

# Diversity & Equality Policy

For the attention of: All staff, students, visitors and people using the services of the College (e.g. catering or employed through agencies, contractors or subcontractors)

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## Our Mission

**Inspire ambition and make a positive difference to lives through learning.**

## Our Values

**Learners First** - placing the learner at the heart of all we do

**Community** - working collaboratively to achieve

**Empowering** - enabling all in a caring environment to achieve their full potential

**Excellence** - a culture of creativity, high expectations, ambition and aspiration

**Diversity** - celebrating diversity and inclusivity as a key to our success

**Integrity** - honesty, openness and trust at the heart of College life

**Respect** - showing fairness, courtesy and mutual respect

**This policy applies to all sub-contractors in the ESF project**

# Diversity & Equality Policy

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## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The Windsor Forest Colleges Group (TWFCG) values the rich diversity of not only its local community but also the wider area from which people are recruited to the College Group.
- 1.2. It is committed to equality and diversity for all who learn, work or use our services and providing high quality services fairly and equitably to the whole community. The contribution of our staff is critical to achieving this and the Group recognises the importance of having a diverse and representative workforce able to meet the needs of all communities.
- 1.3 The Windsor Forest Colleges Group is committed to our Public Sector Equality Duty to:
  - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

*(N.B. These are explained in more detail in Section 8 Definitions and Abbreviations)*

- 1.4 The College Group believes valuing diversity means recognising the strengths, talents and needs of every individual, nurturing potential, maximising opportunities and positively promoting tolerance and respect for all individuals.
- 1.5 The College Group recognises that all have a right of equality of opportunity irrespective of race; disability; gender; gender reassignment; age; nationality; sexual orientation; religion or belief; marital or civil partnership status; pregnancy or maternity status; or socio-economic status, background or class.
- 1.6 The Windsor Forest Colleges Group will publish information to demonstrate our commitment to and compliance with the specific equality duties across our functions.

## 2. Purpose

This policy provides the overarching Groups' vision, values and commitments to equality and diversity. It reflects our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all members of the College Group, including staff, students, governors and visitors to the College Group. It also applies to people using the services of the College Group, e.g. catering or employed through agencies, contractors or sub-contractors.
- 3.2 Staff or students who are working or studying in premises not belonging to the College Group will still be subject to the policy.
- 3.3 The policy also extends to cover behaviour in the VLE; e-mail and other social media (see Social Media Policy)
- 3.4 Behaviour outside working time and outside College Groups' premises may also fall within the scope of this policy. For example, the Group has a duty to act where discriminatory behaviour or harassment by a staff member outside working hours affects a member of staff or student, either directly or indirectly.

3.5 Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously and may lead to disciplinary action.

## 4. Objective

The College Group takes its responsibilities for equality of opportunity seriously and recognises that any discrimination that exists can only be eliminated in partnership with staff. The expectation for fair and inclusive practices will be reflected in all employees' performance indicators and will form an integral part of performance reviews throughout the year.

## 5. Policy Details

5.1 The Windsor Forest College Group aims to:

5.1.1 Build a diverse workforce that at all levels broadly represents the community it seeks to service. A diverse workforce is a potential source of accurate and unbiased information about existing and potential customers. It can help the Group to plan successful strategies and is key to providing and continually improving services through responsive and sympathetic staff.

5.1.2 Treat all employees and applicants for employment fairly and ensure they are not discriminated against because of their race (this includes colour; nationality and ethnic or national origins), gender, disability, age, religion or belief, social background; sexual orientation, gender re-assignment; pregnancy or maternity; and marriage or civil partnership.

5.1.3 Regularly review its recruitment and selection procedures to ensure fair access to all jobs. People will be selected on merit, based on their skills, abilities, experience and qualifications to carry out the job to the required standard as defined in the job description.

5.1.4 Regularly review how and where posts are advertised so that no sector of the community is excluded from finding out about the jobs available.

5.1.5 Support and maintain the "Disability Confident" initiative. This includes a guarantee to interview any disabled applicant who based on their application form and supporting information appears to meet the minimum requirements of the post. The College Group will, wherever reasonable and practicable, retain and/or provide equipment and facilities to retain an existing employee who becomes disabled

5.1.6 Ensure that all employees are valued and treated with dignity and respect. Where harassment, victimisation or bullying are found in the workplace this will be confronted and dealt with under the Group's Disciplinary policy. Every employee has a responsibility to challenge and report inappropriate behaviour. Conduct of this type will often be gross misconduct which can lead to dismissal without notice.

5.1.7 Provide fair access to training and development opportunities that provides individuals with the opportunity to advance in their careers and meet the business objectives of their department.

