



Policy Name and Number:	07 Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure
Version Number:	2
Approval date:	5 February 2025
SLT Lead:	Deputy Principal of Curriculum, Performance and Student Experience
a. Responsible Person for policy review: b. Responsible Manager for policy implementation (if different):	Vice Principal of Safeguarding, Behaviour, Higher Education and Academies Vice Principal of Safeguarding, Behaviour, Higher Education and Academies
How does the policy link to the Strategic Plan Aims and Themes: Aims: 1. <i>Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment</i> 2. <i>Beneficial Partnerships</i> 3. <i>Sustainable SMART Campuses</i> 4. <i>Inclusive, Thriving Community</i> 5. <i>Financial Sustainability</i> Themes: a. <i>Sustainability and the environment</i> b. <i>Happiness and wellbeing</i> c. <i>Digital transformation</i> d. <i>Equality, diversity and inclusion</i>	<p>The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy directly supports Oaklands College's strategic aims and themes by fostering an inclusive and equitable environment that enhances all aspects of College operations:</p> <p>Outstanding Teaching, Learning, and Assessment: The policy ensures that all learners and staff have equal access to high-quality education and professional development opportunities, removing barriers to achievement.</p> <p>Beneficial Partnerships: By embedding equality principles, the College fosters relationships with diverse stakeholders, including employers and community groups, ensuring mutual respect and shared goals.</p> <p>Sustainable SMART Campuses: The policy emphasises inclusivity in campus design and accessibility, contributing to sustainable environments that serve the needs of all users.</p> <p>Inclusive, Thriving Community: Central to the policy is the celebration of diversity, fostering a culture where everyone feels valued, safe, and empowered to succeed.</p> <p>Financial Sustainability: By promoting fair recruitment and retention practices, the policy enhances workforce diversity, innovation, and operational efficiency.</p> <p>Themes:</p> <p>Sustainability and the Environment: The policy aligns with sustainability by promoting equitable access to resources and fostering collaboration across diverse groups.</p> <p>Happiness and Wellbeing: It ensures that dignity, respect, and safety underpin the College's culture, contributing to the holistic wellbeing of the community.</p>

	<p>Digital Transformation: The policy advocates accessible digital platforms and inclusive technology solutions that cater to all users.</p> <p>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: As a core theme, the policy drives the College's commitment to embedding equality across all strategic initiatives and operational practices.</p>
<p>a. Related Policies and Procedures: b. Related Legislation:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Safeguarding Policy and Procedures · Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure · Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure · Recruitment and selection policy and procedure · Grievance policy and procedure · Disciplinary policy and procedure
<p>Consultation Process: <i>eg, FRCP / CPSE / HR / SPBD / SLT</i></p>	<p>HR SLT – 28 January 2025 People Committee – 5 February 2025</p>
<p>Approving Authority:</p>	<p>SLT Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporation/Committee Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Policy Review Frequency:</p>	<p>Annually</p>
<p>Effective Date:</p>	<p>17.12.2024</p>
<p>Date of Next Revision:</p>	<p>16.12.2025</p>
<p>Scope: <i>(Describe what and to whom the policy applies, and any exemptions. i.e. staff, students, stakeholders, visitors, volunteers, contractors)</i></p>	<p>The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy applies to all members of the Oaklands College community, including staff, students, governors, volunteers, contractors, and visitors. It sets the standards for fostering inclusivity and eliminating discrimination in all interactions within the College and in collaborations with external organisations. The policy ensures equitable treatment across all protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. There are no exemptions; its principles and expectations are universally applicable to uphold a consistent, respectful, and inclusive environment.</p>
<p>Policy classification:</p>	<p>Public (website): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Internal: SharePoint <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governor Portal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Canvas <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Key Updates/Changes from previous policy: <i>Update of roles and duties specified throughout the policy.</i></p>	

1. Introduction

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy reflects Oaklands College's commitment to including an inclusive community where every individual is respected and valued. It aligns with the principles of dignity, equity, and justice, ensuring that students, staff, governors, and visitors experience a supportive environment free from discrimination, harassment, and inequality. By integrating the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, the College emphasises its dedication to eliminating biases, advancing equal opportunities, and cultivating harmonious relationships across diverse groups. This policy is not only a compliance mechanism but a framework for embedding fairness and respect in all aspects of institutional life.

2. College Vision, Mission, KPIs and Objectives

The policy underpins Oaklands College's strategic objectives by promoting a culture of equality that supports its mission to inspire success through excellence. The alignment with the College's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) ensures measurable outcomes in areas such as student achievement, staff development, and community engagement. By advancing inclusivity and dismantling barriers to equality, the policy strengthens the College's vision of becoming a leading educational institution that celebrates diversity and drives progression for all stakeholders. Its objectives align with organisational goals, fostering a cohesive, high-performing community.

