



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

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Audience:	Staff, Learners, Governors, Stakeholders

Equality and Diversity (E&D) Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 South Staffordshire College is fully committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and to upholding the rights and responsibilities of staff, students and visitors. The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidance regarding equal opportunities and to establish key principles, structures and monitoring arrangements to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 encompassing three broad aims:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- 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.

1.2 The College is fully committed to exercising its duty as a public sector organisation to prevent learners and staff engaging in radicalisation, extremism and terrorism. We believe that respect for all persons should be at the heart of all that we do. The PREVENT agenda and the positive promotion of British Values - democracy, individual freedom, rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance for people of different religions and beliefs - marries with our organisational commitment to fostering good relations between different groups of people and positively promoting E&D in all that we do.

1.3 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of our commitment for the promotion of E&D and to meet the legal requirements of the Act. The active promotion of E&D will support the College to attract high calibre staff and provide a welcoming environment for all potential learners to support recruitment. Through this strategy we aim to embed E&D within the culture of the College by ensuring that policy making, service delivery and employment practice are fair and transparent. The protected characteristics covered by the policy are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including ethnicity, national origin, colour)
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

1.4 This policy will support the implementation of our vision:

“Transforming the life chances of our communities.”

2.0 Scope

2.1 The scope of this policy will ensure all procedures and processes of the College, relating to the legal observation and promotion of equal opportunities, are observed.

2.2 This policy applies to all learners, staff, governors, contractors, clients, business partners, volunteers and visitors with whom we work to deliver services.

2.3 Policies linked this include:

- Learner Conduct
- FE Learner Financial Support and Bursary
- Child Protection, Safeguarding and PREVENT Policy
- E-Safety
- Compliments, Comments and Complaints
- Capability
- Employee Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Recruitment and Selection
- Adoption Leave and Pay
- Maternity and paternity procedures
- CPD procedures
- Sick Pay
- CRB Policy

3.0 2025 Vision and Strategic Objectives

3.1 This policy will be implemented in a manner that embraces our “Values” and “Guiding Principles:

Guiding Principles:

- Excellence in learning and teaching
- Community contribution
- Entrepreneurial attitude

Values:

- *Togetherness* - Working together to provide an outstanding experience for our learners, employers and communities
- *Standards* - High performance to enhance life chances and success of learners, communities and employers
- *Sustainability* - A beacon for sustainable development, to educate, inspire and enhance quality of life
- *Customer Care* - Exceed the expectations of all by providing creative leadership, inclusivity and respect for people and their future

3.2 The College's strategic operating plan provides a framework from which all actions on equality, diversity and inclusion flow. The E&D Action Plan will contribute to the meeting of the College's overall strategic priorities:

- Increase participation
- Deliver outstanding teaching, learning and business services
- Deliver excellence
- Develop a highly engaged and skilled workforce
- Achieve financial stability and improve efficiency

4.0 Equality Objectives and Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs)

4.1 The Equality Act requires public bodies to set Equality Objectives at least every four years, and they have to be "stretching". These are measured through the setting of Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) to accompany them. To accompany the objectives, the College will review and implement annual EDIMs to accompany the objectives which will be reported on annually through the College's E&D report.

4.2 The policy recognises the additional considerations of direct discrimination by association and perception, indirect discrimination, detriment arising from disability, harassment and victimisation. Active promotion of fundamental British Values links clearly with this policy along with the expectation that opinions and behaviours that are contrary to the values are challenged. Developing an understanding of different cultures and faiths in learners will support the College's approach to combating discrimination.

4.3 Equality Objectives:

1. Foster good relations between different groups
2. Promote the Harassment and Bullying procedure to learners to eliminate bullying
3. Narrow the success and achievement gap of different groups (EDIMS Targets)
4. Ensure that there is a continued analysis of staff and learners in line with statutory requirements
5. Increase understanding and awareness of E&D

5.0 Implementing the Policy

5.1 It is our intention to ensure that no person is subject to unfair treatment in any way and we recognise our responsibilities and legal obligations and this policy will be implemented in accordance with all existing and emerging legislation.

5.2 The policy will be publicised as widely as possible to include staff, learners, governors, business partners and the community and will be available in a variety of formats on request.

