

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Our Policy

The purpose of this Equality policy is to define and encourage best practice, and to guide our compliance with the Equality Act 2010

At Bournemouth and Poole College we champion equality and diversity. For us, equality and diversity are about being pro-active, practical and positive.

### **We promote equality because we believe it's the right thing to do.**

Research shows that more equal societies are better for everyone<sup>1</sup>. Our college is a reflection of wider society. So we believe that a college that does well on equality is better for all of us.

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 three things for all of us:

- ✚ Being able get to, into and around the College, and complete the learning journey, with *equal ease and dignity*
- ✚ Having a *sense of belonging and being well looked after*
- ✚ Feeling the place, the programmes and the policies have been *designed with us in mind*

### **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; women, men and transgender; black and white; of all ages, cultures and faiths; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and straight; disabled and non-disabled; from nearby and further afield.

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 how we run the place – *Nothing about us without us*<sup>2</sup>
- ✚ Valuing our differences as well as the things we have in common

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.theequalitytrust.org.uk](http://www.theequalitytrust.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Slogan of the International Disability Rights Movement

## 1. Students and studying

Because we champion equality, diversity and inclusion (being included), all our courses give students:

- ✚ An unbiased insight into the subject
- ✚ Learning that starts close to home – with our own lives and experiences
- ✚ A broad view of how their course fits within the world
- ✚ Skills to help them learn throughout their lives within a changing world
- ✚ An understanding of fundamental British Values
- ✚ Freedom of Expression

And readiness for a world of work where:

- ✚ Diverse teams are normal
- ✚ Teamwork is highly prized
- ✚ Flexible, open and creative minds are valued
- ✚ Democracy and rule of law are standard

**Harassment and bullying<sup>3</sup> are not be tolerated** including the use of social media and comments such as ‘I didn’t mean it’ or ‘It was only a joke’.

When you enrol, we talk through your whole learning journey, checking that each step is accessible and possible with dignity and ease.

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

So, ours is a College where, for example:

- Women and men study together on everything from engineering to child care
- 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

**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**
- ✚ **Students are well safeguarded and aware of the threat of radicalisation**

---

<sup>3</sup> See also the *Dignity at Work Policy*

## 2 Staff and working

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

- ✚ Treats all staff with respect and dignity
- ✚ Values everyone's work and takes our 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 support positive action to increase the diversity of the 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 and 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
- ✚ No one is put down in public – even when they may be wrong

Harassment and bullying<sup>4</sup> are not tolerated in any form, even under the guise of 'getting the job done'.

So, ours is a College where, for example:

- Deadlines are set with consideration for others
- Opportunities are available for flexible working
- Line-management is honest, open and supportive – and staff are accountable
- Opportunities for career development are transparent and fair

Equality, diversity and inclusion are everyone's responsibility.

### What does excellence look like?

- ✚ **Staff contribute to an open and honest, supportive and inclusive culture**
- ✚ **Policies and ways-of-working promote equality and value diversity**
- ✚ **Staff have the support and the skill to promote equality in their work**

---

<sup>4</sup> See also the *Dignity at Work Policy*

### 3 Leadership and managing

Societies where the gap between the rich and poor is closest are better for everyone [see above]. **Inequality** is about the social and economic gap between the haves and have-nots. Promoting equality is about helping close this gap and having 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 more and those who have less, and making sure ‘less’ 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
- ❖ Our remuneration policy and pay rates reflect our commitment to reducing inequality
- ❖ Contracts of employment model fair, respectful and equitable practice

#### ❖ Leadership from the top

Senior managers take the lead on promoting equality and diversity, and setting the tone on inclusion. All managers integrate equality and diversity into their specific projects and day-to-day work.

This means managers who, for example:

- ✚ Start and finish meetings on time
- ✚ Meet staff 1:1 on a regular basis
- ✚ Do what they say they’ll do - and tackle problems swiftly
- ✚ Are clear and consistent – because the opposite can be undermining
- ✚ 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

We consult with others so our decision-making is not too narrowly focused.

*‘Any management writing a policy without consultation must be doing so because they believe ordinary people could not possibly add anything to their perfect decision making.’*

#### What does excellence look like?

- ✚ **Clear leadership by managers on equality and diversity**
- ✚ **Collaborative management throughout the College**
- ✚ **Accountable plans to promote equality and diversity**
- ✚ **Ensuring compliance with all legal duties**






## 4 Local community and procurement

The College spends millions of pounds each year buying services from other organisations – including builders, engineers, suppliers etc.

