

Policy: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Date: November 2018

Approved by: Vice Principal, Students

Introduction

Gloucestershire College is passionate about equality, diversity and inclusion in all of our activities. Our ambitious and achievable objectives have been developed in consultation with stakeholders and build on work already completed. The College also works to meet the UK HE Quality Code Values.

The College affirms that eliminating attainment differences, celebrating and promoting diversity is a key element of the College's mission. The College also recognises that achieving these ambitions brings a range of benefits to the organisation, including:

- Creating a positive atmosphere where there is a shared commitment to value diversity and respect difference;
- Delivering excellent customer service by ensuring there is an inclusive ethos, responding to the needs of individuals;
- Achieving a representative workforce and student body
- Promoting social cohesion through a greater knowledge and understanding of the diverse community we serve.

Equality is about being valued for who and what we are. This helps us to achieve our best without unfair obstacles, stigma or stereotyping, or being restricted by anyone's expectations of our ability.

In practice, equality means all of us:

- Being able to get to, into and around the College, and complete our learning with equal ease and dignity
- Having a sense of belonging and being well looked after
- Feeling the College, the programmes and the policies have been designed with us all in mind
- Feeling the College embraces all and celebrates different cultures and views.

We value diversity because it makes the College a more creative place to learn and work.

We celebrate the fact that our students and staff, our partners and friends, are from different social and ethnic backgrounds, different faiths, sexual orientation and ages.

In practice this means:

- Seeing and hearing people like ourselves around – as students and staff – so that the College mirrors the diversity of society;
- Listening to different points of view to improve;
- Valuing our differences as well as the things we have in common.

1. Students and Studying

Because we value equality, diversity and inclusion all our courses give students:

- An unbiased insight into the subjects and activities;
- A broad view of how their course fits within the world;
- Skills to help them learn throughout their lives within a changing world;
- An equal opportunity to achieve their aspirations.
- Opportunities to discuss British Values in an open and safe environment.

And readiness for a world of work where:

- Students have a personalised study programme;
- Diverse teams are normal;
- Teamwork is highly prized;
- Flexible, open and creative minds are valued;
- Honesty and respect are natural attributes.

Harassment and bullying are not to be tolerated including the use of social media and digital technology.

We guarantee you a safe, enjoyable and challenging learning experience.

So, ours is a College where, for example:

- Safeguarding is a number 1 priority;
- Women and men study together on everything from engineering to childcare;
- Gay and straight students look out for each other;
- Bullying and ridicule are unthinkable;
- Disabled students feel safe and included all the time;
- Trips out are affordable because poverty is never an obstacle to doing well;
- Lessons are hard work and enjoyable, inclusive and mature;
- Feedback to students is respectful and fosters a culture of improvement.

What does excellence look like?

- **Students are respected, included and well looked after by their teachers and by each other;**
- **Students know about equality and the environment as it relates to their course;**
- **Students can work successfully in diverse teams.**

2. Staff and Working

Because we value equality, diversity and inclusion, the College:

- Embeds the College values in everything we do;
- Values everyone's work and takes concerns seriously;
- Promotes a healthy and considerate balance between work and the rest of our lives.

We know diverse teams produce more creative thinking, sharper problem-solving and better results all round. We are better together and foster collaborative and inclusive working.

We know that any form of discrimination can intrude into the workplace in both blatant and subtle ways.

To counter this possibility, we promote a culture where, for example:

- Banter or flippancy about lesbians, gay men, and transgender people is not acceptable;
- Minority ethnic staff are not expected to be cultural experts;
- Sexualised talk about women and men does not happen.

Harassment and Bullying are not tolerated in any form.

So, ours is a College where, for example:

- Staff support one another through partnership working;
- Deadlines are set with consideration for others;
- Opportunities are available for flexible working;
- Line-management is honest, open and supportive – and staff are accountable.

What does excellence look like?

- **Staff contribute to an open and honest, support and inclusive culture;**
- **Policies and ways of working promote equality and value diversity;**
- **Staff have the support and the skills to promote equality in their work;**
- **Staff learn and grow from inclusive partnerships.**

3. Leadership and Managing

Inequality is about the social and economic gap between the haves and have nots. Promoting equality is about helping close this gap and have a more equitable share for all.

- **Closing the inequality gap**

At The College, **equality** is about access, treatment and the services we provide. It is also about tackling **inequality** where we can – reducing the gap between those who have and the more disadvantaged and making sure there is sufficient to work and learn with respect and dignity.

Ours is a College where, for example:

- Resources (such as assistive technologies) are used to combat inequality – for both students and staff;
- Contracts of employment model fair, respectful and equitable practice;
- Student funds are made available to reduce barriers to learning and success.