3. Purpose/Policy Statement

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy embodies the College's foundational principles of fairness, accessibility, and mutual respect. Its purpose is to establish actionable guidelines that address legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 while promoting inclusivity in learning, teaching, and employment. The policy aims to implement strategies that eliminate unlawful discrimination and enhance the understanding of diversity. Through its practical framework, the College aspires to create an impact that transcends compliance, building an environment where individuals thrive irrespective of their protected characteristics. This ensures equitable outcomes and supports sustained organisational development.

4. Implementation/Communication/Training

The implementation of the policy is facilitated through clear communication and robust training programs tailored to meet the needs of students, staff, and other stakeholders. Induction sessions and ongoing professional development workshops reinforce the policy's principles, ensuring widespread understanding and adherence. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) events and initiatives foster active engagement, while the integration of the policy into operational practices ensures its practical application. Additionally, the policy is made accessible via multiple platforms, such as SharePoint and the College website, to maintain transparency and inclusivity.

5. Monitoring Impact

To ensure accountability and continuous improvement, the College has established systematic monitoring mechanisms for evaluating the policy's impact. Data on student outcomes, staff recruitment practices, and grievances are analysed regularly to identify trends and address disparities. The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy Group oversees this process, providing termly reports to stakeholders. Feedback from consultations, training sessions, and the Student Voice mechanism further informs

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policy adjustments. These measures ensure that the policy remains effective and responsive to the evolving needs of the College community.

6. Scope

The commitments within this policy apply to students, staff, the Corporation, volunteers and users of the College. The policy also forms the standards the College sets for work with other organisations and visitors with regards to achieving equality, for all stakeholders.

7. Context

7.1. The Equality Act 2010 outlines our responsibilities to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

7.2 The Equality Act brings together several pieces of existing legislation and expands the number of protected groups which are now categorised according to:

- Age
- Being or becoming a transsexual person
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Disability
- Race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief and lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

7.3 This Single Equality Scheme describes our unified approach and strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across the College community, our legal obligations and how we will achieve this.

7.4 The curriculum and Student Support and Well-being teams can contribute to some key aspects of the Equality Duty, particularly in regard to promoting and celebrating diversity as part of our responsibility under the Prevent Duty

7.5 **Discrimination** - 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.

7.6 **Harassment** - when an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct which has the purpose (intentional) or effect (unintentional) of:

- violating a person's dignity, or
- creating an uncomfortable, intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

8. Strategy

8.1. Key Principles

The purpose of this Single Equality Scheme is:

- To provide guidelines for good practice in all equality, diversity and inclusion matters relating to members of the College community
- To provide guidelines in the provision of, and access to, the facilities, benefits and services that the College provides
- To highlight and keep updated on current legislation on equality, diversity and inclusion
- To raise awareness with regard to discrimination and ensure that all members of the community are aware of their responsibilities under this legislation
- To develop and deliver the Single Equality Scheme action plan that ensures that the College aspires to be outstanding in all matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion
- To ensure that all members of the College community are aware of issues relating to equality
- To ensure that all members of the College community are aware of the scheme and our action to promote choice, opportunity and progression for all
- To create an inclusive environment, underpinned by fair and impartial practices and procedures, in which all members of the community can feel valued and respected
- To ensure adherence to relevant College procedures

9. Developing the Scheme

- 9.1. We will seek the views of students on equality-related issues on an annual basis, to ensure that we are focusing on issues and developments that are relevant and of benefit to the students, mainly through the Student Voice mechanism and through analysis of the data collected on student performance. Feedback from participants in equality, diversity and inclusion related events will also be considered.
- 9.2. We will continue to use a variety of methods to consult with staff. We will ensure that staff are regularly updated and invited to comment on equality related matters to ensure that the Scheme remains relevant and addresses any areas of concern.
- 9.3. We will continue to consult with wider communities across the group (employers, contractors and key stakeholders) to ensure that all of our partners are aware of our commitments and expectations in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. The equality, diversity and inclusion strategy group will also continue to be a forum for determining the strategic direction of equality, diversity and inclusion related issues and membership is refreshed annually, to ensure that all objectives are met.

10. Meeting our Duties

- 10.1. We will seek to ensure that Governors, staff, students and stakeholders are aware of our Single Equality Scheme and the actions needed for its implementation and their own particular responsibilities in relation to the Single Equality Scheme. (See **Appendix A.**)

11. Equality and Eliminating Discrimination

- 11.1. We will aim to eliminate unlawful discrimination and break down institutional barriers before they can impact on people. We will aim to remove any unforeseen barriers, swiftly and sensitively, as soon as they become apparent.
- 11.2. See **Appendix B** for full details of the College's specific commitments in relation to the nine protected characteristics.
- 11.3. **Appendix K** provides information relating to legislation across all equality strands.

