adjustments may include, but are not limited to:
    - Modifications to physical workspaces (e.g., ergonomic equipment, accessible workstations)
    - Flexible working arrangements (e.g., remote work, flexible hours)
    - Modifications to job duties, if necessary
- Employees can request adjustments at any point during their employment. Bird College will work closely with staff to assess and implement appropriate adjustments on a case-by-case basis.

4.3. Workplace Accessibility

- All Bird College facilities will be continuously assessed for accessibility. The college will ensure that all buildings, including offices, classrooms, and communal areas are accessible to employees with disabilities.
- Regular audits will be conducted to identify and address any barriers to accessibility in the workplace, with action plans developed to implement necessary improvements.
- Bird College is committed to ensuring that online platforms and digital workspaces used by staff comply with accessibility standards, including the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)**.

5. Support Services

5.1. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- Bird College offers an **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** to provide confidential counselling, mental health support and advice on workplace challenges, including accessibility issues.
- Employees will have access to ongoing mental health support, particularly those with different needs or chronic conditions that may affect their work experience.

5.2. Access to Work Funding Support

Bird College is dedicated to ensuring that employees with disabilities have full access to the resources they need to thrive in the workplace. To this end, the College will actively support staff in applying for Access to Work funding, a government scheme designed to help employees with disabilities or health conditions by covering the costs of workplace adjustments.

This funding can cover a range of support, including:

- Specialist equipment or adaptations
- Assistance with travel to and from work if public transport is not suitable
- Support workers or job coaches to help manage work tasks

How Bird College Will Assist:

- **Application Guidance:** The HR department will provide guidance to employees on how to apply for Access to Work funding, including help with understanding the application process and gathering required documentation.
- **Liaison Support:** Where necessary, the College will act as a liaison between the employee and the Access to Work programme to ensure timely and efficient processing of the application.
- **Implementation of Support:** Once funding is approved, Bird College will work with the employee to implement the necessary adjustments, ensuring that any equipment, travel assistance, or support workers are arranged without delay.

Employees who wish to apply for Access to Work funding can contact the HR department for further advice and support throughout the application process.

6. Career Development and Training

6.1. Inclusive Professional Development

- Bird College will ensure that all staff members have access to professional development opportunities, including workshops, training sessions and conferences. Adjustments will be made to ensure that these opportunities are accessible to staff with disabilities.
- Professional development resources, including training materials and presentations, will be provided in accessible formats to ensure equal access to career advancement opportunities.

6.2. Leadership and Awareness Training

- All managers and supervisors at Bird College will receive regular training on inclusivity and accessibility in the workplace, with a focus on supporting staff with disabilities.
- Staff training will cover topics such as unconscious bias, disability awareness and best practices for creating an inclusive workplace environment.

7. Engagement and Consultation

7.1. Staff Engagement

- Bird College will engage regularly with staff members to gather feedback on workplace accessibility and identify areas for improvement.
- An **Accessibility Committee** will be established, comprising staff, HR representatives and external accessibility experts, to advise on policy improvements and oversee the implementation of reasonable adjustments.

7.2. External Consultation

- The college will consult regularly with external disability advocacy organisations to ensure best practices are being followed and that the policy is aligned with sector standards.
- Bird College will establish partnerships with organisations that specialise in workplace accessibility to provide additional support and resources for employees.

8. Monitoring, Review, and Reporting

8.1. Policy Monitoring

- The Access to Work Policy will be reviewed annually, with input from staff and external accessibility experts, to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.
- Regular monitoring of workplace adjustments and accommodations will be conducted to ensure that they are meeting the needs of staff.

8.2. Annual Workplace Accessibility Report

- Bird College will publish an annual **Workplace Accessibility Report**, detailing the number of accommodations made, feedback from staff, and plans for future improvements. This report will be publicly available and demonstrate the college's commitment to transparency and ongoing improvement.

8.3. Data-Driven Adjustments

- Data collected through employee feedback and annual reports will inform future iterations of the Access to Work Policy, ensuring that Bird College continues to meet the evolving needs of its staff.

9. Accountability and Transparency

- Bird College is committed to creating a transparent system for requesting and implementing reasonable adjustments. Staff will have access to a clear, straightforward process for requesting accommodations and receiving timely responses. (See Appendix A for more details about the process).
- An **Accessibility Ombudsperson** will be appointed to serve as a point of contact for staff members with concerns about accessibility and to oversee the resolution of any related issues.

