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Equality and Diversity Policy

1 Policy Statement

The College seeks to achieve an environment in which all are treated equally and in which discrimination is not tolerated. The College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity regardless of disability, race, religion or belief, gender; sexual orientation, age or any other criteria which is irrelevant to a persons learning or employment at the College. Through its policies and procedures the College will promote inclusion, challenge discrimination and value and celebrate the diversity of its staff, learners and visitors.

We will treat all current and potential employees, learners, trainees, contractors and visitors with respect and dignity and establish a culture where diversity is valued. We aim to establish a constructive and positive working and learning environment, free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation. We will celebrate and value diversity in human experience and circumstances.

Age

People of all ages should benefit from college life and we are committed to the provision of a variety of strategies and practices that cater for all ages and take into account individual circumstances and needs.

The College is committed to challenging stereotyping and marginalisation based on age. We recognise that people of all ages can make a positive contribution to the College based on their own experiences and skills. We will provide work, education and training opportunities for people regardless of age, ensuring that College literature reflects positive images of people of all ages and the curriculum provides the opportunity for every learner to reach their full potential

Convictions

The College complies with The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in respect of employment and learner admissions and seeks to ensure that, where appropriate, unrelated criminal convictions do not interfere with individuals life at college. However certain courses of study are exempt from the Act and learners will be provided with the appropriate guidance accordingly.

When employing staff the College will endeavour not to discriminate. However some convictions will be relevant when making appointments.

Disability

The College is committed to promoting access to people with disabilities. A further commitment is to work towards supporting and enabling learners and staff with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, specific learning difficulties, special

psychological needs and medical conditions which may have an impact on day-to-day activities, to take part in all aspects of the College's academic, working and social programmes.

Gender

The College is committed to ensuring that both female and male staff and learners are given equal access to all areas of College life; appropriate non-sexist language is used and stereotypical views are challenged. The College will not enquire about a person's marital status.

Gender Reassignment

The College is committed to upholding equal rights of transgendered people and will support a member of the College who intends to, is undergoing or has undergone gender re-assignment.

Race

The College values cultural diversity and aims to recognise and counter racism and cultural stereotyping in all its forms. In the light of the Macpherson Report the College recognises that institutional racism can affect the quality of the lives of learners, staff, contractors and visitors. The College undertakes to examine its structures to ensure that they are offering equality of opportunity to all staff and learners whatever their ethnic origin or heritage. We will encourage an ethos of understanding and respect for all cultures. The College has a separate Race Equality Policy.

Religion and Belief

The College respects the right of individuals to hold their own religious and philosophical beliefs. Individuals are expected to respect the views and beliefs of others. The expression of intolerant beliefs and opinions that infringe the rights of others is not acceptable.

Sexual Orientation

The College is committed to welcoming individuals of all sexual orientations, both employees and learners. The College will respond sensitively and supportively whenever individuals raise the issue of their sexuality. The College will be pro-active in promoting a safe and positive environment where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered individuals feel able to choose whether or not to be open about their sexuality and know that their choice will be respected.

Trade Unions

The College will not discriminate against learners or staff who belong or do not belong to a trade union and we will adhere to the concept of anti discriminatory and anti oppressive freedom of speech.

2 Context

This procedure has been written to ensure members of staff, learners, contractors, visitors and customers are aware of the duties placed upon the College by Equality legislation and regulations. It is a comprehensive policy to explain the background, law, and our intentions together with our commitment to equality and diversity.

This policy will apply to all current and potential employees, learners, trainees, contractors and visitors to the college. Contractors are required to indicate that they subscribe to this policy or have to produce an equivalent policy of their own.

Stockport College makes it a condition of service and admission that employees and learners follow this policy and any breach may be dealt with under the Staff or Student Disciplinary Procedures as appropriate.