12. Harassment and Bullying

We aim to foster an environment in which all members of the College community can work and study effectively. Harassment and bullying is not acceptable, even if it forms part of an isolated incident. The College will eliminate all forms of harassment and bullying, should they become apparent. See **Appendix C** for definitions and brief guidance.

13. Monitoring and Reporting Our Progress

We will collect and analyse data to measure our progress towards the values set out in this Scheme. Monitoring information will be distributed each term to members of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group for information and planning purposes. **Appendix D** details the information we will collect, analyse and monitor.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

- 14.1. The Executive Director People and Culture and the Deputy Principal Curriculum, Performance & Student Experience are responsible for leading on equality, diversity and Inclusion across the College; however the whole College community has a duty and responsibility to abide by the key principles contained in this scheme.
- 14.2. See **Appendix E** for full details of roles and responsibilities across all activities.

15. Good Practice in Staffing Issues

We will continue to ensure that all current and prospective staff are treated equitably, justly, fairly and without discrimination in their working lives, by applying all equalities legislation to our Human Resources practices. We will continue to screen our policies for equality impact, as appropriate, and will take action where necessary. We will also continue to promote equality of opportunity through our recruitment procedures, including the use of positive action and the monitoring of retention of staff. **Appendix F** details our specific commitments to staffing issues.

16. Training

Both compulsory and non-compulsory equality, diversity and inclusion training programmes will be provided to support the Single Equality Scheme. This involves everyone throughout the College (Governors, students, and all staff). Promoting equality, diversity and Inclusion will become a part of induction for all new staff and students. Training events for all will be publicised and monitored as part of the

College's quality review of staff and students' development. (See **Appendix H** for further information).

17. Implementing The Equality Duty

17.1. The College will consider the needs of all individuals (staff, students, visitors, stakeholders, contractors, suppliers and visitors) when shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to employment. We will ensure that our decision making is robust, transparent and that we have fully considered the impact of our proposal on all equality groups. Having a sound decision making process not only fulfils our statutory requirements but also ensures that we are better placed to deliver policies and services that are inclusive, efficient and effective. While the Equality Act does not explicitly require Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to be conducted, we will consciously consider the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision making.

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

17.2 The following principles explain what is essential in order for the Equality Duty to be fulfilled when making decisions:

1. Knowledge – staff need to be aware of the requirements of the Equality Duty. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves staff knowing exactly what is expected of them and how they can achieve the College's expectations of them.
2. Timeliness – the Equality Duty must be complied with before and at the time that a particular policy is under consideration or decision is taken – that is, in the development of policy options, and in making a final decision.
3. Real consideration – consideration of the three aims of the Equality Duty must form an integral part of the decision-making process. We must prove that we have given the proposal serious and rigorous consideration and applied 'due regard.' We must also show that the process has influenced the final decision.
4. Sufficient information – the decision maker must consider what information they have and what further information may be needed in order to give proper consideration to the Equality Duty. The EIA is conducted by completing five main questions:
 1. Aims and objectives of the proposal
 2. Outcomes and impacts of the proposal
 3. Minimising the negative impacts
 4. Maximising the positive impacts
 5. Incorporating or disregarding feedback.

17.3 During the decision making process the writer or owner of the policy must ensure that they have:

- Not unlawfully discriminated
- Engaged with stakeholders
- Engaged in an evidenced based decision making process
- Paid due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duties.
- Considered the impact of the proposal on equality groups

18. Publicity and Awareness of the Single Equality Scheme

The College will ensure that all staff, students, visitors, stakeholders, contractors and suppliers are made aware of our Single Equality Scheme and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and will be publicly available on our website. The Scheme will be drawn to the attention of students and staff at induction and new staff will be expected to subscribe to it at the time of appointment. The College will continuously develop its methods of publicising the scheme to students.

19. Positive Action to Promote Choice, Opportunity and Progression

19.1. We will continue to ensure equality of access to the delivery of our programmes of learning. We will ensure that all members of the College community can learn, teach, train and succeed in a mutually supportive environment. We will also continue to ensure equality of access to employment through the use of positive action, where appropriate, and within the scope of the Equality Act 2010. Applicants for posts at the College are routinely asked prior to interview if special adaptations to enable participation are required; those applicants with a protected characteristic are guaranteed an interview for a post if they meet the essential requirements.

19.1.1. **Appendix G** details our specific commitments to procurement.

19.1.2. See **Appendix I** for our specific commitments to promoting choice, opportunity and progression.

20. Complaints relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

20.1. Staff and students will be made aware of the complaints procedures via induction. Copies of the Single Equality Scheme and Complaints Procedure will be made available around the College (in receptions, digital learning environment, offices and on the College websites) and to any member of the College community on request.

