

Welcome to Wirral Met College's 2019

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion underpins everything the College does. This includes the design and delivery of our curriculum, the support we provide for our students and staff, the design and location of our buildings and community bases.



This newsletter will show you how we welcome and support students and staff with a range of abilities, and from various backgrounds.

Wirral Met

Wirral Met College

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the curriculum

Wirral Met's vision is 'To be an inclusive, outstanding college' and one of the most important ways we can achieve that is build the themes of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into our curriculum. By doing this, we help our students to develop their understanding of these issues in a context that is relevant to their vocational goals and life aspirations.

English

Our GCSE English students have been studying non-fiction texts, including the Diary of Anne Frank and a speech by Malala Yousafzai. In addition to analysing the language and structural features of these pieces, the students naturally had the opportunity to discuss how each text represented powerful young women fighting for their rights and to debate issues such as persecution, religion, terrorism and education. Anna King, GCSE Lead Tutor for English, said: "This has been the most powerful session we have done with our students. We were concerned that the topics may cause some difficult debates but I must say that every single student handled it brilliantly and respectfully."

Science

Our Level 3 Applied Science students looked at women working in the science industry, focusing on Donna Strickland, who recently became the first woman in 55 years to win the Nobel Prize for Physics. Students also discussed comments made by a professor at CERN regarding women and physics and the concept of a glass ceiling for women in science. Ruth Jones, Applied Science lecturer, said: "The idea was to recognise that everyone, men and women, has the right to any sort of science career and it is just ability, not gender, that is important."

Business

Our AAT Level 3 Apprentices developed their higher level thinking and evaluation skills by discussing and debating the concept of equality and fairness. Lecturer Brian Wood used Victorian art to provoke discussion about issues around discrimination, multiculturalism and the connection between 19th Century slavery, modern slavery and fair trade.

Prep 4 Life

Our Future Options students have been learning about Syrian food and culture, thanks to fellow student Ayan who joined the group this year. The students learnt how to make hummus, falafel and baklava from scratch, while learning about Ayan's culture and developing their communication skills.

Hair & Beauty

Our students have taken part in a range of activities to help them learn more about our diverse community, including studying the treatments needed for different skin types and genders, learning about different cultures through trips to the World Museum and an international supermarket, and setting up a community project collecting clothes for a local charity.



This is just a small sample of the many ways in which Equality, Diversity and Inclusion have been embedded into teaching and learning over the last few months.

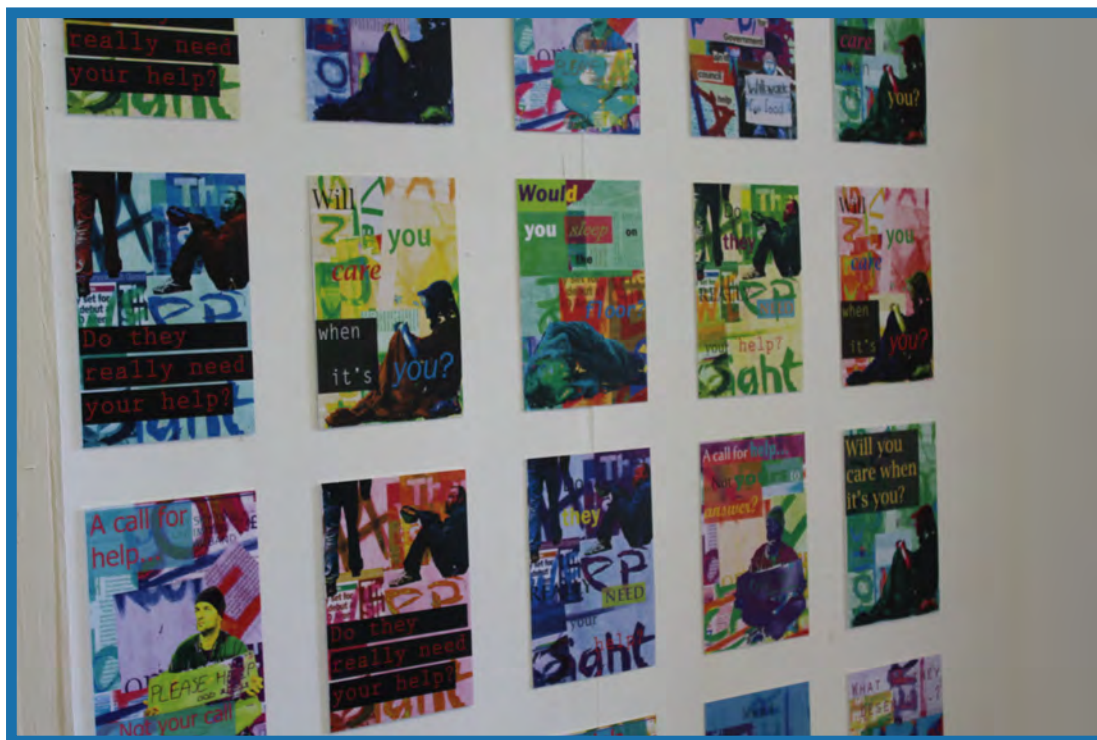
Art students take a closer look at diversity issues

