

Policy: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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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 with respect and inclusion;
- Delivering excellent experience by ensuring there is an inclusive ethos, understanding and 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 we are and having equal opportunities, regardless of diversities. This helps us to achieve our best without unfair obstacles, stigma or stereotyping.

In practice, equality means all of us:

- Being able to access College, work and learning with equal ease and dignity;
- Having a sense of being well respected and safe at College;
- 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 our staff and students:

- Have the right to be respected in their place of work or study
- Build a stronger sense of identity and wellbeing
- Gain a more comprehensive understanding of their community and build wider networks
- Improve career aspirations and outcomes
- Experience 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.

1. Students and Studying

Equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded throughout student life at College where:

- Students have personalised study programmes and support;
- Diverse teams are encouraged and celebrated;
- Teamwork, communication and respect are promoted and valued as part of student development;
- Integrity and respect are promoted, practiced and expected

The study programme, support and extra-curricular activities give students:

- An unbiased and inclusive insight into the subjects and activities;
- A broad view of how their course fits within the world;
- Skills to help them adapt and learn throughout their lives within a changing world;
- An equal opportunity to achieve success;
- Opportunities to discuss equality, diversity and inclusion amongst peers and staff to promote and develop a greater understanding;
- Awareness and understanding of issues and topics relating to safeguarding, protected characteristics, health and wellbeing;
- Opportunities to discuss British Values in an open and safe environment and understand the importance of behaving respectfully.

We are committed to creating a safe, enjoyable and challenging learning experience that ensures respect and inclusion is afforded to all. To achieve this:

- Safeguarding is a number 1 priority;
- Harassment and bullying is not tolerated at College, including the use of social media and digital technology.
- Creating equal opportunities to access learning and celebrate diversity on our courses, regardless of age, gender, race, disability and background;
- All students are encouraged and supported to be ambitious and have high aspirations;
- Raise awareness and provide support relating to LGBTQ+
- Personalised support and accessibility to students with SEND or additional needs to delivers inclusivity and promotes independence;
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds can access a range of financial support to enable access to their education;
- Feedback to students is respectful and fosters a culture of improvement.

What does excellence look like?

- **All students are respected and valued by their teachers and peers;**
- **Inclusivity and access to equal opportunities exists for all students;**
- **Students discuss and learn about equality and the environment relating to their course and long-term ambitions;**
- **Students work effectively 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;
- Widens participation by protected groups when accessing opportunities for development and progression.
- Promotes a healthy and considerate balance between work and the rest of our lives.
- Is a disability confident employer;
- Works to remove stigmas and create a culture of openness.
- Equality and diversity training is mandatory for all staff

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.

3. Leadership and Management

Inequality is about the social and economic state of not being equal, especially in rights, opportunities and status. Promoting equality is about helping close this gap and have a more equitable access to opportunities for all.

- **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.

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 and into the community.

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to promote equality through the services we procure. This means we value partnerships with businesses and 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, LGBTQ and disabled people – because these are the groups who often find it harder to compete in the world of business.

5. College Environment (campuses and facilities)

The College is committed to ensuring our campuses and facilities can be accessed and enjoyed by our staff and students.

The College is proud to have an inclusive environment that includes:

- Welcoming and accessible reception areas for all
- Classrooms with appropriate access for all and sensory-friendly stimuli
- Sensory-friendly corridors and stairwells to support those with visual impairments
- Elevator facilities with priority access for those with physical impairments or difficulties
- Well-equipped toilet facilities at each campus, including disabled toilets
- Changing Places shower/toilet facility, with overhead hoist and changing bed
- Autism friendly learning, social and calm spaces
- Flexible multi-faith spaces for prayer, reflection and contemplation

Engagement with staff and students about the College environment is essential to maintaining its inclusivity. This is achieved by:

- Personalised transition, initial assessments and diagnostics to support personalisation;
- Ongoing two-way discussions and feedback about the spaces and facilities;
- Assessments of student needs to include additional support, reasonable adjustments and exam access arrangements;
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are completed in collaboration with the individual
- Consultation with staff and students in our plans for refurbishment and design of new spaces or building.
- Acknowledging that while not every space can always be easily accessible for every individual, the utmost effort is made to identify reasonable adjustments to improve accessibility.

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.

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