5.1.8 Support employees who wish to use a mode of dress dictated by cultural and religious beliefs. However, where uniforms are provided or where the wearing of any apparel may conflict with health and safety regulations, the relevant manager may impose restrictions.

- 5.1.9 Consider adapting Group requirements or practices where they are contrary to employees cultural and religious needs e.g. allowing employees to have the time and location to pray where this is a requirement of their religion.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY**

- 5.2 The Windsor Forest College Group aims to:
- 5.2.1 Ensure equal access, fair treatment and appropriate provision to the whole community regardless of race, gender, disability, age, religion/belief, nationality, social background or sexual orientation and any other reason not connected to entitlement and availability.
- 5.2.2 Celebrate equality and diversity for example via posters; tutorial activities and College Group wide celebratory events.
- 5.2.3 Embed equality and diversity within curriculum planning; teaching and learning.
- 5.2.4 Provide high quality services designed to meet a wide range of different needs in the community and regularly review them by seeking the views of the existing and potential customers so as to ensure that we do not disadvantage customers either now or in the future.
- 5.2.5 Provide appropriate services, adapting these to meet the needs of the whole community promoting equal access to services, including producing clear information about how to access services (e.g.in different languages and large print).
- 5.2.6 Provide additional learning support (ALS) tailored to individual needs for learners who require ALS to support their learning and progression.
- 5.2.7 Provide and publicise clear information about how dissatisfied customers can complain about the services they have received, and how the College Group will respond to any complaints received.
- 5.2.8 Consult with and actively listen to people who use our services by seeking regular feedback through a variety of means including meeting with members of the various communities.
- 5.2.9 Ensure that, wherever feasible, all services and buildings are accessible.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 6.1 Successful implementation of the policy will depend on a partnership between the College Group, the students and the community, and will involve:
- 6.2 Governors are responsible for:
- ensure the College Group's strategic plan has a commitment to equality and diversity
  - to engage with and represent the local community
  - to be represented on the Equality and Diversity Steering Group
  - ensuring the College meets all its legislative duties, including the general and the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 and all subsequent legislation.
  - Striving to ensure that the membership of the body of governors and advisors reflects the diversity of the student communities at the College Group.

- Monitoring equality and diversity reporting through the committee structure.

6.3 The Chief Executive and Group Principal and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Leading the promotion of an inclusive College culture of awareness, understanding and respect.
- Implementing the Equality Act 2010, including the general and specific duties and all subsequent legislation, and of the Equality and Diversity Policy and to agree equality targets
- Approving the membership structure of the Equality and Diversity group.
- Producing and publishing the annual Equality and Diversity Report.
- Ensuring the staff and students understand their responsibilities and are given appropriate support and training to enable them to carry out their duties.
- To ensure equality and diversity data is embedded within our self-assessment reports
- To challenge existing cultures and traditions
- To engage with the community

6.4 The Equality and Diversity Steering Group (with the associated Equality and Diversity Working Groups at each College) is responsible for:

- Reviewing the policy annually
- Monitoring its effectiveness and measure its impact
- Agreeing and monitoring equality objectives
- Advancing Equality and Diversity by disseminating information about equality issues within the Group
- Encouraging and supporting teaching, learning and assessment activities across the Group that embed and advance the promotion of equality and diversity.
- Contributing to the annual Equality Information report
- Providing a forum to address equality and diversity issues raised by staff and students.
- Identifying and promoting relevant staff training opportunities and activities.

6.5 All staff are responsible for:

- Promoting an inclusive College Groups' culture of awareness, understanding and respect.
- Challenging inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour.
- Contributing to self-assessment reporting on how equality and diversity are promoted in their areas.
- Reporting incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- To attend and complete relevant training to understand the policy and the implications for their role and responsibilities
- To familiarise themselves with any related procedures and codes of practice.
- To adopt appropriate behaviour towards students, members of the public and other employees in a manner that promotes good practice in equal opportunities.
- To reflect policy requirements in their written communication and publications both within and outside the College Group.

6.6 Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Developing schemes of work, lesson content and resources which recognise and promote inclusion.

- Fully integrating and embedding equality and diversity within curriculum planning and teaching, learning and assessment.
- Regularly reviewing the promotion of equality and diversity in individual subject areas and improving the opportunities identified in the scheme of work.

6.7 Students are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive Groups' culture of awareness, understanding and respect.
- Behave in a way which does not discriminate against, bully or harass any individual or group.
- Report incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

6.8 All Stakeholders (for example, parents/carers, governors, contractors, visitors) are expected to:

- Behave in a way which does not discriminate against, bully or harass any individual or group.
- Behave in a way that does not contravene the Group's Equality and Diversity Policy.

