

# Equality and Diversity Policy

**GATESHEAD COLLEGE**  
EDUCATION  
WITH  
EMPLOYMENT  
EDGE



<b>No: EQY-POL-001</b>	<b>Version: 15</b>
<b>Issue Date: 05/07/2023</b>	<b>Review Date: 05/07/2025</b>
<b>Author: Director of People &amp; OD</b>	<b>Approved by: Corporation Board</b>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) completed by: Director of People &amp; OD</b>	<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) completed on: 26.05.23</b>

## Monitor Changes

Version Level	Details of Change	Date
01	New document	10.10.02
02	Full review, re-write new template and logo,	18.10.07
03	Full re-write and modernisation to reflect current practice and title change (Previously Equal Opportunities Policy)	16.11.10
04	Change of template	01.02.12
05	Reviewed and updated	30.03.12
06	Reviewed to reflect changes in management	31.10.12
07	Reviewed and updated	02.12.13
08	Reviewed and updated	31.03.14
09	Reviewed and updated. Explanation of each protected characteristic added and changes to staff titles and responsibilities.	29.04.16
10	Reviewed and updated	10.01.18
11	Reviewed and updated. Provided additional details of complaint categories.	28.01.19
12	Updated Index of Multiple Deprivations	23.01.20
13	Updated staff titles to reflect new staff structures	03.02.21
14	Updated staff titles and inclusion of IHRA working definition of Anti-Semitism	29.09.21
15	Updated to remove out of date or unnecessary information and streamline wording	Drafted May 2023

<b>Key search words for this document</b>
Equality Diversity Inclusion EDI equal opportunities agreements regulations act equality diversity protected characteristics victimisation discrimination harassment

This front page is for monitoring and dissemination purposes only. It does not form part of this Policy document.



# Equality and Diversity Policy

## 1. Introduction

Gateshead College is fully committed to equality and diversity. We recognise that diversity is a positive attribute which brings many benefits. It is our intent to embed equality and diversity into the heart of the College's culture and to embrace all the aspects of a diverse workforce and student population. The aim of this policy is to support that intent by providing a framework for continuous improvement and to ensure we work together towards a fairer College and society. We will work to ensure that we move beyond compliance to secure excellence in all areas of our work.

We will continue to enhance our reputation as a courageous, intelligent, responsive, and responsible organisation where all flourish. We can only do this by being aware of who we are becoming and recognising our responsibilities to grow citizens and workers of tomorrow.

## 2. Commitments

A fully inclusive organisation, with equality and diversity embedded in everything we do, we will:

- aim to ensure that no one is treated less favourably than any other and all feel included;
- aim to provide an inclusive and harmonious place to work and study where equality and diversity is promoted, valued and the rights and dignity of individuals are respected;
- not tolerate any form of prejudice, discrimination, victimisation or harassment against employees, learners, or members of the public;
- assure that all policies, procedures, and services are free from direct and indirect discrimination;
- be an exemplar employer with equality of opportunity central to the recruitment and development of all our staff;
- create a working environment where people are engaged and inspired to work together with focus, commitment, and passion;
- behave responsibly and ethically as a business, doing the right things in the right way, and shaping students to become good citizens, living sustainable lives;
- be adaptable in service provision and design to meet the identified welfare, financial, disability, careers education and employment advice and support delivery for our students and potential students;
- support students and potential students to access appropriate support services, appropriate student finance packages, including external support services;
- in the spirit of partnership work with a cross section of stakeholders who help us deliver the key success identified in our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

Gateshead College Foundation is an independent charity set up by Gateshead College with the purpose of making sure that young people and adults, living in our region, can access funds to enable them to develop their skills and improve their life chances. The Foundation will provide resources and support not available through other statutory routes, to people who want to study a further education course at Gateshead College; this might be in the form of grants, scholarships, loans, equipment, gifts, bursaries, and prizes. It could help towards the payment of fees, pay for specialist equipment or uniforms, help talented athletes to go to competitions or help with travel costs - especially for those who live some distance away.