Students in the Wirral Met Art School have taken inspiration for some of their work from issues strongly related to the themes of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Combining the in-depth theoretical knowledge gained from their Art History module with their practical skills and individual artistic talents, this year's students have produced a range of thought-provoking pieces for their Final Major Projects. The standard of artwork has been extremely high, with pieces tackling subjects such as:

- Misogynist and sexist portrayals of Theresa May in the media
- Homelessness in the UK, where luxury and decadence are 'normal'
- Disability and its relationship to modern consumerist society
- The rich cultural history of Japan and the mythology that has emanated from there
- The complex relationship between mental health and drugs in popular culture

Lewis Taylor, Lecturer in Art & Design said: "The Foundation Diploma at Wirral Met encourages students to be thoughtful about the world around them and to explore themes that involve social protocols and behaviour," explains Lewis. "They are further encouraged to identify areas of discrimination and hypocrisy in order to tackle these problems in an academic and visually communicative way. Students are often affected by the things they discover and often become motivated to produce artwork that investigates and reveals discrimination, duplicity and corruption in society."



Growth in demand for ESOL

Wirral Met has offered English courses to Speakers of Other languages (ESOL) for over 30 years but in the last two years the numbers have grown dramatically and Wirral Met has responded to the challenge. There were only 17 young people under 19 years old in 2017 and this number has risen to 86 in 2019. The number of adults based in the Wirral to start a new life has also risen to 370.

The ESOL programme ranges from Pre-Entry Level 1 up to Level 2 and comprises full-time, part-time, evening and community based classes. As well as learning a new language the students have to learn how to access travel, housing, health care and the job market; all of this is included in their ESOL course.

Enrichment is a big part of what ESOL students can enjoy, including a tour of the Wirral, observing local government and trips to museums and places of interest to learn about British culture. Our younger students have also been involved in several environmental projects on the Wirral including two projects with Bidston Hill. The first was a sponsored charity clean-up for Children in Need and the second was to clear unwanted weeds and species. This term included a beach clean-up at New Brighton. Not only did students enjoy getting out and about they had the opportunity to converse with native speakers. ESOL students also took part in a sponsored run at the Oval – and won! In June they celebrated Refugee Week by meeting up with Asylum Link Merseyside for a picnic at Wirral Country Park.

One of the things we notice as ESOL teachers is that students might be quite isolated where they live and Wirral Met becomes their ‘community’. Students are always keen to support one another with interpreting or support for illness. Our adult classes have even cooked for the 16-18s, who are unaccompanied minors without family, and explained to them where and how to shop to create the dishes from home.

All through the year our female ESOL students have been attending the The Girls’ Network set up by the Students’ Union. The project matches 14-19 year old girls with a female mentor to develop skills and confidence and to open up opportunities and experiences that the girls otherwise may not have access to. In January eight ESOL students met their mentors and started their year-long programme. They have been meeting their mentors every 4-6 weeks and have taken part in a number of workshops, training and work experience placements. They have developed strong relationships with women who are brilliant role models for the female students. Next January the girls will ‘graduate’ from the programme but will continue to be lifetime ambassadors.

Renewed commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff



Our Principal, Sue Higginson, recently signed the Association of Colleges' Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter, which sets out a range of commitments to ensure that we create an environment that promotes student and staff wellbeing, and that proactively supports student and staff mental health.

As a college we have a well-established history of supporting people with mental health and wellbeing, including the provision of counselling services and specialist support staff for mental health and wellbeing. More recently, our Charity of the Year for 2018-19 has been Wirral Mind, and a range of activities have taken place across the year to raise the profile of mental health and wellbeing including:

- Mental Health Awareness Week in May, in which a range of activities, competitions and events took place across the College.
- Earlier in the academic year our own Dr Joe Delaney, Consultant in Integrative Medicine, ran a series of Emotional Resilience and Wellbeing sessions for College staff.
- Several members of our ALS team gained their Level 2 Certificate in Awareness of Mental Health Problems.
- Providing Mental Health First Aid training to over 20 college staff from various departments across the college, and Mental Health Awareness training to a large number of other staff.
- We have recently appointed two new Mental Health and Wellbeing Officers to support students.