We also work in partnership with a large number of local employers on, for example, apprenticeship schemes.




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<sup>5</sup>. This means we favour contractors who can demonstrate, for example:

-  A commitment to fair and equitable employment practices – including wages levels and gender differentials
-  A guarantee on the well-being of our students, and protection from harassment and discrimination
-  Evidence of ethical practices in relation to the environment and sustainability
-  Involvement with the local community and a commitment to training young people
-  Diversity among their directors / owners

Our priority in procuring, commissioning or contracting services is to work with small 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 with other employers to promote equality and environmental best practice**

---

<sup>5</sup> See College Procurement Policy for more details

## 5 Places and spaces – our environment

We champion inclusive design because inclusive design is how equality is applied to the built environment - our buildings and the spaces around them.

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











Inclusive design is about making sure places and spaces are welcoming and easy to use. This means we involve as many different people as possible in the planning and design, building and management of our places and spaces. It's part of being an organisation that values collaboration and uses diversity to improve how we do things.

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

We support the slogan of the international disability rights movement:

***Nothing about us without us***

An inclusive environment means, for example:





-  Autism-friendly learning spaces
-  Entrances designed for people with sight and mobility impairment
-  Classrooms with excellent acoustics
-  Dyslexia sensitive web-site
-  Hearing loops in all open public spaces
-  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
-  Gender neutral toilets

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
- Professional 'Access Audits' influence our building plans
- You are unlikely to hear us say: 'Access is a budget issue'

Not every space will be accessible to everyone but we will do our utmost to make it so.

### What does excellence look like?

-  **Wide consultation and acting on what we hear - with inclusive results**
-  **Creative and imaginative solutions to design dilemmas**
-  **State-of-the-art places and spaces which work for everyone**
-  **Policies that ensure the safety and well-being of students, students and visitors**

## 6 Our equality priorities

Our duty is protection from discrimination or harassment on the basis of eight 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, and safety in public spaces, as well as other life factors which carry stigma and stereotype such as HIV status, unemployment and under-employment, residency status and asylum, ability in language and literacy etc.

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

*All these characteristics and situations are covered by this policy*





## 7 Our College values

Equality, diversity and inclusion are part of the College values:

- 1 **Committed to learning**  
Dedicated in our learning, teaching and support
- 2 **Make it enjoyable**  
Cultivating a positive and supportive College environment
- 3 **Consistent and fair**  
Applying and upholding our values and standards
- 4 **Respectful and considerate**  
Treating each other, our College and community, with respect and consideration
- 5 **Value everybody**  
Valuing the contribution and achievements of every person in the College

## 8 British values

We are also committed to embedding and promoting the Government's fundamental British Values within our daily College life:

-  Democracy
-  The rule of law
-  Individual liberty
-  Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

## 9 The legal context

Because the College receives public funds, we are bound by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty<sup>6</sup>.

This requires us, in all we do, to have due regard to the need to:

### 1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment

For example:

- A pay audit reveals significant differentials in take-home pay between two staff teams doing different jobs but jobs of equal worth: one team – mostly men, and another team – mostly women.  
An action plan is drawn up to change the women's pay rate
- A transgender student is recommended not to join a local firm as an apprentice because 'she is likely to be bullied'.  
The College works with the firm's managers to make sure there is a safe and supportive environment

### 2 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

For example:

- Focus groups of disabled staff, students and others advise us on how to make the design of the new Student Advice Centre inclusive and accessible
- Additional tutorial time helps close the success rate gap between young men and young women on A level science courses

### 3 Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

For example:

- Unbiased information is included in some courses about the history and lives of Traveller communities and the ways in which they are excluded and stigmatised – follow a series of negative reports on local TV
- Activities take place involving both staff and students on World Mental Health Day to counter stereotypes of mental illness

The College also upholds its commitment to the Prevent Duty 2015 and ensures that our staff and students are protected from the threat of radicalisation.

## 10 How we organise equality, diversity and inclusion in the College

Equality and diversity are managed by the Executive – the Principal and the senior leadership team.

There is an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group. This group researches and promotes best practice, and supports developing annual Equality action plan for the Executive.

---

<sup>6</sup> 'What the equality law means for you as an education provider – further and higher education. Equality & Human Rights Commission 2011