In addition to financial support, the Foundation will also seek to offer other forms of support, to ensure Gateshead College students experience the very best personal, professional, and social development we can offer. This may take the form of mentoring support, volunteering opportunities, work experience programmes and community projects.

### **3. Legislative framework**

The Equality Act 2010, consolidates protection against discrimination on the grounds of nine protected characteristics:

- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Gender reassignment**
- **Marriage and civil partnership**
- **Pregnancy and maternity**
- **Race**
- **Religion and belief**
- **Sex**
- **Sexual orientation**

The Equality Act 2010 also put in place a single public sector equality duty, which gives public authorities a legal responsibility to provide this protection and make decisions which are fair and transparent, including the allocation of public money.

The Equality Act harmonises the previous duties on race, disability and gender into one single duty, which covers all seven equality strands: age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The single public sector equality duty requires the College to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

It is deemed good practice to have a Single Equality Scheme (the Scheme) to identify and focus on key objectives/priorities.

The Scheme describes how we will fulfil our statutory duties to:

- promote equality of opportunity and diversity;
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
- place the advancement of inclusion, equality, and diversity at the centre of what we do;
- ensure that the College operates best practice as an employer and service provider in pursuit of equality and diversity.

The Scheme will be supported by our Single Equality Action Plan (SEAP).

#### **4. Scope**

This policy relates to:

- members of the Governing Body
- all staff (prospective and current)
- former staff (in some circumstances)
- students (prospective, current)
- former students (in some circumstances)
- contractors, partners, and third-party providers
- visitors and volunteers

For staff, this policy applies to (but is not limited to) advertising of jobs, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, reward, facilities, health, and safety, conduct at work, grievance and disciplinary procedures and termination of employment.

For students, this policy applies to (but is not limited to) admissions, teaching and learning, funding awards under the College's control, student support, facilities, health and safety, personal conduct, student references, student complaints and disciplinary procedures.

This policy also applies to work and services provided on behalf of Gateshead College by contractors, partners, and third-party providers. We expect contractors/sub-contractors that are undertaking building, maintenance, or repair work in any of our buildings/estate to comply with this policy.

#### **5. Strategy for Implementation**

To realise this commitment, we will:

- challenge inequality, prejudice, and discrimination.
- promote diversity in all its aspects, including employing a workforce and recruiting learners to reflect the community we serve.
- treat all people with respect and dignity.
- provide an environment free from prejudice, harassment, discrimination (direct/indirect), discrimination arising from disability and victimisation.
- where it is reasonable to do so make adjustments to enable equal access to college resources and services ensuring that none are treated less favourably.
- ensure that equality and diversity is embedded in all College policies, procedures, and Charters.
- ensure that all policies, strategies, and procedures have had an analysis on the effect on equality (new documents when written and current documents during review) to ensure that, where appropriate, they promote equality and do not unlawfully discriminate.
- work in partnership with recognised trade unions to ensure that staff are committed to the policy, and it is fully effective.
- inform all staff and learners about our commitment to equality and diversity.
- ensure that the learner's experience in College makes them more aware of equality issues.
- ensure that staff are working to narrow achievement gaps between different groups of learners.
- ensure equality and diversity are promoted through teaching and learning.

- promote our commitment to equality and diversity through positive statements and images in marketing and communications activities.
- ensure that any organisation that delivers services on behalf of the College (or works in partnership with the College) understands our commitment to equality and diversity and to eliminate discrimination.
- develop, publish, and implement a Single Equality Scheme which sets out how we will fulfil our statutory duties regarding promoting equality and tackling discrimination.
- seek to develop partnerships with external groups and organisations to develop best practice and widen the scope of our diversity activities in the community.
- staff or learners who are in breach of the Equality and Diversity Policy and/or relevant legislation will be dealt with through formal disciplinary procedures.

