



Equality and Diversity Policy

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Introduction

The College welcomes students and employees from all backgrounds and communities and operates a values-set that treats everyone fairly and with dignity and respect. It's not where you come from, but where you are going that is important while you work and study at the College.

The College strives to create an inclusive environment where everyone is treated equally, and with respect. Zero tolerance is applied to instances of discrimination, harassment or bullying of any kind and on the grounds of age, race, gender, marital status, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexuality.

The College values academic freedom and is committed to promoting and positively encouraging free debate and enquiry based on a wide range of views. The College will, however, always take firm and decisive action against anyone demonstrating any form of hate crime, including anti-Semitism, Islamophobia.

All employees and students are expected to:

- Treat all individuals fairly, with dignity and respecting different styles, skills and cultures
- Promote a work and education culture in which diversity is highly valued and embedded
- Ensure zero tolerance of all forms of discrimination, bullying and harassment
- Takes steps to resolve personal conflict as early, fairly and amicably as possible

All stakeholders (including students, staff, contractors and partners) are subject to this policy and those related to it. Employees will receive regular equality and diversity training and students will develop their understanding of these topics as an embedded part of the teaching and learning they receive for their studies. The College will regularly review its

practices to ensure continuous improvement and to remove any barriers that may restrict access to the College and the curriculum for individuals or groups.

If a student believes they have been discriminated against in any way they should raise the matter with the College via their tutors, Head of School or the College's complaints policy. Employees should raise any concerns about discrimination via their line-manager, the Human Resources team or the College's grievance procedures. All matters raised will be taken seriously and will be dealt with fairly and promptly.

Legal Framework

The College's Equality and Diversity Policy recognises the requirements and general duties of the Equality Act (2010) which requires public bodies to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people who share a protected characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of people who share a protected characteristic
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life in other activities where their participation is low

And to have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The general equality duties will be fulfilled by the College, when exercising its functions as follows:

Discrimination is recognised as when a person is treated less favourably than another

person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have. It is also recognised as potentially occurring through association to another individual who may be discriminated against because of their protected characteristic.

Harassment is recognised as unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.

Victimisation is recognised when a person experiences disadvantage because they have supported someone in making a complaint or an allegation of discrimination, or because they personally have made an allegation of discrimination.

The College recognises the definition of disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and/or long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This is recognised to include not just people with obvious physical disabilities, visual or hearing impairments, but also people with dyslexia, diabetes, epilepsy, mental health conditions or long-term illnesses that are now in remission.

Equality and Diversity Objectives

Equality and Diversity objectives and impact measures (EDIMs) are in place at both Corporate and School levels. Targets are set based on analysis of employee and student data such as, enrolments, recruitment, absence, retention, achievement, success, behaviour and performance. Performance is monitored in-year and at year end as part of routine quality monitoring and annual self-assessment processes.

The College's top-level equality objectives include:

- Ensure the College is an accessible place for people to work and learn
- Ensure equality and diversity practice is embedded in the College employee recruitment processes e.g. Blind Recruitment; Disability Compliant Scheme

- Provide students with specialist and impartial advice and guidance about their education and next steps (pre-entry and on-programme) that gives full consideration to individual circumstances
- Provide the opportunity for employees and students to disclose information relating to their protected characteristics
- Provide Equality and Diversity training to employees and students which includes Unconscious Bias, Safeguarding and Prevent
- Ensure the promotion of equality and diversity is effective across all areas of the curriculum and wider aspects of College life
- Reduce the gaps in success rates between specific groups to no greater than 5%
- Ensure students from specific groups are achieving their next step aspirations with consistent levels of success
- Provide information which allows the performance monitoring and drives prompt actions for improvement.

Monitoring & Reporting Progress

Performance against agreed indicators are monitored on a termly basis by Heads of School, Curriculum Directors and members of the leadership team. At the end of the academic year, a final performance review is undertaken as part of the College's annual self-assessment process and findings are reported in the College's Annual Equality and Diversity Report.

College policies and procedures are also reviewed annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose and are compliant with all statutory duties.

Equality and diversity practice is continually assessed in the context of feedback from employees and students as soon as it is received – formally or informally.

Policy approval arrangements

This policy is approved by the College Corporation on an annual basis.

Authorised by	Date
Recommended by the College Leadership Group	November 2022
Approved by Corporation	November 2022

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