6.9 Staff and students who do not comply with this policy may be subject to the Group's Disciplinary Policies and Procedures.

## 7. Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

7.1. The Windsor Forest College Group will plan, monitor and evaluate the success of its work towards promoting diversity and equality within employment and service delivery.

7.1.1. Monitoring employment data:-

- Staff profile
- Staff development
- Disciplinary
- Grievances

7.1.2 Monitoring information by the use of Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMS) within the curriculum areas on:-

- Recruitment, retention, achievement and success.
- Attendance
- Enrichment
- Progression
- Learner satisfaction
- Complaints
- Disciplinary records
- Change management

7.2 Regular reports will be submitted to the Equality & Diversity Steering Group.

7.3 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. Where necessary, the review will be more frequent to ensure compliance with current legislation.

7.4 The Groups' progress in meeting the legislative requirements of the Equality Act 2010 will be published on our website on an annual basis.

## 8. Definitions and Abbreviations

“Protected Characteristic”. The Equality Act 2010 introduced the term to refer to aspects of a person’s identity explicitly protected from unlawful discrimination. Nine are identified: - Race; Disability; Gender; Age; Sexual Orientation; Religion and Belief; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy/Maternity and Marriage/Civil Partnership.

Socio-economic status, class or background is not a “protected characteristic” under the Equality Act but we consider it important the experiences of groups of people whose life chances may be affected by their social identity, in particular those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

### Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

“**Advance**”equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- Remove/minimise disadvantages experienced by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant characteristic that are different from the needs of people who don’t share it.
- Encourage people with a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activities where participation by such people is disproportionately low.

“**Foster**” good relations includes having due regard to tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

## 9. Associated Documents

- Dignity At Work Policy
- Equality Objectives
- Guidance for Trans Students and Trans Staff
- Recruitment Policy
- Lesson Observation Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Student Management Procedures/College Behaviour Management Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure

## APPENDIX 1. LEGISLATION

The Equality Act 2010 recognises the following types of discrimination:

- A. Direct discrimination, including associative and perception discrimination
- B. Indirect discrimination
- C. Harassment
- D. Victimisation
- E. Disability discrimination
- F. Failure to make reasonable adjustments

- A. Direct discrimination – occurs when someone is treated unfairly, or less favourably than another person because they have a protected characteristic. This often arises because of assumptions, stereo-typing or prejudice.
  - a. Associative discrimination – direct discrimination against someone because the associate with another person who has a protected characteristic, e.g. a parent of a child with disabilities
  - b. Perception discrimination – direct discrimination against someone because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic, e.g. believing someone is gay.
- B. Indirect discrimination – happens when a ‘provision, criterion or practice’ is applied that appears to affect everyone equally but which in fact puts people who share a protected characteristic at a disadvantage.
- C. Harassment – occurs when someone behaves in such a way that a person’s dignity is violated, or behaves in such a way that they create an environment that is offensive, hostile, degrading, humiliating or intimidating for a person where this is:
  - a. Related to a protected characteristic (except pregnancy/maternity or marriage/civil partnerships) or
  - b. Of a sexual nature (sexual harassment)
  - c. Where a person is treated less favourably because they either submitted to or rejected sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or to gender reassignment (known as consequential harassment)

The Act does not specifically cover harassment on the grounds of pregnancy/maternity or marriage/civil partnerships. However, direct discrimination prohibits treatment such as bullying or harassment which results in a person being treated less favourably.

The Act changes the definition of harassment from unwanted conduct “on the grounds of” to unwanted conduct “related to”. This subtle difference has two benefits.

Firstly, it will protect people who are offended by the conduct even if it is not specifically directed at them. Example a white woman sees a person from a black and minority ethnic background being subjected to racially abusive language and complains that this has caused her environment to be offensive, even though she is white and not the subject of the abuse.

Secondly, the definition protects in relation to association or perception. For example, it will provide protection for someone who experiences harassment because their partner or their son is a disabled person.

- D. Victimisation – occurs when someone is treated unfairly or less favourably because they have supported someone in making a complaint or an allegation of discrimination or because they personally have made an allegation of discrimination.

- E. Discrimination arising from a disability – occurs when a disabled person is treated less favourably because of something connected to their impairment, medical condition or specific learning difficulty.
- F. Failure to make reasonable adjustments – occurs when an organisation fails to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person, to avoid the disabled person being placed at a substantial disadvantage when compared to a non-disabled person.

**Current subcontractors in the ESF Project are:**

- West Berkshire Training Consortium
- Newbury College
- Bracknell and Wokingham College
- TESS – Training Event Solutions
- Berkshire College of Agriculture
- Alan Hester Associates
- Construction Skills People