We will continue to provide a range of services and initiatives for both students and staff, to reinforce the importance of meeting the needs of all members of our college community.

Red Heart Campaign

Wirral Met have taken the pledge and are now part of the Red Heart Campaign to help eradicate hatred, xenophobia and discrimination in our communities.

The pledge:

- I will always treat others how I wish to be treated!
- I will always be supportive of differences I do not understand.
- I will always appreciate and celebrate diversity and our cultural differences.
- I will always look for ways to support my fellow citizens and help whenever I can.
- I will not look the other way if I witness hate or discrimination.



The red heart campaign will be delivering tutorials to staff and students from September 2019 and we have 4000 badges to give out across College to support the pledge.

Intergenerational projects brings together younger and older members of the community

In April 2019 our Health and Social Care department joined up with Wirral Community Health and Care Foundation Trust, and Alpha Housing Association, for the Intergenerational project.

Foundation Trust staff recognised that older people in our local communities can often feel lonely and isolated, while many younger people have limited contact with older generations. The aim of the project was to bring these generations together, break down barriers and find common ground in order to tackle loneliness and boost the health and wellbeing of everyone involved.

A group of our students visited a sheltered housing scheme in Bromborough, teaching the residents how to get to grips with modern technology. Students enjoyed helping the residents learn to use their iPads and smartphones, and also gained great communication skills and an appreciation of the value of supporting our local community.



SEND student success - Lee Charles

Lee Charles started at Wirral Met College in September 2014 having enrolled for UAL Music level 3. He is a very keen guitarist, who played in bands and studied music at school. He also has a great interest in various periods in time and cultures e.g. Punk Music, the impact they had in the past and their legacy now.

Lee has a visual impairment and cerebral palsy. Lee was anxious about moving on to College from school and it was important he was supported through this by his school, Pensby High, teachers, teaching assistants, Sensory Support Service, Lee's parents and specialist support staff at Wirral Met.

During the 18 months before he left school, a great deal of work was done to support his transition to college which included meetings with Lee and his parents, external agencies, school visits and taster music sessions in College. Lee required one to one Learning Support Assistance support when he first came to College which included note-taking, mobility and exam access arrangements. As his confidence improved this was gradually reduced over the next 2 years and he successfully achieved his Level 3 Music qualification.

Lee's confidence and self-belief had improved so much he wanted to continue with his education. Meetings were held with Lee, his parents and ALS Specialists to look at his options. BA Cultural Studies was of great interest so meetings were arranged with the course lecturers to find more in-depth information. An application was submitted and accepted, along with applying for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) which funds student support for learning difficulties/ disabilities on Higher Education (HE) courses. Working closely together with lecturers, ALS and HE support services, Lee has completed his degree. He has been an exemplary student, committed to his studies and in July 2019 Lee celebrated successfully achieving his BA (Hons) Cultural Studies and is even considering taking his studies further... maybe a Masters!



SEND Student Success - Scott Comber

Scott Comber first came to Wirral Met in September 2016, to study Bricklaying Level 1, having previously attended Kingsway Academy. He is a very hard working student, with excellent attendance and a real commitment to learning and developing new skills. Scott has moderate learning difficulties, and has an Education Health and Care Plan. Scott successfully completed his level 1 Bricklaying at our Wirral Waters Campus in July 2017 and progressed to the Bricklaying Level 2 Diploma. At the end of another very successful year, Scott passed that qualification and made the decision that he wanted to progress into employment.

With this goal in mind, Scott progressed onto our Supported Internship programme in September 2018. Peninsula Fencing in Moreton kindly agreed to provide an opportunity for Scott and in January 2019 he began working as an intern for 3 days per week, attending College for one day per week to develop his employability, maths and English skills. As with many Supported Internship students, Scott initially required the support of a Job Coach from the College, working alongside Scott to help him learn the different aspects of the job and build relationships with his colleagues. As Scott became more independent this support was gradually reduced to the point where Scott no longer requires any Job Coach support in his role. Scott's internship has been so successful that in June 2019, Peninsula Fencing offered him a job, and he is now working in a full-time paid position at the company as a General Labourer.

A fantastic achievement and very well-deserved!



Top tips for communication with deaf people

Do

- Get the deaf person's attention before starting
- Face the deaf person
- Speak clearly, at a natural pace
- Use an expressive face
- Make eye contact
- Ensure your face is in good light
- Keep your mouth visible
- Use pencil and paper if you get stuck
- Make sure the deaf person knows the topic of conversation
- Use natural gestures
- Check the deaf person has understood you before continuing
- Smile and relax!

