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Quality Assurance Policies & Procedures

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

1. Policy Statement

The College is committed to the promotion and advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion for its staff and students. We aim to provide a learning and working environment which values individuals equally and does not disadvantage individuals by discriminating on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Further information on the definitions of the protected characteristics can be found at www.equalityhumanrights.com.

2. Responsibilities

Governing Body

- Ensure the College complies with the Equality Act 2010 and the Single Equality Duty.
- Monitoring the delivery against the key priorities and targets in the Single Equality Scheme.

The Executive

- Takes the lead in the promotion of a positive and inclusive environment that challenges discriminatory behaviour against any equality group or member of that group
- Ensure the Single Equality Scheme is implemented and collects and publishes equality data
- Devise and implement the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan and monitor its impact

Managers

- Implementing the policy
- Ensuring staff understand their responsibilities and are given appropriate support and training to enable them to carry out their duties.

Staff

- Avoid unfair discriminatory practices whilst challenging discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour by students, work placement providers or outside contractors wherever it occurs.
- Develop schemes of work, lesson content and resources which recognise and promote inclusion.
- Accept personal responsibility for abiding by this policy

Students

- Acknowledge the Respect values and behave in a way which does not discriminate against another equality group either directly or indirectly.

External Partners

- Be aware of the College's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and share our commitment to equality, diversity & inclusion

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3. Statutory Duties

Hartlepool College of Further Education will abide by its current statutory duties for students and staff, in line with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and resulting duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different groups

4. Students

4.1 Recruitment and admissions

The College will ensure that:

- Recruitment and publicity materials are designed in a range of formats to ensure they are free from bias and stereotypes, and encourage applicants from all groups in the community;
- Applicants for courses are considered on the basis of their ability to meet the entry criteria as specified in the course information;
- Applicants are not treated less favourably because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation;
- Applicants are interviewed on the basis of their academic ability and/or potential to succeed;
- Application and enrolment procedures give students the opportunity to identify any additional learning support available for their needs.

4.2 Teaching and Learning

The College will ensure that:

- The range, content and delivery of the curriculum reflect the needs of students and the community;
- We create a learning environment which embraces diversity through the use of positive images, appropriate facilities and specific awareness raising events;
- We promote and maintain an inclusive and supportive work and study environment, which affirms the rights of individuals to be treated fairly and with respect and affords opportunities to reach their full potential;
- We promote the values of the College as described in the College Respect agenda to encourage a positive learning culture.

4.3 Support services and facilities

The College will ensure there is a range of support services and facilities is provided which will enable students with particular physical, social and cultural needs to participate fully in College life, including:

- Tutorial support
- Additional support with learning e.g. English and Maths
- Additional learning support e.g. dyslexia, hearing and autistic support specialists
- Financial and welfare advice
- Personal counselling
- Social, recreational and catering facilities
- Learner Voice activities
- Student Ambassador programme

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- Student Council

The College will ensure that our support services and facilities are publicised to students and potential applicants through recruitment and publicity materials, the College website, the student handbook and at induction.

4.4 Multi-faith prayer room - for any religious persuasion or none

The multi-faith prayer room (2.42) is available for all College staff, students and official visitors.

Staff and students can use the room for individual prayer and meditation. The facility is available to assist the prayers of members of any religion and it is asked that users are mindful of others using the room. Others may wish to pray at the same time or wish to use the space to quietly think and reflect. Access is available via the key at Reception.

5. Staff

5.1 Recruitment and selection

The College will ensure that:

- When a vacancy arises, the person specification identifies the essential and desirable levels of qualifications/training, knowledge/experience and skills/abilities required for the job;
- Posts are advertised internally and/or externally to attract applicants who meet the person specification;
- Applicants are considered on the basis of their suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the requirements set out in the person specification.
- All applications are anonymised during the shortlisting process to avoid discrimination.

5.2 Training and Development

The College will ensure that:

- Training and development needs are identified through performance improvement processes;
- Equality, diversity and inclusion training is offered as part of the induction for new staff.

5.3 Working environment

The College will ensure that:

- Reasonable adjustments to premises or working arrangements are made to ensure that employees are not disadvantaged on the grounds of any protected characteristics.

6. Harassment, victimisation and discrimination

- The College will not tolerate harassment, victimisation or discrimination and has procedures in place to deal with such incidents.
- Students who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against or otherwise treated unfairly within the scope of this policy, may raise their concerns with their tutor in the first instance. Alternatively, they may pursue the matter through the student complaints procedure.
- Staff who feel that they have been unfairly treated within the scope of this policy may raise their concern through the staff grievance procedures.

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- Staff or students whose conduct breaches this policy through discrimination, harassment or victimisation of others will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure for staff or students, as appropriate.



Single Equality Scheme

2023 – 2027

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Introduction

This Single Equality Scheme brings together our plans across the College. The objectives demonstrate our commitment to continued action in tackling inequality and promoting diversity.

The purpose of this Scheme is to set out the ways in which we will continue to meet our legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010. The Act specifies nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

The general equality duty requires due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The specific duties require public bodies to:

- Publish information demonstrating their compliance with the equality duty
- Set themselves specific equality objectives

Evidence Base

To inform the setting of objectives and the measurement of our progress in achieving them, we aim to collect and analyse the following information by the different protected characteristics:

For Learners

- Profile of learners
- Student recruitment
- Apprenticeship recruitment
- Retention and achievement rates
- Progression
- Complaints
- Student surveys
- Disciplinary actions
- Bullying incidents
- Work placements

For Staff

- Profile of staff by job role
- Recruitment and selection
- Gender pay gaps
- Disciplinary proceedings
- Grievances
- Exit interviews
- Flexible working
- Maternity/paternity/shared parental numbers

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Equality Priorities

We have identified our key objectives to allow us to focus on those things that will make the biggest impact in terms of advancing equality, diversity & inclusion, and to help the College achieve its wider strategic aims.

Equality Objective 1: Ensure the safety and well-being of students across all protected characteristics

The College will:

- Make clear to all students what is expected in terms of their behaviour
- Ensure the rates for recorded bullying incidents are comparable for all protected characteristics
- Ensure the rates for disciplinary actions (academic and behaviour) are comparable for disability-no disability, ethnicity groups, and males-females
- Ensure student satisfaction rates for feeling safe, as evidence through student surveys, are comparable for students across all protected characteristics

Equality Objective 2: to strive and reduce the gender pay gap

The College will:

- Aim to attract more females in those teaching roles where males dominate
- Where above vacancies arise, specifically target female groups
- Ensure any job vacancy adverts contain positive messages to and about females
- Promote other job-related aspects that might appeal to females - e.g. family friendly policies and the potential to job share

Equality Objective 3: become more a more diverse and inclusive workforce in terms of race

The College will:

- Where above vacancies arise, specifically target non-white groups
- Ensure any job vacancy adverts contain positive messages to and about non-white people
- Promote other job-related aspects that might appeal to a more diverse and inclusive workforce - e.g. family friendly policies, potential to job share and flexible working options.

Equality Objective 4: Improve the data monitoring of our workforce to ensure advancing equality of opportunity

The College will:

- Ensure all staff records on the HR Management system are completed personal information including the 'prefer not to say' option
- Monitor the staff recruitment stages (application/shortlisting/interview/offer) for the range of protected characteristics
- Monitor staff exit interviews for issues in relation to the protected characteristics