

Equality and Diversity Policy

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Scope and Purpose

1. Policy Statement

Equality and diversity is central to all we do.

- 1.1 Wiltshire College recognises and encourages the valuable and enriching contribution of all who work and learn within the College and the rights of all individuals who come into contact with the College, such as prospective students, job applicants, visitors and other stakeholders.
- 1.2 We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity, respecting and celebrating differences, eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and fostering good relations, between all who work or learn at Wiltshire College, or use our services.
- 1.3 We recognise that all have a right to equality of opportunity and are particularly mindful of the nine protected characteristics identified by the Equality Act 2010.
 - Race
 - Disability
 - Sex
 - Age
 - Sexual orientation
 - Religion and belief
 - Gender re-assignment
 - Pregnancy/maternity
 - Marriage/civil partnership
- 1.4 We are committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and fostering good relations between all who work or learn at Wiltshire College, or use our services.
- 1.5 Other aspects of a person's identity, background or circumstances can cause that person to experience discrimination, for example socio-economic status, class or background. The College is committed to advancing equality and eliminating discrimination on these and other grounds.
- 1.6 All College students, staff and stakeholders will be made aware of Wiltshire College's Equality and Diversity Policy, through the Student Handbook, student, staff and governor induction programmes and visitor arrangements.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The Equality and Diversity Policy of Wiltshire College is underpinned by principles to which all College staff, students and stakeholders should adhere, namely:
 - The creation and maintenance of an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff and students are recognised and valued
 - That successful implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy is the responsibility of all College staff, students and stakeholders
 - All students, staff and other stakeholders of the College will be treated with fairness, respect and sensitivity

- The creation and maintenance of a working and learning environment where all will have the opportunity to fully participate in order to achieve their full potential in a climate free from discrimination, bullying or harassment
 - Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all students and staff.
 - We will regularly review our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness
 - This policy is fully supported by Senior Managers and has been approved by the Governing Body of the College.
- 2.2 The College's Core Values will embed equality and diversity in their implementation, namely:
- Putting the student first
 - Delivering outstanding quality and innovation
 - Celebrating and respecting diversity
 - Empowering staff to maximise their potential
 - Providing an outstanding and responsive service to customers, employers and the community.
- 2.3 The College actively promotes British Values through tutorial and classroom delivery using the following key themes
- Democracy
 - The rule of law
 - Individual liberty
 - Respect and tolerance
- 2.4 All staff will be required to attend development opportunities to ensure that they are aware of and adhere to the College's Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 2.5 The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.
- 2.6 The Equality Act 2010 recognises the following types of discrimination (please see appendix 1 for further information):
- Direct discrimination, including associative and perception discrimination
 - Indirect discrimination
 - Harassment
 - Victimisation
 - Discrimination arising from disability
 - Failure to make reasonable adjustments.

3. Accountability

- 3.1 All staff, students, contractors and visitors to the College are made aware of the policy. Where staff or students are working at premises other than College locations they will be subject to the policy. The policy covers behaviour in the virtual learning environment (eStudy), by email and other social media. Breaches of this

policy will be taken seriously and may lead to disciplinary proceedings.

- 3.2 The College has a role in promoting good practice in equality and diversity in the workplace. Work-based assessors will monitor equality and diversity through progress reviews, meetings with students and employers/workplace supervisors. The College expects that an employer with a work-based or placement student will have an Equality and Diversity policy. The College will work alongside its partner employers to improve equality and diversity in the workplace and to eliminate discrimination.

Specifically:

- **Governors are responsible for ensuring that:**
 - they are aware of and take ownership of the College's responsibilities as outlined in this policy and equality legislation
 - they review College equality and diversity information and consider this with regards to setting targets for the College.
 - they consider the diversity of the Corporation and how this compares to the student population
 - before any major strategic decisions are made, the Corporation considers equality issues
- **The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that:**
 - The College's Strategic Plan encompasses our commitment to equality of Opportunity and action plans deliver equality
 - The quality improvement plan has equality at its core
 - The College recruits and retains an inclusive and diverse workforce which is appropriately developed to ensure each individual has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Equality Objectives deliver aspects of equality that apply most to the College
 - Equality impact assessments are conducted for major decisions and changes and to ensure that all policies have been written and maintained so that their outcomes are fair and non-discriminatory. It is intended that this policy is fair to all. Where any part could potentially lead to unequal outcomes, the policy then justifies why this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **The College Management Team is responsible for ensuring that:**
 - They promote this policy amongst their staff and ensure compliance
 - Actions within their departments contribute towards the College meeting its Public Sector Duties
 - All programmes of learning offered, will be regularly reviewed through the SAR and curriculum planning processes. They will examine how far they meet the needs of all students with particular reference to equality of opportunity
 - Students' participation, attendance and success is monitored throughout the year and early remedial action is taken.
 - They take appropriate action where necessary to assist minority or under-represented groups to increase participation, retention

and achievement tailored to any patterns within curriculum areas (e.g. gender bias)