Don't

- Start speaking if the deaf person is not looking at you
- Talk too quickly or too slowly
- Turn around or move away
- Look down or away
- Over-exaggerate your lip pattern
- Shout (this distorts your face and mouth, and can be painful for hearing aid wearers)
- Feel embarrassed
- Stand with a window or bright light behind you
- Cover your mouth
- All speak at the same time
- Switch to a new topic without warning
- Switch to a new speaker without warning
- Give up



To find out more sign up for one of our
British Sign Language courses!

Meeting students' needs

Wirral Met College offers a wide range of services to meet any additional needs students may have. We help students to overcome barriers and achieve their full potential.

Additional Learning Support (ALS)

The ALS department has a large team of highly qualified and experienced staff who support students with a range of difficulties including:

- **Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties**
- **Moderate Learning Difficulties**
- **Complex Learning Difficulties**
- **Autism Spectrum, Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, ADD**
- **Mental Health and Well Being**
- **Blind or Partial Sight**
- **D/deaf or Hard of Hearing**
- **Physical Difficulties**



Students undergo individual assessments, and have individual learning support plans. We support in many different ways, including providing equipment; additional tutorials; support in the classroom; support and extra time in exams.

Pastoral Support Mentors

Our Pastoral Support Mentors work on an individual basis with students, supporting them with many different issues including:

- **Personal/emotional problems**
- **Housing/financial issues**
- **Family issues/problems**
- **Problematic attendance/behaviour**
- **Being behind with coursework**
- **Time management/study skills**
- **Support for young parents**
- **Crisis support**



Any student can access the mentor service. We provide support to suit each individual's needs.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

By having access to this service, students who may otherwise have felt unable to carry on with their education, can continue and succeed. Our qualified Counsellors support students with a wide variety of challenges including:

- **Family problems or relationship difficulties**
- **Major life changes, unplanned pregnancy etc**
- **Pressures to do with course/exams**
- **Stress, anxiety, depression**
- **Loss and bereavement**



New facilities for students with additional needs

Every year our Additional Learning Support team provides support to over 900 students with a wide range of additional needs. We constantly review the service we provide, and adapt to the needs of our students and the feedback they give us.

Some of our students told us that they need somewhere quiet where they can access the learning support team, work quietly, or spend their break times if they are feeling overwhelmed in our busy college environment. In answer to these requests, our ALS team at the Twelve Quays campus worked with our Facilities team to set up a new base room.

The room has been set up to be a calm, relaxing environment where students can access emotional and academic support, work on their support strategies, and engage in activities such as mindfulness and sensory regulation to help them through the college day. The facility has been incredibly successful; so much so that the team are now setting up a second facility in our Conway Park campus.



Mayor and Mayoress visit Wirral Met College's STEAM Centre

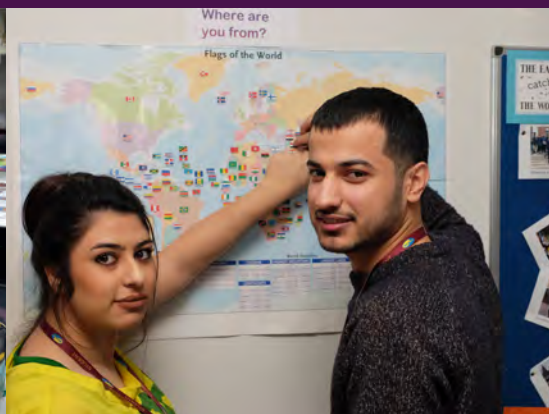


On Tuesday 16th October 2018, Wirral Met's engineering students welcomed the Mayor and Mayoress of Wirral, Councillor Geoffrey Watt and Mrs Anne Watt to the STEAM Centre at the Twelve Quays Campus. Performing Engineering Operations level 1 students have designed and built a sports wheelchair for use in wheelchair rugby sevens competitions.

Five engineering students, Richard Boston, Roy Coleman, Joshua Hibberd, Thomas Bather and Steve Hough formed a team that produced an outstanding product which meets the challenging requirements of competitive wheelchair rugby. The students initially created a sketch for the design of the wheelchair and then worked on the detailed manufacturing brief using a computer aided design programme.

Supported by industry experts DaVinci Mobility, they then researched and identified the best materials to be used, taking into account the requirements for a lightweight, flexible, robust, load bearing chair that would survive heavy knocks and crashes which form part of this competitive sport. They went on to build the wheelchair using welding techniques they have learnt on their courses and they then organised a range of tests to ensure the wheelchair was ready for use.

Wheelchair rugby player Stuart Williams put the wheelchair to the test in the charity Peacock Cup match on Sunday 7 October 2018 and was delighted with its performance.



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