20.2. We will monitor the equality data of complainants, whenever possible, and use this information to ensure that there are no discrepancies in the level or type of complaints from different equality groups.

20.3. An electronic copy of this document can be downloaded from the College websites.

20.4. Please contact the College on 01727 737000 for information on how to make a complaint or email us at info@oaklands.ac.uk

20.5. See **Appendix J** for further information regarding complaints.

21. What happens if the Single Equality Scheme is not adhered to?

21.1. Oaklands College will not tolerate behaviour which breaches its Single Equality Scheme and will initiate action which may be the provision of support and training, or action of a disciplinary nature (where appropriate) against those who do not meet the standards of behaviour required.

21.2. Behaviour which breaches the Single Equality Scheme may include:

- Acts of willful, unfair and unjustified discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying against members of the College community

- Acts of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying by contractors, visitors to the College, members of the College community or members of the public.

22. Consultation and Communication

22.1. As we continue to develop the scheme we will consult with a range of stakeholders (for example):

- Students
- Parents
- Staff
- Governors
- Employers
- Community and voluntary groups

22.2 Our stakeholders will be informed of events, developments and initiatives, as they arise. We will develop a number of specific events throughout the year which will help us to achieve our equality duties and gather feedback from our stakeholders.

23. Key definitions/glossary

24. Equality

Ensuring that individuals or groups are not treated less favourably due to characteristics such as age, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Equality focuses on creating a level playing field by providing equal opportunities for all.

25. Diversity

Recognising, valuing, and embracing differences among people in terms of backgrounds, skills, experiences, and perspectives. Diversity enhances the richness of the College community by fostering inclusivity and innovation.

26. Inclusion

Creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and able to contribute fully. Inclusion involves actively removing barriers to participation and ensuring that all individuals are supported in achieving their potential.

27. Protected Characteristics

27.1. Defined under the **Equality Act 2010**, these are specific attributes safeguarded against discrimination. They include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins)

- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

28. Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic. It includes:

- 28.1. **Direct Discrimination:** Overtly treating someone unfairly due to a protected characteristic.
- 28.2. **Indirect Discrimination:** Applying a policy or practice that disadvantages a group with a protected characteristic, even if unintentionally.
- 28.3. **Discrimination by Association:** Treating someone unfairly because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- 28.4. **Discrimination by Perception:** Treating someone unfairly because they are mistakenly perceived to have a protected characteristic.

29. Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.

30. Bullying

Unjustified and inappropriate behaviour that undermines, intimidates, or humiliates an individual. Although not necessarily tied to a protected characteristic, bullying breaches the College's standards of conduct.

31. Victimisation

Treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under the Equality Act 2010.

32. Reasonable Adjustments

Changes or accommodations made to remove or reduce disadvantages experienced by individuals with disabilities. This may include physical alterations, adjustments in teaching methods, or flexible work arrangements.

33. Equality Duty

A legal obligation under the **Equality Act 2010** requiring the College to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between those with protected characteristics and others.

34. Positive Action

Measures taken to improve equality by addressing disadvantages, meeting different needs, or encouraging participation of under-represented groups, provided these measures are proportionate and lawful.

35. Single Equality Scheme

Oaklands College's comprehensive framework for integrating and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of its operations, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

36. Institutional Discrimination

Collective failure of an organisation to provide appropriate services or opportunities due to policies, procedures, or practices that disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics.

37. Prevent Duty

The statutory duty under the **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015** requiring institutions to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism, while promoting inclusivity and safeguarding diversity.

38. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

A systematic process to identify the potential effects of policies, procedures, or decisions on equality groups, ensuring that the College meets its legal and ethical responsibilities.

Appendix A - Appendix A - Meeting our Duties

- Ensuring awareness of our Single Equality Scheme to ensure success and responsibilities are met.
- Staff, students, contractors (including subcontractors), suppliers and stakeholders are aware of the value placed upon equality of opportunity and that action will be taken in the event of any breach of the Scheme.
- Governors and staff have access to relevant and appropriate information which assists them to plan, implement and monitor actions to carry out their responsibilities under the Scheme.
- The College's publicity materials present appropriate and positive messages about age, disability, gender identity, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and cultural diversity.
- Schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity and positive promotion of age, disability, gender identity, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and cultural diversity issues.
- All students can access appropriate support and facilities.
- Applicants for employment are drawn from a wide pool, with positive action, where appropriate, to encourage applications from under-represented groups.
- Recruitment and promotion procedures are designed and implemented to eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Staff development schemes are designed to meet the particular needs and enhance the skills of individuals of all under-represented groups.