- Teaching observation reports include an evaluation of how successfully equality and diversity is embedded and advanced
 - Internal verification procedures include scrutiny of equality and diversity.
 - Schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources of staff within their areas are reviewed against the commitments within this policy and take action to make improvements or adjustments accordingly
 - Business Support areas analyse their service and resources against the commitments within this policy and take action to make improvements or adjustments accordingly, accounting for equality in their SAR.
- **Staff are responsible for ensuring that:**
 - They are aware of this policy and their duties in relation to all of the protected characteristics and the College's Public Sector Duties under the Equality Act
 - They demonstrate sensitivity to issues of diversity and that they attend and complete staff training to help their understanding of the issues in this area
 - Whatever their role, they challenge, within their ability, inappropriate behaviour of any person wherever it might occur within the College or during its activities
 - Visitors and contractors are made aware of and comply with the policy
 - They conduct themselves throughout their employment in a way that positively supports this policy and protects the College's reputation
 - Students have the opportunity to comment on equality and diversity issues.
 - **Students are responsible for ensuring that:**
 - They attend induction, enrichment and tutorial activities to expand their knowledge of equality and diversity.
 - Their coursework reflects sensitivity to issues of equality and diversity and does not include any discriminatory content
 - They do not use any College equipment or resources to produce or research material in such a way that could be considered discriminatory or in opposition to the commitments within this policy
 - 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.

4. Monitoring

- 4.1 The effectiveness of the Equality and Diversity Policy in ensuring we are meeting our commitments, will be monitored through the regular collection and analysis of data that should be as unobtrusive to individuals as possible, commensurate with this objective.

- 4.2 Corporate monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the Equality and Diversity Policy will be the responsibility of the Senior Management Team and will be undertaken on its behalf by the Performance and Quality Group. Curriculum Areas and Functions will be responsible for the gathering and analysis of data as required by the Senior Management Team.
- 4.3 Outcomes from analysis of information collated will inform self-assessment processes and College improvement plans. The quality of the promotion of Equality and Diversity will be assessed through self-assessment reports, internal and external verification and observation of teaching and learning.
- 4.4 A set of Equality Objectives will be agreed and an action plan drawn up to help ensure that these are achieved. The College will publish annually on our website a College Equality Report which will summarise the outcomes of the monitoring activities, highlight progress towards the achievement of the objectives and report on the College's overall performance in regard to equality and diversity.

5. Stakeholders

5.1 Active advancement through publicity and marketing

- The image the College projects of itself in its promotional material, advertising and public relations activity, sends messages about the College's approach to equality and diversity
- College publicity will be regularly reviewed to ensure that:
 - i) it is non-discriminatory to any group or individual
 - ii) it is provided in hard copy and electronic forms to ensure that information is widely available and accessible by individuals with a range of needs
 - iii) it gives a positive image of a place which welcomes all for education and training
 - iv) where groups might be under-represented applications from members of disadvantaged/under represented groups are actively encouraged.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that appropriate publicity reaches all groups in the community, enabling the widest possible recruitment.
- All College users and potential College users should be made aware of:
 - i) study support
 - ii) support for child care
 - iii) the services available within the College to support Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
 - iv) the College counselling and guidance services;
 - v) the availability of careers guidance.
 - vi) financial support
 - vii) the admissions process

5.2 Access to the Curriculum and College

- Course programmes, syllabuses and resources are regularly examined to ensure they do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any group
- Syllabuses and resources include positive acknowledgement of the contributions made to society by a diversity of cultures
- Courses are available to as wide a range of students as possible by enhanced flexibility in both delivery and timing

- After due process of assessment of need, Learning Support is made available to all students requiring it
- Ways of modifying curriculum delivery to allow access to classes for individuals with learning difficulties and/or disabilities continue to be sought
- Assistive technologies will continue to be developed and deployed to assist and enhance the participation of students with disabilities and impairments in their use of learning opportunities
- Procedures for accreditation and assessment will, wherever practicable, be flexible and responsive to the needs of the whole range of students who attend the College
- The College supports the entitlement, for the whole College community, to information, guidance and wellbeing, which will enable individuals to manage their personal development
- By adapting and modifying the environment and facilities the College will strive to make all groups feel welcome
- Offensive material of a discriminatory nature will not be displayed in any part of the College
- Wherever possible, a facility at each of the main College centres will be made available to meet religious needs
- The College will comply with the requirements of all current legislation pertaining to the access rights of people with mobility problems

5.3 Student Complaints

The Student Complaints Procedure is available for all students to report any concerns. The complaints will be documented and the complainant will receive a response in accordance with the Complaints Procedure. Any complaints relating to equality and diversity are monitored separately and referred to the equality and diversity group for consideration.