3 The Procedure

3.1 This procedure is implemented in the context of the following legislation:

Equal Pay Act 1970
Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Civil Partnerships Act 2005
Race Relations Act 1976
Disability Discrimination Act 1995/2005
Employment Rights Act 1996
Protection for Harassment Act 1997
Human Rights Act 1998
Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
Employment Act 2002
Sexual Orientation (employment regulations) 2003
Sexual Orientation (**goods and Services**) 2007
Religion and Belief (employment regulations) 2003
Religion and Belief (**goods and services**) 2007
Gender Recognition Act 2004
Gender Reassignment Regulation 1999
The Children's Act 1989/2004
Age Discrimination (employment regulations) 2006
Gender Equality Duty 2007

Related information is contained in the College's:

Dignity at College Policy and Procedure
Student Discipline and Grievance Procedures
Staff Discipline, Capability and Grievance Procedures
Attendance Management Policy
Student Mental Health Policy and procedure
Race Equality Policy and Procedure
Child Protection Policy
Disability Policy
Disability Equality Scheme

3.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

The College will ensure that:

- Governors, staff and learners are aware of the College's Equality and Diversity and related policies and how these will be implemented. The College will also provide training and support to enable staff and learners to apply the policies and act within the law.

- ❑ Staff and learners are aware of the value placed upon equal opportunities and that action will be taken in the event of any breach of the policies.
- ❑ Governors and staff have access to comprehensive information, which assists them to plan, implement and monitor actions to carry out their responsibilities.
- ❑ All policies and procedures are non-discriminatory and anti oppressive and that monitoring and positive action processes are regularly reviewed.

3.3 MONITORING OUR PROGRESS

The College will monitor and review on an annual basis the progress that has been made towards achieving its targets using **the equality and diversity action plan**. **Results from monitoring** shall be published and made available to staff and learners.

3.4 POSITIVE ACTION

In certain circumstances the law allows Positive Action as a way of overcoming inequality.

Positive Action allows the College to:

- ❑ Provide facilities and services, in training education and welfare to meet the special needs of people from particular equality groups.
- ❑ Target education and training at particular equality target groups that are under represented in a particular area of work or study.
- ❑ Encourage applications from particular equality target groups that are under represented in particular work areas or curriculum areas.

Positive action strategies are intended to be temporary measures only. They must be kept under regular review and cannot be used once the under representation no longer exists. The College will ensure that when using positive action as a strategy it falls within the law.

3.5 BREACHES OF THE POLICY AND COMPLAINTS

- ❑ Acts of discrimination, harassment, abuse or victimisation will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.
- ❑ Disciplinary action could include dismissal in the case of staff and expulsion in the case of learners.
- ❑ Staff and learners who feel they are being discriminated against should seek resolution through the **Dignity at College policy and Procedures**.
- ❑ **Staff or learners who feel that they have experienced discrimination will receive support from the College and the College will take appropriate action.**
- ❑ Prospective learners who consider that they have been unfairly treated with respect to their application or are dissatisfied with some aspect of the recruitment and selection procedure should write giving details to the Head of the Quality Unit. All complaints will be investigated and the prospective learner informed of any action taken.
- ❑ Applicants for employment who feel that they have been unfairly treated with regard to their application or are dissatisfied with some aspect of the recruitment and selection procedure should write giving details to the Assistant Principal Human Resources and Operational Development. All complaints will be investigated and the applicant informed of any action taken.

3.6 PUBLICISING OUR POLICY

3.6.1 To learners, prospective learners and other members of the public

- ❑ The College's commitment to equality will be highlighted in the prospectus, on the website and intranet.
- ❑ A summary of the results of monitoring information will be included in the annual report where this does not contravene confidentiality.
- ❑ A summary of the policy shall be included in **student information packs, which are given to all learners at induction.**
- ❑ Summaries of the policy will be displayed in appropriate public areas around College.
- ❑ The induction programme for learners will include the College's commitment to equality and diversity, outlining any action to be taken by learners who experience discrimination and the actions taken against the perpetrators of discrimination.
- ❑ Tutors will reinforce this information during tutorials and/or placement visits.