Appendix B - Our Equalities Commitments

Sex Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of sex.
- Advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between men and women.
- Monitoring any gender pay gaps and taking action, as appropriate.
- Gathering and using information on how the College's policies and practices affect sex equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services to students and staff.
- Consulting with stakeholders and taking account of relevant information in order to determine sex equality objectives.
- Assessing the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on sex equalities

Race Equality Commitments (also includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality).

We are committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation relating to race, ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations between persons of different racial or ethnic groups, national origins or nationalities
- Putting in place arrangements for implementing this scheme, publicising its contents and the results of its monitoring and effectiveness
- Assessing the impact of its policies on students and staff of different racial groups, ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality

Disability Equality Commitments

The College has adopted the social model of disability which promotes the right of a disabled person to belong, to be valued, to choose and to make decisions. In adopting this model, we accept that we will have to strive to remove barriers created by attitudes, systems and practices that prevent participation by disabled persons.

We are committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation of disabled persons that is related to their disability, including treating a person unfairly due to disability related sickness absence
- Advancing equality of opportunity for disabled people
- Fostering good relations
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encouraging participation by disabled persons in public life
- Ensuring that all reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
- Taking steps to take account for a person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons
- Gathering and using information on how the College's policies and practices affect the educational opportunities available to, and on the achievements of, disabled students and staff

Age Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Advancing equality of opportunity for people of all ages
- Fostering good relations
- Eliminating discrimination harassment and victimisation related to age
- Creating a working environment underpinned by fair and equitable practices and procedures in which all members of the community feel comfortable
- Actively tackling age discrimination whether overt, covert or by omission
- Eliminating any criterion, provision or practice that disadvantages people of a particular age, unless it can be objectively justified

Sexual Orientation Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Advancing equality of opportunity for people of all sexual orientations
- Fostering good relations
- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sexual orientation
- Working with other institutions, local communities and other partners to eliminate discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation and to encourage and promote good practice

Gender Identity Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Advancing equality of opportunity for transgendered people.
- Fostering good relations
- Embedding systemic action to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to gender identity
- Promoting gender identity equality widely and consistently, alongside other equality strands
- Working with other institutions, local communities and others, to tackle gender discrimination and to encourage and promote good practice
- Ensuring that a person who is undergoing gender reassignment is entitled to use the facilities (including toilets and changing areas) that are appropriate for their own gender identity. The wishes of the person undergoing gender reassignment will be taken into consideration in all cases.

Faith, Religion or Belief Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Advancing equality of opportunity for people of different religions or beliefs, or of no belief
- Fostering good relations
- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to religion or belief, or nonbelief
- Actively tackling discrimination regarding religion or belief/non-belief, whether overt, covert or by omission
- Eliminating religious harassment (unwanted behaviour based on religion and which includes proselytising i.e. seeking to convert others to a particular religion or sect)
- Working with other institutions, local communities and others to tackle discrimination regarding religion or belief/non-belief and to encourage and promote good practice
- Providing a quiet /prayer room facility for use by all faiths and none

Pregnancy and Maternity Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Advancing equality of opportunity for women who are pregnant or have given birth in the last 26 weeks or are breastfeeding (including female students of any age)
- Fostering good relations
- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to pregnancy and maternity
- Providing a quiet room or facility for breastfeeding

Marriage and Civil Partnership

We are committed to:

- Treating civil partners in the same way as married people in employment and training. Any benefits given to married employees will also be offered to civil partners, including flexible working, statutory paternity pay, paternity and adoption leave, health insurance and survivor pensions

Appendix C - Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying

Harassment

The Equality Act 2010 states that there are three types of harassment that are unlawful:

- Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic
- Sexual harassment
- Less favourable treatment of a person because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex.

Harassment occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted behaviour which is related to one or more of the protected characteristics, which has either the purpose or the effect of:

- Violating a person's dignity
- Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment
- Unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour.

A person does not have to say that they object to the behaviour for it to be unwanted. Behaviour associated with harassment can take many forms and is defined as unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. (See the table below for examples).

Harassment Related to a Protected Characteristic

Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic means harassment based on: age, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, marriage and civil partnership and religion or belief. "Related to" means and includes situations where a person who is subjected to the unwanted behaviour does not share the protected characteristic themselves but there is a connection between the behaviour and the protected characteristic.

For example:

A student might complain of harassment, in a classroom setting, because a member of staff comments that 'all men are useless', even if the comments were not directed at that student. Sexual Harassment occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted behaviour, which is of a sexual nature and which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

It is also unlawful to treat a person less favourably because they either submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to their sex.

See examples of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature.