5.4 Staff

The College is an equal opportunity employer. Equal opportunity is about good employment practices and enabling an efficient contribution by our staff.

We will actively monitor our performance to ensure we are meeting our commitments. For example we will gather and use the following information to monitor and improve practice:

- Staff profile
- Grievance Records
- Disciplinary Records
- Complaints
- Staff Progression
- Access to and satisfaction with staff development opportunities.

Recruitment advertisements will indicate the College is an equal opportunity employer and will include the Positive about Disability two ticks logo

Neither recruitment advertisements nor post details will include conditions or requirements which have an adverse impact in relation to the protected characteristics

At interview applicants will not be asked questions which may be considered discriminatory and members of the interview panel will have received specific equality and diversity training for this role

Job applicants' Equality of Opportunity monitoring information will be kept separate from application forms and will remain anonymous. The interview panel will not be provided with this information.

All staff will be asked to complete a form denoting their protected characteristics. In addition staff will be invited to disclose sexual orientation and their Religion and Belief. This information will be used for monitoring the effectiveness of policy, including the promotion of race equality, and, as above, will remain anonymous.

Short-listing of applicants and selection will be made against specified criteria. Those short-listing and interviewing will indicate reasons for decisions against such specified criteria.

The College will pursue non-discriminatory practices relating to pay and conditions. All staff will have access to induction, regular performance development reviews, training and development reviews and appropriate staff development in equality and diversity, to equip staff to recognise and embed diversity and to challenge any form of discrimination.

All employment policies and procedures will be developed and reviewed within the context of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Any employee may use the grievance procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct. If the matter relates to harassment on the basis of disability then the grievance may be raised in line with the Dignity at Work Policy or directly with the Assistant Principal HR. The College wishes to ensure that staff feel able to raise such grievances and no individual will be penalised for raising such a grievance, unless it is untrue and made in bad faith.

Any employee who harasses any other employee on the grounds of any of the protected will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. In serious cases such behaviour will be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and as such could result in dismissal.

The 'Positive about Disabled People' standard will be maintained through the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

We will provide reasonable adjustment for any staff who are or who become disabled.

We will embed equality and diversity throughout workforce practice, for example providing good customer care, embedding equality and diversity in teaching and learning and providing a high quality service for all.

6. Associated Documents

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The College's policies will be reviewed regularly to ensure they do not contain any discriminatory elements. Equality Analyses will be conducted appropriately.

This Equality and Diversity Policy is supplemented by complementary provisions in the:

- Admissions Policy
- Information, Advice & Guidance Policy
- Quality Manual (curriculum)
- Staff Recruitment Policy

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Fitness to Study Procedure
- Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure
- College Complaints Procedure

7. Implementation

The Governing Body carries the ultimate responsibility, under the law, for ensuring that the College meets the requirements of equality legislation. The authority for this is delegated to the Principal who in turn has designated the Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Campus to take the strategic lead for championing equality, diversity and inclusion. This role is shared with the Assistant Principal of Human Resources in regard to the College as an employer. However all staff have the responsibility to uphold the policy, comply with the law and support the College in fulfilling its duties and commitments.

Appendix 1

Definitions of terms (source: LSIS)

- **Equality** is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential – to live as equal citizens in society free from discrimination and harassment.
- **Diversity** is about respecting, valuing and celebrating aspects that make us unique as individuals – recognising that we contribute to society because of these aspects, not in spite of them.
- **Direct Discrimination** happens when someone is treated unfairly, or less favourably than another person, because they have a protected characteristic. This often arises because of assumptions, stereotyping or prejudice. The Equality Act 2010 extended the definition of direct discrimination to cover **association discrimination** and **perception discrimination**. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with a person who has the protected characteristic or because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** happens when a 'provision, criteria or practice' is applied that appears to affect everyone equally but which in fact puts people who share a protected characteristic at a disadvantage.
- **Harassment** happens when someone who behaves in such a way that their conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an environment that is hostile, degrading, humiliating or intimidating. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, touching, sexual jokes, displaying pornographic images and sending emails of a sexual nature.
- **Victimisation** happens when someone experiences disadvantage *because* they have supported someone in making a complaint or an allegation of discrimination or because they have personally made a complaint or allegation.