5.3 Legally, the College's Governors are the "responsible body" for E&D and have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the organisation is compliant with the law and the public sector duties. They should therefore ensure that they have an awareness of all relevant legislation; that membership of the Board reflects the wider community; that the strategic plan includes a commitment to E&D and that they receive and respond to equal opportunities monitoring data. They should also ensure that all staff are aware of, and implement their legal and other responsibilities with overall responsibility distributed through:

- The Principal is responsible to the Board of Governors for ensuring that E&D is continuously promoted and comprehensively implemented in all aspects of the College's operations.
- The Assistant Principal – Human Resources is responsible for advancing, monitoring and implementing all aspects of the policy relating to the recruitment, employment and retention of staff.
- The Assistant Principal – Learner Services has day to day responsibility for overseeing E&D issues in relation to learners and ensuring that they are kept high on the agenda by cascading information on legislation, policy and initiatives to staff, providing briefings and email alerts where required.
- All managers of the College are responsible for advancing E&D and inclusion in their areas. This involves addressing the equality objectives, increasing the representation of particular groups of learners, improving the performance of all learners (particularly those from protected characteristics) in their individual curriculum area or department, promoting inclusion and good relations and challenging discrimination, harassment and bullying. It also means ensuring that all staff access appropriate levels of training on E&D issues. They must also ensure that effective self-assessment monitoring and review systems are in place to measure equality and diversity outcomes.
- All employees of the College have a responsibility for implementing the E&D policy and advancing equal opportunities in all aspects of their work.

5.4 The Safeguarding and E&D (SED) Committee is responsible for developing, advancing, monitoring and reviewing the policy and evaluating its effectiveness by:

- Setting and monitoring equality and diversity performance measures (EDIMs);
- Monitoring and analysing data on learner applications, enrolment, retention and achievement in terms of age, ethnicity, gender and disability with a view to comparing trends and highlighting and improving or narrowing the gap of any imbalances identified;
- Monitoring and analysing student progression in terms of age, ethnicity, gender and disability, including progression within the College, progression into other educational institutions and, where possible, progression to employment;
- Monitoring and analysing staff recruitment and progression in terms of age, ethnicity, gender and disability;
- Ensuring College policies in relation to E&D are regularly monitored, reviewed and updated, in line with legal requirements and external body recommendations;

- Holding regular meetings of the SED at which the views of staff and learners are represented and policies and practices are regularly examined and reviewed;
- Producing an Annual Equality and Diversity Report for submission to the Chief Executive and Principal, ELT and Governors.

5.5 To further this policy, South Staffordshire College will ensure that:

- All staff receive training in E&D and are updated with relevant changes as necessary
- All managers regularly monitor teaching and assessment materials to ensure they comply with equal opportunities legislation and promote E&D, preparing learners appropriately for further study and/or work
- All learners receive information relating to E&D at induction and opportunities to celebrate diversity are promoted throughout the year

6.0 Annual E&D Report

6.1 To inform the setting of objectives and the measurement of our progress in achieving them, the College will collect and analyse the following information by the different “protected characteristics” and report on them in the annual Equality and Diversity report:

For Learners

- Profile of learners
- Applications, success and failure rates of admissions to programmes
- Success, Retention, Achievement rates
- Progression
- Disciplinary action
- Complaints by learners
- Satisfaction levels
- Safeguarding analysis
- Health and Safety analysis

For Employees:

- Profile of employees
- Profile of management
- Recruitment and selection by application, short listing, interview and appointment
- Type of contract
- Training application rates by contract
- Maternity/paternity/adoption numbers
- Promotion application and success rates
- Disciplinary and Grievance proceedings
- Satisfaction levels

7.0 Complaints

- 7.1** Complaints relating to E&D will be handled through the Compliments, Comments and Complaints procedure. In the event of any serious complaint, the issue will be raised with the Assistant Principal – Learner Services.
- 7.2** Complaints from staff relating to E&D will be handled through the usual grievance procedures by the HR department, with involvement of specialist E&D advisors, as appropriate.

8.0 Monitoring and Review

- 8.1** This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Governors every three years.
- 8.2** The internal monitoring of the implementation of this policy will be the responsibility of the SED Committee which will be chaired by the Assistant Principal – Learners Services.
- 8.3** The SED committee will produce a report to be considered by the Board on an annual basis.
- 8.4** The Assistant Principal – Learner Services has responsibility for ensuring that this policy and its associated processes and procedures remain appropriate and comply with changes in legislation.