Behaviour Example Sexual nature

Including but not limited to:

- Physical assault, pushing, standing too close, intimidating stance, threats of violence.
- Inappropriate touching, sexual assault, coercion of sexual acts
- Verbal shouting, offensive emails, phone conversations, text messages, comments or jokes
- Sexual jokes, emails or comments
- Non-verbal hostility, display of offensive pictures and photographs

- Pornographic photographs or drawings

All members of the College community, staff and students alike, by their own behaviour and their response to others, are legally responsible for helping to ensure that individuals do not suffer any form of harassment and that they are encouraged and supported in making complaints. Difficulty in deciding what constitutes harassment should not deter anyone from complaining of behaviour that they find offensive or distressing. The College will, however, take willfully false allegations very seriously and may take disciplinary action as a result.

The Equality Act states that it is not necessary for a person to immediately say that the behaviour that they object to is unwanted for the behaviour to be construed as harassment. Some behaviour, that causes offence or distress, may be conscious or deliberate or may arise from thoughtlessness or insensitivity. In either case, the person causing harassment should be given a clear signal that his or her behaviour is unacceptable. This may be done directly or through a suitable third party. No one should be deterred from complaining of behaviour, which distresses him or her, by embarrassment, intimidation or fear of publicity. The need for confidentiality will be respected wherever possible.

Bullying is unjustified and inappropriate behaviour which is threatening or humiliating. Discrimination is any action, which deprives an individual of rights or opportunities. It may be either direct or indirect, by association, or by perception.

Direct discrimination occurs when you treat a person less favourably than you treat (or would treat) another person because of a protected characteristic and this is done deliberately or unjustifiably. Discrimination based on association also occurs when you treat an individual less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy/maternity). This might occur when you treat a student less favourably because their sibling, parent, carer or friend has a protected characteristic.

Discrimination based on perception also occurs when you treat someone less favourably because you mistakenly think that they have a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy and maternity). Discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity is the treatment of a woman less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger. It is direct sex discrimination to treat a woman less favourably because she is breastfeeding a child who is more than 26 weeks old.

Discrimination arising from disability is treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when this cannot be justified, and failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Indirect discrimination occurs when you apply an unjustifiable provision, criteria or practice in the same way for all people or a particular group of people, but this has the effect of those people who share a protected characteristic within the general group, being subject to a particular disadvantage. It doesn't matter that you did not intend to cause a disadvantage with a particular protected characteristic. What does matter is whether your action does or would disadvantage people compared with people who do not share that characteristic. 'Disadvantage' within the College could mean denial of an opportunity or choice, deterrence, rejection or exclusion.

Indirect pregnancy and maternity discrimination are not covered under the equality act although it could be included in the definition of direct sex discrimination. Institutional Discrimination is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their protected characteristics.

Appendix D - Monitoring Our Progress

To inform the setting of targets and the measurement of our progress in achieving them, we will collect as a basic minimum and analyse the following information in 2023/24:

For students:

- Gender, disability, age and ethnic profiles of students (Director of Quality)
- Applications and conversion rates for admission to programmes across any groups (Marketing Director)
- Retention rates across all groups (Director of Quality)
- Achievement rates of all groups (Director of Quality)
- The progression rates of all groups (Marketing Director)
- Work placements across all groups (Director of Business Engagement)
- Behaviour management action relating to all groups (VP Student Support & Progression)
- Complaints by students or their sponsors (Director of Quality)
- Assessment appeals by all groups (Director of Quality)

For staff: (Vice Principal of HR and Organisational Development)

- Disability, gender, age, ethnic profiles of staff in post, by job family and type of work
- Applications for employment and appointments,
- Selection success rates
- Type of contract (permanent, temporary) by group
- Promotion rates of all groups
- Disciplinary proceedings for all groups
- The number of staff who benefit or suffer detriment as a result of performance assessment procedures e.g. including appraisal, capability proceedings by group
- Grievances by group
- Satisfaction surveys by group
- The number of staff who cease employment by group
- Gender pay gaps (See Appendix L)

The information will be used to:

- Decide whether there are differences in the way different groups are treated
- Decide if there are any gaps in recruitment, attainment and success of different groups of students
- Decide if there are any gaps in recruitment and pay for staff
- Investigate the underlying reasons for any differences
- Identify areas where specific action could be taken and ensure that it is taken
- Highlight any unfairness, disadvantage or possible discrimination and take action where appropriate.
- Develop and monitor the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan
- Compare College data to local and national statistics in order to identify success and areas for improvement

Appendix E - Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Making sure the College complies with the Single Equality Scheme and meets all public sector equality duties
- Making sure the Single Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Governor is responsible for:

- Updating the Governing Body on strategic equality, diversity and inclusion matters and providing a link role for communication
- Challenge and hold to account the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion “management teams”
- Attendance at meetings of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group
- Participating in the formulation of strategy relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Chief Executive and Principal and Senior Management Team are responsible for:

- Giving a consistent and high profile lead on all equality, diversity and inclusion issues
- Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion inside and outside the institution
- Making sure the Single Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed

