Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Author: Carol Nield

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1. Introduction

1.1 The College is committed to providing a learning and work environment free from direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation where all members of our community are treated with respect and dignity and valued for their contribution and individuality. We believe in inclusivity and opportunity for all students, staff and the wider community and recognise the key role education has in helping to transform society for the benefit of individuals and communities.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (the Policy) is to set out the College's commitment to an inclusive and supportive environment for students, staff, contractors and visitors that is free from discrimination, where all are able to participate and where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

2.2 The Policy also outlines the responsibilities of members of the College's community to adhere to and uphold the Policy. These responsibilities are detailed in Section 5.

2.3 The aim of the Policy is to promote positive attitudes towards inclusivity and valuing diversity and sets out how the College will meet its public equality duty and integrate equality of opportunity into all aspects of College life; how policies, procedures and plans will be monitored for adverse impact; how the overall practice and outcomes of the College will be monitored and how action will be planned and delivered to address any concerns that are identified.

3. Scope

3.1 The policy applies to all students, staff and visitors to the College and those contracted to work at or for the College. This includes volunteers, agency workers, contractors and occasional workers.

3.2 The Policy applies to all aspects of the student lifecycle including recruitment, selection, and admission. The College's Admissions Policies are underpinned by the principles of fairness, equality of opportunity and access to courses and the range of services.

3.3 The Policy applies to all areas of employment including recruitment applications, short-listing, selection, progression, training, reward, benefits, capability and performance, discipline, grievance, absence, conditions of service and reasons for termination of employment.

3.4 An equality and diversity action plan supports this Policy and sets out the activities the College shall undertake to meet and exceed our statutory duties. These activities will support us to meet our legal duties, in particular, the need to have due regard to:

   a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct within the Act.

   b) advance equality of opportunity between those that share a relevant protected characteristic and those that do not;

c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

4. Principles

The College will:

- Ensure that people are treated equally regardless of their identification with one or more of the protected characteristics, including those who identify as trans*, gender non-binary and gender fluid, socio-economic background, family responsibilities, or other appropriate distinction.

- Take a zero tolerance approach to discrimination, victimisation, harassment or any other prohibited conduct of any kind by any party. Behaviour found to be in breach of this policy will be addressed in accordance with the College's policies and procedures.

- Be proactive in all matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, valuing and celebrating the richness brought by a diverse population of staff, students and partners.

- Develop and improve our responses and learning provision to under-represented groups to increase participation and improve community cohesion.

- Develop responses to address social and economic disadvantage developing and delivering projects that seek to engage hard to reach learners.

- Narrow the gaps in achievement between different groups of learners by providing timely support to enable curriculum teams to respond positively to under-achievement.

- Ensure our learners are well-equipped with the skills and knowledge to live and work in a diverse and multi-cultural society through the delivery of teaching, learning and enrichment activities that positively represents different groups within society, improves group cohesion and values diverse contribution.

- Ensure the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are applied consistently across all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment, including admissions, student services and learner support.

- Ensure the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are applied to recruitment, redeployment, staff development and promotion, to ensure that all individuals are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 An Equality and Diversity Policy cannot succeed without the active support of the entire College community.

The responsibility for delivering the Policy extends to every member of the organisation including managers, those with an explicit remit for diversity, and individual members of staff. The implementation of this Policy is therefore a shared responsibility as set out below;

Line Managers are responsible for

- understanding, adhering to and applying the policy and associated policies and plans;
- Ensuring that procedures relating to staff recruitment, selection, career development, discipline and grievance are carried out in accordance with the statutory duties to promote equality and eliminate discrimination;
- role modelling positive workplace behaviours to champion and promote equality and diversity, treating employees in an inclusive way and creating an inclusive culture where staff and students are able to be themselves and bring their best;
- identifying, challenging and dealing with unacceptable behaviours as they arise;
- sensitively resolving concerns through informal discussion, and seeking guidance should formal procedures be required;
- seeking advice and, where relevant, training to understand and implement the policy.