- **Leadership from the Top**

Senior leaders promote equality and diversity and inclusion through role modelling the values in specific projects and their day to day work.

This means managers who, for example:

- Role model both the College and British values;
- Meet staff on a regular basis to inform and update;
- Do what they say they'll do – and tackle problems, mindful of how this affects others;
- Are clear in direction and expected outcomes;
- Use a collaborative and consultative style of managing – to encourage more creative results;
- Foster a culture where everyone can talk about equality with fluency and ease;
- Consult with others so decision making is not too narrowly focussed.

What does excellence look like?

- **Clear leadership by managers on equality, diversity and inclusion;**
- **Collaborative management throughout the College;**
- **Accountable plans to promote equality and diversity;**
- **Robust challenge of staff who do not “live” the values;**
- **Attainment gaps are narrowed.**

4. Local Community and Procurement

The College works in partnership with a large number of employers on, for example, apprenticeship schemes and work experience.

We are one of the largest employers in the area and play a significant role in the local economy. So we are well placed to promote our values beyond the boundaries of the College.

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to promote equality through the services we procure. This means we favour contractors who can demonstrate for example:

- A commitment to fair and equitable employment practices;
- A guarantee on the well-being of our students, and protection from harassment and discrimination;
- Involvement with the local community and a commitment to training young people.

We procure, commission and contract with services who are local companies owned or part-owned by women, minority ethnic, LGBT and disabled people – because these are the groups who often find it harder to compete in the world of business.

What does excellence look like?

- **Doing business with firms which promote equality and diversity;**
- **Partnerships which benefit the local community including student volunteering, work experience and internships;**
- **Work with other employers to promote equality and environmental best practice.**

5. Places and Spaces – Our Environment

Inclusive design promotes equality because it makes sure that as many of us as possible can access and enjoy College facilities.

Inclusive design is about making sure places and spaces are welcoming and easy to use.

Inclusive design is not just about the finished product. It is about how you get to the finished product. Wide and imaginative consultation means better results.

An inclusive environment means, for example:

- Initial and diagnostic assessments that support a personalised programme;
- Autism-friendly learning spaces;
- Classrooms with appropriate acoustics;
- Reception staff who say “yes, we can”;
- Well-equipped accessible toilets at each site;
- Classrooms laid out for people using wheelchairs;
- Tutors who think through the whole of your learning journey before enrolling you;
- Well-planned access arrangements for learning and exams.

Ours is a College where, for example:

- A wide range of people are engaged in our plans for refurbishment and the design of new buildings.

Not every space will be accessible to everyone but we will do our utmost to make reasonable adjustment.

What does excellence look like?

- **Wide consultation and acting on what we hear – with inclusive results;**
- **Creative and imaginative solutions to design dilemmas;**
- **Places and spaces which work for everyone.**

6. Our Equality Policies

Our duty is protection from discrimination or harassment on the basis of 9 characteristics: age, race, gender, gender identity, religion / belief, sexuality and disability, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy, maternity and paternity.

Disability covers physical and sensory impairment, learning disability and difficulty, mental health and neuro-diverse conditions (such as autism, dyspraxia etc).

It also covers class, poverty and deprivation, health and well-being, safety in public spaces, as well as other life factors which carry stigma and stereotype such as unemployment, residency status and asylum, ability in language and literacy etc.

We also work to reduce inequality between those who have more and those that have least.

7. Our College Values

Ambition

We want to be the very best we can become for our learners - we measure our success by their success. We value what we do because it matters. We believe that every learner can achieve regardless of their ability and aptitude.

Responsibility

Our success is built on each of us taking personal responsibility for our own actions and work and committing to doing our best every time.

Improvement

We are committed to continuously improving everything we do for the benefit of our learners. We actively invite feedback from our customers, regularly review completed tasks to identify opportunities to improve, are receptive to new ideas and learn from our failures as well as our successes.

Team work

We work collaboratively utilising the different knowledge, skills and experiences we each have; we openly communicate and resolve issues through helping not blaming each other.

Communication

Everyone is informed, listened to and involved; we take collective responsibility for achieving our vision; we make our expectations clear.

Respect

We believe that trust, respect and civility bring out the best in people. We celebrate our differences and treat each other and our learners in ways that promote mutual respect. We respect and value the contribution that we each make.

8. The Legal Context

Because the College receives public funds, we are bound by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This requires us to publish our Equality Objectives.

Gloucestershire College is committed to demonstrating our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in all of our activities. Our ambitious and achievable objectives have been developed in consultation with stakeholders and build on work already completed.

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