The Strategic Lead is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating work on equality, diversity and inclusion
- Publishing monitoring information and the Annual Report
- Reviewing and developing the Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan

The Vice Principal of Quality, Student Experience and Progression:

- Supplying accurate data and monitoring information, including reports relating to student achievement and supporting monitoring and report creation

The Executive Director of People and Culture for:

- Ensuring that the College staffing profile is more reflective of sector averages, where reasonable and appropriate
- Producing reports detailing staffing information relating to demographic profiles, including staff profile, pay gaps, grievances and disciplinary action
- Co-ordinating equality, diversity and inclusion related training for staff
- The use of positive action in recruitment, when appropriate

Managers are responsible for:

- Putting the Scheme and its strategies and procedures into practice
- Making sure that all staff know their responsibilities, and receive support and training in carrying these out
- Following the relevant procedures and investigating staff or students who may be discriminating unlawfully

All staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with equality, diversity and inclusion incidents and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- Consistently challenging any inappropriate language or behaviour of staff and students
- Promoting equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination and fostering good relations
- Taking up training and learning opportunities as advised

- Ensuring that they report any incidents that contravene this scheme to their manager or other appropriate member of staff

All contractors and service providers, including subcontractors, are responsible for:

- Being aware of our Single Equality Scheme
- Following the Single Equality Scheme and any equality conditions in contracts or agreements

Students are responsible for ensuring that:

- They attend induction, enrichment and tutorial activities concerning equality and diversity and fulfil their responsibilities towards other students and members of staff
- Their coursework reflects sensitivity to issues of equality and diversity and does not include any discriminatory content
- They refer cases of inappropriate behaviour by any staff, visitors or fellow students to a member of staff, act as good role models to peers and challenge inappropriate behaviour where they are confident in so doing

Appendix F - Staffing (Executive Director of People and Culture)

We will:

- Operate a recruitment process that is based on equality of opportunity for all
- Advertise all vacancies in the appropriate medium and have regard to the staff profile and its imbalances in terms of age, disability, gender and ethnicity
- Ensure a consistent approach to the interpretation of staff documentation (e.g. contracts of employment) and implementation of policies and procedures across the College
- Monitor and review, through our quality assurance processes, that equal opportunities during employment are adhered to
- Treat all staff with dignity and respect, valuing the contribution of each member of staff
- Monitor the composition of staff and job applicants across the College and in each department/service by gender, ethnicity, age and disability and address identified imbalances and under representation
- Use positive action where appropriate
- Ensure there is no direct or indirect discrimination in all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment, pay, working conditions, training, promotion, dismissal, references and pensions
- Monitor and report on the equality information of staff leaving employment

Appendix G - Procurement (Director of Finance)

We will:

- Ensure that all partners, contractors and consultants are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in service provision
- Ensure our procurement policy does not exclude smaller groups and that consultants and contractors demonstrate good practice and sign up to the organisation’s policies
- Ensure that suppliers and contractors are aware of and comply with the College’s Single Equality Scheme, including through the tender process
- Include equality clauses in all contracts and service specifications

Appendix H - Training (Learning & Development Manager)

Training will be developed to allow maximum flexibility and to be reactive to departmental need, changes in legislation and external events. It will be comprised of a range of specialist training events, underpinned by an online, certificated ACAS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion’ mandatory programme. At the end of each academic year the content of relevant courses will be reviewed and a further detailed plan will be developed.

Monitoring: All approved staff training is recorded and attendance monitored via Human Resources.

Appendix I - Our Commitment to Promoting Choice, Opportunity and Progression

(Deputy Principal Strategy, Partnership & Business Development)

We will:

- Operate an Admissions Scheme which is based on the ability to succeed and does not involve unduly restrictive conditions or requirements
- Review the information that we provide about our programmes to ensure that it is clear, contains relevant facts and is easily understood by all potential students
- Seek to make staff more aware of the cultural assumptions, stereotypes and biases which may exist within curriculum materials and assessment methods, and encourage and support them in developing curriculum materials which reflect a wider range of experience and culture
- Monitor the composition of the student body in each curriculum area by gender, ethnicity, age and disability and address identified imbalance and under representation
- Monitor the achievement of students by gender, ethnicity, age and disability and seek to address identified imbalances
- Ensure, through our quality assurance policies, that equal opportunities issues are addressed in the design and delivery of learning programmes
- Review our portfolio of programmes to ensure that the range of opportunities provided reflects the needs of all sections of the community
- Reserve the right to refuse admission to our premises or any of our courses on the grounds of security, safety or breach of the Single Equality Scheme.

