

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policy and Strategy



The College welcomes students and staff from all backgrounds and communities, and we guarantee that you will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect while you are here. It's not where you come from, but where you are going that is important while you study or work here. We recognise individual needs, situations and goals and will work with you towards removing the barriers to what you can do and what you aspire to be.

We believe in creating an inclusive environment and it's an essential part of our culture. We expect all of our employees to treat each other equally, honestly and with respect. We have zero tolerance of discrimination, harassment or bullying of any kind. This includes on the grounds of age, race, gender, marital status, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexuality or on any other grounds, including association.

We want to nurture a culture where diverse perspectives can help drive success for individuals and groups. The College is here to help you achieve your ambitions, whether through learning or employment. We want you to aim high and do well. We do not want anything to stand in your way, so we will provide a wide range of support for those who need it. The support you need to make progress will be provided without question; this is your entitlement.

The College values academic freedom and is committed to promoting and positively encouraging free debate, enquiry and, indeed, protest. This means that it tolerates a wide range of views, political as well as academic, even when they are unpopular, controversial, or provocative. The College will, however, always take firm and decisive action against anyone demonstrating any form of hate crime, including anti-Semitism, Islamophobia.

All staff 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. Students, staff and governors will receive regular training, updates and information. We will review our practices to ensure we continually implement best practice and remove any barriers that could restrict access to individuals or groups.

If you believe you have been discriminated against in any way you can use the College Complaints Procedure. If you are a member of staff there are informal and formal routes including policies you can access to resolve any concerns and to get a quick and just resolution. All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly.

The diversity of our students and staff is one of our great strengths; it contributes to the atmosphere and ethos of the College in which we expect to give you the environment to enjoy working and learning.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy is fully supported by the College Leadership Group and Senior Management Team.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Equality and Diversity policy is underpinned by the Equality and Diversity strategy, which sets out in more detail our equality objectives and impact measures and how progress against these will be monitored and reported. It describes how the College seeks to ensure that it is free from unlawful discrimination and promotes diversity across all of its activities and work.

3. Legal Framework

3.1 The strategy recognises the requirements and general duties of the Equality Act (2010) by public authorities to:

- 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
- Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life in other activities where their participation is low

3.2 In addition to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected

characteristic and those who do not

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

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

2.3.1 **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.

2.3.2 **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.

2.3.3 **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.

3.4 The College recognises the definition of disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and 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.

4. Equality and Diversity Objectives

4.1 Equality and Diversity objectives and impact measures (EDIMs) are in place at both Corporate and School levels. Targets are set based on analysis of student and staff data, which relates to enrolments, recruitment, absence, retention, achievement, success and behaviour. These are set and monitored through the Self-Assessment

and Quality Improvement Action Plan monitoring activities to ensure that equality is embedded in quality monitoring activities.

4.2 The equality objectives set at corporate level are:

- Reduce the gaps in success rates where performance between groups is above 3% to include all protected characteristics
- Monitor achievement gaps for English and Math's to include all protected characteristics applying the 3% threshold between groups
- Develop equality and diversity monitoring arrangements for student destinations
- Ensure equality and diversity practice is embedded in all aspects of the new College student recruitment process
- Ensure equality and diversity practice is embedded in the College recruitment processes e.g. Blind Recruitment and Disability Compliant Scheme.
- Ensure that equality and diversity practice is advanced consistently well across all areas of the College including the promotion of fundamental British Values
- Provide Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training
- Provide Unconscious Bias training
- Provide Safeguarding and Prevent training
- Provide specific management training related to challenging behavior, procedure on dealing with incidents and unconscious bias.
- Provide the opportunity for all staff to disclose information relating to all nine protected characteristics
- Develop management reports which allow the monitoring of protected characteristics to improve performance and the employee experience recruitment and selection, retention\staff turnover, well-being, including (where relevant)
 - Parental
 - leave
 - work/life balance requests,
 - sickness
 - grievances
 - disciplinaries
 - harassment

5. Monitoring & Reporting Progress

- 5.1 The College Leadership Group and Senior Management Team review the College's performance against its Corporate and local EDIMs. Key student performance indicators are monitored on a weekly basis. These include applications, enrolments, absence, retention, achievement and success.
- 5.2 In-year performance is formally reviewed through the Self-Assessment process and progress is reported twice annually via the Quality Improvement Action Plans. This includes information drawn from a variety of quality indicators to ensure that equality is embedded including key performance indicators, observations, surveys, and focus groups.
- 5.3 Regular monitoring and reporting of associated policies and procedures also takes place on a scheduled basis as detailed within the College's Quality Assurance Plan. This includes a wide range of activity to include for example, the Managing Student Behaviour, safeguarding, learner support fund, additional learning support, admissions, staff Grievance and Disciplinary policies and the Complaints Policy.
- 5.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion practice is continually reviewed by staff and students. Involvement with College employees takes place through a number of mechanisms, including new employee induction, Staff Forum, training and development and also on an ad hoc basis, as and when required. This commitment includes training all managers and all other employee about their rights and responsibilities under the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. Students are involved in the development and review of equality and diversity policy and practices through a variety of mechanisms including student representatives, surveys, focus groups, student Council.
- 5.5 A formal Equality and Diversity report is submitted to the Corporation on an annual basis and meets the reporting requirements of the Equality Act (2010).

This includes reporting on a range of student and staff data, for example:

- Students:
 - Profile of students enrolled
 - Retention, success and achievement of students
 - Numbers of students receiving a range of support services
 - Disciplinary and exclusions of students
 - Student feedback
 - Complaints

- Employees:
 - Profile of employees
 - Performance information for staff
 - Access and take up of training

6. External Benchmarks

6.1 The College's work in relation to equality and diversity will, wherever possible, be measured against external benchmarks. Opportunities to work towards external recognition on all aspects of equality and diversity will be actively sought and maintained, for example the Disability Confident scheme.

7. Reporting Incidents

7.1 When reporting a breach of this strategy or an incident, in the first instance please speak with your line manager who will be able to provide advice and talk through options and next steps.

7.2 If this is not appropriate or fails to resolve matters satisfactorily, then contact a member of the Human Resources Team.

Authorised by	Date
College Leadership Group	July 2021

Contact us

West Herts College: 01923 812000

Barnfield College: 01582 569569