Individual members of staff are responsible for:

- understanding and adhering to this policy and associated policies;
- modelling positive workplace behaviours to create an inclusive culture where people feel able to be themselves and bring their best;
- raising with their manager any concerns or matters which they feel are a breach of this policy;
- completing equality and diversity training as a minimum every three years;

Human Resources are responsible for:

- training and advising all employees and managers, ensuring an understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion and their responsibilities;
- contributing to the development and monitoring the College equality and diversity action plan including the review of employment processes;
- engaging College employees to ensure shared ownership of relevant actions;
- supporting the application of appropriate procedures to address a breach of the Policy;
- monitoring workforce demographics

Students are responsible for:

- Upholding the principles of this policy;
- Contributing to a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity
- Demonstrating positive inclusive behaviours

5.2   The Principal and Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is communicated, implemented, monitored and continuously reviewed according to legislation. The Corporation is responsible for overseeing the College's implementation of the policy and will receive an annual progress report at a relevant meeting of the Board.

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6. Implementation

6.1 The Vice Principal People, Organisational Development and Culture is responsible for the overall implementation and monitoring of the Policy through the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and will provide progress reports on an annual basis.

6.2 The Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Committee (DEIC) is responsible for the development, monitoring and implementation of an equality and diversity action plan, to ensure that the objectives of this policy are met and a working and learning environment in which all staff and students can fulfil their potential is fostered.

6.3 All applicants to the College will be made aware of a clear commitment to an equitable, diverse and inclusive student population where harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated. Students will be provided with information about this Policy through induction and will be expected to abide by its principles.

6.4 Data on the characteristics of all applicants, students and staff will be collected for statistical reporting, equality analysis, to inform policy development and for action planning to drive quality improvement. Data will be based on self-declaration by staff and students and every effort will be made to reduce the category of 'not known/not provided' to increase the validity and analysis of data. However, the College will respect the right of an individual not to declare.

6.5 All employees are required to familiarise themselves with this Policy and ensure their practices are consistent with its contents and legislation. New employees will be provided with a copy as part of their induction

6.6 All staff are required to complete mandatory on-line Equality and Diversity awareness training every three years and refresher training as required. Line managers are responsible for ensuring the training is undertaken and completion will be monitored by Human Resources.

6.7 Individual members of staff should inform their line manager or Human Resources if they think that discrimination is taking place.

6.8 In order to ensure their effectiveness, all policies and procedures will be monitored and reviewed and be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). Appropriate modifications will be made where these are suggested.

6.9 The Policy will be published online and made available in hard copy and alternative formats upon request.

6.10 An Annual Equality and Diversity report will be published on the College's website. The report will include specific measures adopted to promote equal opportunities, progress on developments, and the outcome of the relevant year's monitoring of statistics, and future priorities.

7. COMPLAINTS

7.1 The College will take seriously any instances of non-adherence to the Equality and Diversity Policy by employees, prospective employees, students, and visitors, as well as any persons or companies associated with the functions of the College. Any instances of non-adherence will be investigated and where appropriate will be considered under the relevant Disciplinary Policy for staff or students. Appropriate action, according to the nature of the incident, will be taken in relation to any breach of the Policy by visitors or any persons or companies associated with the functions of the College

7.2 Any student who wishes to raise a complaint of discrimination, harassment or victimisation should raise their concerns through the Student Complaints Procedure.

7.3 Any member of staff who wishes to raise a complaint of discrimination, harassment or victimisation should raise their concerns through the Staff Grievance Procedure.

7.4 Any applicant for employment concerned about the application of the Policy should contact the Human Resources Department

8. Equality Impact Assessment

8.1 This Policy has been reviewed to ensure that it does not discriminate (either intentionally or unintentionally) against any of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender (including gender identity), race, religion or sexual orientation and meets our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Hugh Baird College

Balliol Road
Bootle
Liverpool
L20 7EW

Telephone
0151 353 4444

Email
enquiries@hughbaird.ac.uk

www.hughbaird.ac.uk

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