

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

(incorporating ACCESSIBILITY PLAN)

SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Policy Family	Governance
Reference	SFC-01
Responsible Manager	Principal
Approval Date	16 December 2024
Issue Number	2
Review Date	December 2027

Aim

Equality of opportunity is everybody's right and is a central aim of the College for all staff, students, governors and others associated with the College. The City of Stoke on Trent Sixth Form College continuously strives to uphold the aims of the Equality Duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010,
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations by recognising and valuing diversity.

Particular groups are covered against discrimination within the Equality Act 2010 as they have "Protected Characteristics". The nine protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- sex
- sexual orientation

Both those who associate with persons with protected characteristics (e.g. carers) and those mistakenly associated with protected characteristics also have protection in law.

The College is also mindful of the socio-economic, cultural, psychological and experiential factors which can affect students with or without protected characteristics including those who are 'looked after' or are carers themselves.

The College promotes the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs in all that we do and with particular regard to those with protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

"A caring community, delivering excellence and inspiring futures"

Every member of the College community has a responsibility for promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of College life.

Scope

The City of Stoke on Trent Sixth Form College, its prospective student, students, staff, parents and carers, Governors, Trustees and visitors to its sites.

Policy

The College is fully compliant with the Equality Duty and all relevant legislation. The College Leadership Team consciously thinks about its duties when policies and procedures are developed and decided upon, and implemented and reviewed. A record of how decisions are reached is included in SMT minutes.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the College treats students *differentially* to secure equality of opportunity to achieve best potential outcomes.

The College recognises that disabled people's needs may be different from those of non-disabled people. We therefore take account of disabled people's impairments when making decisions about policies or services. This might mean making reasonable adjustments or treating disabled people differently to non-disabled people in order to meet their needs.

In accordance with its specific duties, the College publishes information to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty at least annually and sets and publishes equality objectives at least every four years. The Equality & Diversity Policy is available on the College's website.

Staff, Governors and Volunteers

The College believes that Equality and Diversity should permeate every aspect of College life, including the whole curriculum and Progress Coach(ing).

British Values are exemplified in College leadership, teaching and through general behaviours; including through opportunities in the curriculum, and encouraging students to respect other people (with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010).

It is the responsibility of staff at all levels to work in agreed ways to close achievement gaps for students. It is the responsibility of leaders and managers to ensure that teams develop and implement plans which are consistent with the College's Equality Objectives.

The College will apply its Equality & Diversity Policy in all areas in the employment process including the recruitment of new staff. Copies of the policy are available to applicants for employment at the College and all advertising promotes the College's commitment. As a disability confident employer, all disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for a post will be offered an interview in order to encourage workplace diversity.

Staff are encouraged to discuss any equality and diversity concerns they have with their line manager or seek advice from the Human Resources team. A Grievance Procedure is available to all staff, details of which are available from Human Resources.

"A caring community, delivering excellence and inspiring futures"

Students

The welfare of the student is paramount at all times. Staff and governors are committed to listening to and valuing each individual in its care. The College will continuously strive to create an environment which develops the resilience and critical awareness of students so that their vulnerability to emotional manipulation in all its forms is minimised.

The College ensures that through induction all students are aware of the College's policy and equality and diversity issues. It is committed to monitoring Equality and Diversity opportunities as part of the College's quality processes.

The College is committed to a learning culture which is open, dynamic, promotes praise, and positively encourages the exploration of controversy including providing opportunities to explore equality issues in lessons and group coaching, and through student groups and societies. The Prevent Duty which requires all staff to exemplify British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance, aligns directly with this approach.

The College will seek to provide opportunities for students to celebrate diversity in lessons and through cross-College events and student groups and societies.

The College will proactively use student voice to understand and advance equality issues in the College.

Students are encouraged to speak to their Progress Coach or Curriculum Manager if they have any equality and diversity concerns. A Complaints Procedure is available to students, details of which are on the College's website.

Accessibility Plan

The City of Stoke on Trent Sixth Form College has a responsibility to make its sites welcoming and supportive to those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including staff, applicants, students and their families, and visitors. The accessibility plan meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and DfE guidance for schools.

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial (more than minor or trivial) and long-term (a year or more) adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal day to day activities. This includes sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight and hearing, and long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools and colleges are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students with disabilities, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled student faces in comparison with non-disabled students.

We aim to treat all users of the site fairly and with respect. We will provide access and opportunities to all without discrimination of any kind. We will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made in order to reduce and eliminate barriers to accessing the curriculum and to achieve full participation in the college community.

"A caring community, delivering excellence and inspiring futures"

Compliance with the DDA is consistent with the college aims, Equal and Diversity Policy and SEND Policy, including;

- Not to discriminate against disabled students in admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services,
- Not to treat disabled students less favourably,
- To take reasonable steps, to make reasonable adjustments, to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage,
- To publish an accessibility action plan,

The college respects student’s confidentiality and the requirements of GDPR to protect student’s data.

The college is committed to; providing all students with a broad and balanced curriculum that is differentiated, adjusted to meet the needs of individuals and their preferred learning styles; and endorses the continued development of an inclusive curriculum via:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to students’ diverse learning needs,
- Overcoming potential barriers to Teaching Learning and Assessment for individuals and groups of students.

Accessibility Action Plan

Target	Action	Whom	When	Impact
CPD supports staff in delivering their duties.	Staff, governors and Trustees receive ongoing training in making the curriculum accessible to all.	Principal (Governors) Assistant Principal of Curriculum & Quality (Teaching Staff) Director of Student Experience (Support Staff)	July 2025	
Appropriate staff maintain on-going links with stakeholders, to support the execution of duties.	Staff will continue to seek the advice of LA services and appropriate health professionals from local NHS Trusts.	Director of Student Experience Safeguarding & Support Manager Mental Health Services Team Leader	July 2025	
To ensure all buildings and rooms are equally	The planning and undertaking of future improvements and refurbishments of sites	Director of Operations, Systems and Technology	August 2025	

"A caring community, delivering excellence and inspiring futures"

accessible to all site users.	will take into account the needs of students, staff, and other users. For example, lighting, acoustics, design features and physical access.	Estates Manager		
-------------------------------	--	-----------------	--	--

Implementation

The Local Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to promote equality and diversity within the College. The LGB also monitors the overall progress made by the College towards achieving the targets in the annual Equalities Report.

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day to day operation and implementation of the Policy within the College.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has responsibility for ensuring that the Single Equality Policy is implemented throughout the College.

All staff, students and visitors must treat everyone with respect and dignity at all times, promote an environment that does not allow or tolerate any discrimination, harassment or victimisation and challenge and report any unacceptable behaviour.

Communication

The College is committed to supporting and developing staff in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to developing the expertise of staff in delivering effective and enjoyable teaching, learning and assessment for all. All new employees are introduced to the College's Equality & Diversity Policy and the praise learning culture during induction.

New employees, governors and volunteers who join the College during the academic year are required to complete the New Staff Induction Training, including a session on Equal Opportunities.

The College Equality and Diversity Policy is published on the college website.

Monitoring

The Local Governing Body as a committee of the Trust has a key role in scrutinising and advising on the work of the College, in strategically delivering on the Equality Objectives. The LGB receives reports and scrutinises relevant data with regard to the outcomes and experiences of those with protected characteristics.

Associated Information and Guidance

Related Documents

- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

"A caring community, delivering excellence and inspiring futures"