3.6.2 To staff

- ❑ A copy of the policy will be included in the staff handbook and the staff intranet.
- ❑ The staff induction will include an overview of the College's commitment to equality. It will also outline procedures with regard to reporting cases of discrimination and the actions taken against perpetrators.

3.6.3 To work placement providers

- ❑ All work placement providers will receive a summary of the policy and will signify their understanding and agreement to these responsibilities. Staff visiting learners on placement will ensure that this takes place.

3.7 REVIEW AND CONSULTATION

The Equality and Diversity Committee will review this policy on an annual basis. As part of the review the Committee will seek to take into account the views of stakeholders including learners and staff and the local community.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Governors are responsible for:

- ❑ Having ultimate responsibility to ensure that the College complies with Equality legislation and the codes of practice supporting it.
- ❑ Ensuring that the Equality and Diversity policy is followed and this will be achieved through the consideration of an annual report.
- ❑ Ensuring that the membership of the Corporation reflects the diversity of the communities served by the College.
- ❑ Ensuring that the College's strategic plan includes a commitment to equality.
- ❑ Ensuring that equality training is part of the College's strategic plan.
- ❑ Being aware of the Corporation's statutory duties in relation to equality legislation as an employer and service provider.
- ❑ Receiving and responding to the monitoring information on equality target groups

4.2 The Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for:

- ❑ Overseeing the continuing application and development of the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- ❑ Preparing, monitoring and reviewing the Equality Action Plan.
- ❑ Reporting annually to the Governors on Equality issues.
- ❑ Advising on the formulation of policies, procedures and resources.

4.3 The Principal is responsible for:

- ❑ Giving a consistent high profile lead on equality issues and promoting equality both internally and externally.
- ❑ Working with the Corporation and Senior Leadership Team to ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy and Action Plan are implemented effectively.
- ❑ Ensuring that appropriate action is taken against individuals on College premises and working on behalf of the college who do not act in accordance with the policy.

4.4 Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- ❑ They take the lead in creating a positive, inclusive ethos that challenges inappropriate language and behaviour.
- ❑ They are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to equality legislation.
- ❑ All aspects of College policy, procedures and activities are sensitive to matters of equality.
- ❑ Equality and Diversity monitoring data from **equality target groups** is collected and analysed.
- ❑ Targets on recruitment retention and achievement of learners are set based on the analysis of monitoring data.
- ❑ Teaching observation reports include criteria on equality and diversity issues.
- ❑ Internal verification procedures include scrutiny of equality and diversity issues.
- ❑ Curriculum areas assess performance in relation to equality issues and action taken if appropriate.
- ❑ The procedures for recruitment and promotion of staff model best practice in equality.
- ❑ Targets are set on the recruitment and promotion of staff based on the analysis of monitoring data.
- ❑ The College's publicity materials present appropriate and positive messages about **all groups of learners**.
- ❑ Learner induction programmes and tutorials reflect the College's commitment to promote equality.
- ❑ Appropriate training and development is provided for both staff and learners to support the appreciation and understanding of diversity.

4.5 All staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- ❑ They are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to equality legislation.
- ❑ Schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of diversity.
- ❑ They challenge discrimination and inappropriate language and behaviour by staff, learners, placement providers other members of staff and users of our services.

4.6 All learners are responsible for ensuring that:

- ❑ They create and maintain an environment where harassment and discrimination are considered unacceptable.
- ❑ They support and comply with the aims of the Equality and Diversity Policy and procedures.
- ❑ They understand that the consequence of contravening equality legislation and the College Policy.

4.7 Partners, Contractors and Service Providers

- ❑ All partners, contractors and service providers will be responsible for adhering to any equality guidelines in agreements or contracts.
- ❑ The College is committed to ensuring that those organisations with which it works and employs will demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity and have policies and procedures in place to achieve this

5 Location and Access to the policy

This document will be held on the College intranet and if relevant on the College website. The document will be made available on request to external parties as required and may be converted to other formats if appropriate (Braille, Large Print, Other Languages etc)