Appendix J - Complaints (Vice Principal of Quality, Student Experience and Progression)

All incidents and complaints of an equal opportunities nature, however informal, should be logged with the Quality department, anonymously if necessary, showing the nature of the complaint and any outcome. Such a record should be kept, even if the individuals concerned did not wish to make the matter formal. The College will monitor all complaints on a regular basis. For those who wish to make a formal complaint, full details of how to do this can be found in the College's Complaints Procedure, which is available on the College's Intranet, at receptions and on our website.

Appendix K - Legislation

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act updates, simplifies and strengthens the previous equality legislation. It covers employment, facilities, goods, services and education, including the admission and treatment of students.

The act makes it unlawful for to discriminate against people based on nine protected characteristics

- Age
- Gender Reassignment (being or becoming a transsexual person)
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Disability
- Race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief and lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Age

The Act defines age by reference to a person's age group. An "age group" can:

- Refer to people of the same age or a range of ages
- Be wide, such as 'people under 25'
- Be narrow, such as people born in 1976
- Be relative, such as 'a person older than me' or 'younger than me'
- Be linked to an actual or assumed physical appearance

Disability

A person is a disabled person under the act if they have 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' There is no need for the person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matter is the impairment and not the cause. Colleges have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities and cannot unlawfully discriminate, harass or victimise people because of their disability.

Aids and HIV

Aids and HIV is a health issue that often attracts widespread publicity and high levels of stigma as a result of misinformation, fear and prejudice. The College will regard AIDS in the same way as any other serious illness or disability. The College will ensure that staff and students are well informed about HIV/Aids through the work of tutorials and effective partnership work. The College will support those individuals who have AIDS or HIV infection through the provision of medical and welfare advice.

Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment is defined as a personal rather than a medical process which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with.

A person will be protected because of gender reassignment where they:

- Make their intention know to someone
- Propose to undergo gender reassignment surgery (even if it is not completed)
- On starting gender reassignment surgery
- Start or continue to dress, behave or live according to their gender identity
- Undergo any treatment related to gender reassignment
- They receive gender recognition under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

Trans Equality

A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process (or part of a process) to change his or her sex from their 'birth' sex. This process can be referred to as 'Gender Reassignment'.

Transvestites (sometimes known as 'cross-dressers') are not transsexual because they do not intend to live permanently in the gender opposite to their birth sex and, therefore, are not protected by The Equality Act. However, they would be protected from direct discrimination and harassment, if this is experienced because someone thinks that they are transsexual, even if that is not the case. The College is committed to preventing discrimination and harassment, in addition to advancing and promoting equality for Trans persons. This commitment extends to individuals that are perceived to be Trans, when in fact they are not (discrimination by perception), and to individuals that are associated with a Trans person (discrimination by association).

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated no less favourably than married couples.

All employees are protected against discrimination on the basis of marriage or civil partnership. However, being married or in a civil partnership is not a protected characteristic for Further Education colleges.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

The act defines race as a person's

- Colour and/or Nationality
- Ethnic or national origin
- Racial group – a group of people that share a colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin.

Religion or belief

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. For a religion to be protected, it must have a clear structure and belief system. "Belief" means any religious or philosophical belief and includes lack of belief. For a belief to be protected under the equality act:

- It must be genuinely held
- It must be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on the information available at the moment
- It must be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour
- It must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance
- It must be worthy in a democratic society
- It must be compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights or others.

Sex

Unlawful sex discrimination happens when someone is treated unfairly because of their gender. Women, men and transsexual people can all experience sex discrimination. Sex discrimination also includes treating someone less favourably because they are married or in a civil partnership: for example, by not hiring married women.

Sexual Orientation

The law protects people from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientations towards people of the same sex, people of the opposite-sex, or people of both sexes. This means they protect lesbian women, gay men, bisexual people and heterosexual people in employment, services, and education.

Positive action provisions

Students with protected characteristics may be disadvantaged for social or economic reasons or for reasons to do with past or present discrimination. The Act contains provisions which enable education providers to take action to tackle the particular disadvantage, different needs or disproportionately low participation of a particular group of students, provided certain conditions are met. These are known as the positive action provisions and allow (but do not require) education providers to take proportionate action to remedy the disadvantage faced by particular groups of students. Such action could include targeted provision or resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged student group. Employers are allowed by law, to take positive action to help redress any imbalances that may have arisen in the workplace as a result of past discrimination or disadvantage. The aim of positive action is to ensure that people from previously excluded groups have the opportunity to compete on equal terms with other applicants.

Other British and European Legislation and Directives

Legislation and case law in the area of Equality of Opportunity is constantly changing. Other key documents include:

- The Working Time Directive
- The Employment Rights Act 1999
- Health & Safety at Work Act
- The EEC Equal Treatment Directive
- The EU Social Chapter
- Part Time Workers Directive
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Appendix L - Gender Pay Gap Reporting (Executive Director of People and Culture)

This will be published as part of the Annual EDI Report