10. Conclusion

Bird College remains committed to creating an equitable, accessible workplace where all staff members, regardless of ability or background, can thrive. This **Reasonable Adjustment Policy with Access to Work Support** is part of our broader effort to promote a diverse and inclusive working environment. The policy will continue to evolve in response to staff feedback and advances in accessibility best practices, ensuring that Bird College remains a leader in workplace inclusivity within the higher education and performing arts sectors.

Appendix A

Reasonable Adjustment Request Process

Bird College is dedicated to providing an accessible and inclusive working environment for all employees. This process outlines the steps staff members should follow to request reasonable adjustments, as well as the process for responding to these requests.

1. Purpose of the Process

The purpose of this process is to provide staff members with a transparent, straightforward method for requesting accommodations. It ensures that all requests are handled fairly, consistently, and in compliance with legal requirements such as the Equality Act 2010.

2. Definition of Reasonable Adjustment

A **reasonable adjustment** refers to any modification or support provided by Bird College to remove or reduce barriers that staff members may face due to a disability or long-term health condition. Adjustments may include changes to physical workspaces, job duties, schedules or the provision of assistive technology.

3. Who Can Request a Reasonable Adjustment?

All employees of Bird College, including full-time, part-time, and temporary staff, are eligible to request reasonable adjustments. Contractors and external partners working regularly at Bird College may also submit requests.

4. Steps for Requesting a Reasonable Adjustment

Step 1: Initial Request

- **Staff Member**: Any staff member requiring an adjustment should initiate the process by notifying their line manager or the HR department. The request can be made in writing (via email) or verbally.
- **Required Information**: The staff member should provide the following details to facilitate the process:
    - Nature of the disability or condition (no medical diagnosis is required at this stage)
    - Description of the barrier(s) they are experiencing in the workplace
    - Suggested adjustments or accommodations that could alleviate these barriers
    - Any relevant medical or occupational health documentation (if available and if the employee feels comfortable sharing it)

Step 2: Acknowledgment of Request

- **HR Department**: Upon receiving the request, the HR department will issue an acknowledgment of receipt within **5 working days**.
    - The acknowledgment will include an outline of the next steps, timelines and any documentation that may be required.

Step 3: Initial Assessment

- **Line Manager and HR**: The line manager, in consultation with HR, will conduct an initial assessment of the request. This may involve:
    - Discussing the requested adjustment(s) with the employee to clarify needs and explore potential solutions
    - Consulting relevant medical professionals or occupational health advisers (with the employee's consent) to gain further insight into the nature of the adjustment

Step 4: Implementation Plan

- **HR and Line Manager**: Within **10 working days** of the initial request, the HR department, in consultation with the employee and their line manager, will develop an **Implementation Plan**. This plan will outline:
    - The agreed-upon reasonable adjustments
    - A timeline for implementing the adjustments
    - Any required resources or equipment
    - Review dates for assessing the effectiveness of the adjustments

Step 5: Implementation of Adjustments

- **HR and Facilities/IT (if necessary)**: The HR department, along with the relevant support teams (e.g., IT for assistive technology, Facilities for physical modifications), will implement the agreed-upon adjustments within **20 working days**, depending on the nature and complexity of the request.
    - If delays are anticipated, HR will communicate the reasons to the employee and provide an updated timeline.

Step 6: Confirmation and Communication

- **HR Department**: Once the adjustments have been implemented, the HR department will notify the staff member and confirm that the accommodations are in place.
    - The employee will be given the opportunity to review the adjustments and provide feedback to ensure their effectiveness.

5. Follow-Up and Review

- **Review Period**: All reasonable adjustments will be reviewed regularly. An initial review will occur within **3 months** of the implementation to assess whether the adjustments are meeting the employee's needs. Subsequent reviews will occur annually or as needed.
- **Employee Feedback**: Staff members are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback on their adjustments. If an adjustment is no longer suitable, the employee can request a new assessment at any time by restarting the process.

6. Appeals Process

- **Right to Appeal**: If a request for reasonable adjustment is denied, or if the staff member believes the accommodation provided is inadequate, they have the right to appeal the decision.
- **Appeal Submission**: Appeals should be submitted to the **HR Manager** within **10 working days** of receiving the decision. The appeal must include:
    - A detailed explanation of why the staff member believes the decision is incorrect
    - Any new or additional information that may support the request
- **Appeal Review**: The line manager, the Principle and an external accessibility expert (if necessary), will review the appeal within **10 working days** of submission and provide a final decision.

7. Confidentiality

Bird College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all reasonable adjustment requests. Only individuals directly involved in the request process, including HR, line managers, and relevant medical or occupational health advisers, will have access to the information.

8. Support and Advice

HR Department: Staff members can contact the HR department at any stage of the process for guidance, advice, or support.

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