## 6. Responsibilities

- a) The Corporation designates the principal as having overall responsibility for equality and diversity.
- b) The Director of People and Organisational Development has accountability for setting the equality strategy and for overseeing the implementation of the equality and diversity policy and for ensuring an annual report is made to the Corporation.
- c) All staff have a contractual obligation to be committed to the equality and diversity policy and be proactive in its promotion and implementation.
- d) All students have a responsibility to comply with the Student Code of Conduct.
- e) The Equality & Diversity Steering Group, chaired by the Director of People and Organisational Development:
  - contributes to the shaping and implementation of Equality and Diversity strategies and policy.
  - drives the implementation of the Single Equality Scheme and action plan by on-going monitoring of performance and achievement of objectives.
  - identifies emerging issues and develops remedial actions.
  - considers, discusses, and implements best practice.
- f) The Head of People is responsible for ensuring the Equality & Diversity Policy is meeting its commitments by monitoring its implementation strategy.
- g) The Director of People and Organisational Development produces and presents a report to the Board of Governors as summarised below on an annual basis, highlighting areas of improvement and priorities arising for the following academic year:
  - progress against the objectives identified in the Single Equality Scheme and the delivery of the annual action plan reported by Chair of the Equality & Diversity Steering Group.
  - performance analysis of third-party deliverers - Director of Business Development.
  - use of positive statements and images across all aspects of college communication to promote our commitment to equality and diversity – Director of Marketing and Communications.
  - summary of progress to narrow learner equality achievement gaps - Assistant Principal - Standards and Performance.
  - summary of issues from recognised trade unions as required (NEU/UCU/UNISON) by the Head of People.

- summary of adjustments made for individuals to enable equal access to college resource and services – Head of Department - High Needs Learners, and the Facilities Manager.
- summary of complaints/grievances received in year from learners and staff - Head of Customer Services and Student Experience and the Head of People and Organisational Development.
- staff and learner profiles with comparisons drawn against the local community from the Head of People and Organisational Development, the Head of Customer Services and Student Experience and the Funding and Data Manager.

## **7. Measuring Impact**

Specific targets for improvement will be set, regularly monitored via the Equality & Diversity Steering Group and an annual report on progress, success and key issues presented to the Board of Governors.

## **8. Positive Action**

We will use positive action measures to alleviate disadvantage experienced by people sharing a protected characteristic, reduce their under representation in relation to activities or meet their particular needs. The College will ensure that when using positive action as a strategy, it falls within the law.

## **9. Complaints Procedure**

If a person e.g., student, former student, employee, 3<sup>rd</sup> party, partners, member of the public, 3<sup>rd</sup> party staff or Work Based Learners partner believes they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation the College will take this very seriously. All complaints (including those from whistle blowers) will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedure, i.e., complaints procedure, harassment/bullying procedure or grievance procedure.

## **10. Prevent**

There is no place for extremist views of any kind at Gateshead College, whether from internal sources – students, staff or governors, or external sources - community, external agencies, or individuals. It is imperative that our students see our college as a safe place where they can discuss and explore controversial issues safely and in an unbiased way and where our staff encourage and facilitate this. As a college we recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for our students. We also recognise that if we fail to challenge extremist views, we are failing to protect our students.

Any prejudice, discrimination, or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by students, staff, visitors or partners will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with using the relevant disciplinary procedure. Where deemed necessary the college will alert any concerns about extremism to partner agencies including the Police and local authorities.

## **11. Related Documents**

The following documents form part of this overall Equality and Diversity Policy for both students and employees:

- Public Interest Disclosure Policy – Raising a Concern at Work
- Complaints Procedures

- Student Harassment/Bullying Procedure (STM-PRO-009)
- Student Code of Conduct (STM-FRM-009/STM-PRO-005)
- Values in Action (HR-GDE-004)
- Grievance Procedure (staff) (HR-PRO-003)
- Harassment Policy (HR-POL-003)
- Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2019-21
- Analysis on the Effect of Equality (QTY-QSD-FRM-023)
- Recruitment Policy (HR-POL-005)
- Strategic Plan
- Prevent Policy (GC-POL-007)

## **12. Review**

This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis or in accordance with legislative developments and the need for good practice, using the local consultation/negotiating arrangements within the College.

Please note that if you require this document in an **alternative format**, please contact the Marketing department or Customer Services.