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THE POLICY STATEMENT

Northbrook College aims to be an outstanding organisation that welcomes values and celebrates diversity. The College believes all individuals should have every opportunity to achieve their full potential and provides a wide variety of learning opportunities across various locations within the local community to achieve this goal.

We believe everyone has the right to be treated fairly and all members of the College community – learners, staff, governors and visitors – are treated with respect and dignity.

We seek to provide a working environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation, where all learners, staff and visitors feel welcome, safe, valued and included in the College community.

The College's Single Equality Policy not only complies with legal requirements but also supports our mission, practices and core values. Central to our vision and practice is making a difference to the lives of the people we serve, with the aim of recognising the value of each individual.

The College seeks to safeguard the rights of all groups outlined in the Equality Act 2010 with reference to the protected characteristics: race, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender (sex), pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment.

We work to prevent, challenge and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of the protected characteristics, as well as unfair discrimination by perception or association.

The policy replaces and develops previous individual policies and schemes on age, disability, race and gender.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The College has an over-arching statement which outlines its commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and to eliminating unlawful discrimination.

REASONS FOR THE POLICY

To bring to life the College's values of inclusivity, valuing each other, developing students and staff to their full potential, serving our community and focusing on teaching and learning while operating in a sustainable way.

To provide an overarching statement that outlines the College's commitment to equality and diversity and links all the different equality strands into one equality policy.

To ensure the College meets all its duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Children and Learning Act 2009, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

To provide a framework which actively promotes equality and diversity in College life and ensure it is embraced by the College community. The College community includes learners, staff, governors, partner organisations/employers and visitors.

VALUES AND COMMITMENT

- To create a working and learning environment where positive relations are fostered between members with different protected equality characteristics.
- To provide a safe and welcoming environment for everyone in the College.
- To create an inclusive ethos, responding to individual needs where racism, stereotyping and discrimination can be discussed openly, challenged and prevented.
- To advance equality of opportunity.
- To undertake positive action to narrow achievement gaps between groups.
- To eliminate all forms of discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Each year as part of the self-assessment process, the College sets itself a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). In addition, there is a monthly HR report which analyses staffing, including recruitment from an E&D perspective and plans to address any areas of concern. These are shared with the Senior Leadership Team and the governors who monitor targets within the QIP.

CONSULTATION

The policy was developed in consultation with the Corporate Governing Body, staff and learners. These groups have had the opportunity to influence the policy at the meetings of the Corporate Governing Body, the Equality and Diversity Committee, the Managers' Training and Development Forum, the unions recognised by the College, and the Student Equality and Diversity Forum. Drafts of the policy were presented to these groups for amendment and suggestions as it was developed.

THE POLICY

Legal Compliance: The College will provide all information about its policy to learners, staff, governors, partner organisations/employers and volunteers. All members of the College community will be expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the policy.

Promotion: The College will promote equality of opportunity, positive attitudes and good relations between all members of the College community. All staff and students are responsible for the promotion of equality.

Impact Assessment: Our Impact Assessment monitors the impact on race, gender, disability and age and will be extended to all protected characteristics. The College has a public duty to assess the effect of the equality policy on staff and learners from different groups. It will do this by setting and monitoring equality and diversity targets as set out in the College Quality Improvement Plan. Each curriculum area is required to comment on equality and diversity issues within its area in the annual Self-Assessment Report.

All staff are required to highlight equality and diversity positively in their Schemes of Work and session plans. The impact of equality and diversity in teaching and learning is also measured during lesson observations.

Balancing Rights and Responsibilities: All members should exercise their right to freedom of expression in a way that is compatible with the rights and beliefs of others. The College will take necessary steps to balance the rights of individuals with divergent views that seem to be in conflict with common views, as sensitively as possible.

Positive Action: The College takes positive action to narrow gaps in achievement and address under-representation of groups in the provision of employment, education and training. It monitors data on race, gender, age, and disability among the staff and learners. There is an action plan to re-address any gaps revealed in its monitoring which is reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team and the Equality and Diversity Committee.

Teaching and Learning: The College will ensure that its teaching and learning strategy actively promotes equality of opportunity and meets the needs of individual

learners by ensuring effective and appropriate learning support is in place and teaching methods, approaches and materials are varied and relevant.

Complaints: The Marketing and Communications Manager oversees the formal complaints procedure. All formal complaints will be logged and investigated thoroughly in line with College procedure.

All members of the College community, including all learners, staff and subcontractors have a duty to report any act of discriminating behaviour, harassment and victimisation relating to protected characteristics.

Complaints or issues raised by learners, their parents/guardians or external organisations are covered by the Customer Complaints Procedure. Issues raised by staff are covered by the Grievance Procedure.

External Organisations: The College will actively promote equal opportunity with its partners, employers and work experience providers. The Apprenticeship Team requires that employers sign to confirm they have their own equality and diversity policy or will work with the College policy. Quality Assurance visits to partners and subcontractors are undertaken to monitor compliance and good practice.

Staff Development: The College is responsible for providing training on equality and diversity for its employees. This includes initial training at induction and further sessions at different levels to promote awareness. Training is designed to enable all staff to carry out their role in promoting equality, fostering good relations between different groups and eliminating discrimination.

Contribution to Community Cohesion: We are committed to building strong relationships with community groups and local organisations, contributing to community cohesion.

Monitoring and Review: The College assesses the success of policy and procedure through a variety of means. Equality Impact Assessment is a process of systematically checking policies and practices for any adverse impact that they may have on staff, students or the wider community.

The Single Equality policy is approved by the Corporate Governing Body and action plans and outcomes are monitored by the Governors, Senior Leadership Team and the Equality and Diversity Committee at meetings.

The Division of Responsibilities

The Corporate Governing Body: Reviews the College strategic plan and its commitment to equality and diversity and monitors compliance with current legislation and public sector duties. This includes monitoring the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Improvement Plan.

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team: Provides executive leadership and direction on equality issues. The Principal and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that the action plan is reviewed regularly.

Staff: All staff have responsibilities for promoting equality and fostering good relations between people of different ethnic, gender, age, disability and any other protected characteristics (See Appendix 1). The staff are responsible for putting policies into practice and challenging inappropriate behaviour from either learners, work placement providers or other members of staff.

Learners: As key stakeholders in the College, learners have a responsibility to comply with all College policies, treating fellow learners, staff and visitors with respect and dignity. Learners are made aware of the College policies at induction, during tutorial discussions and through various methods including posters and messages.

Equality and Diversity Committee: Chaired by the Principal and includes student representation. It monitors equality and diversity performance including monitoring and analysing data on student enrolment and success by gender, race, age and disability in line with Ofsted inspection. It also monitors staff recruitment, retention and promotion in terms of age, race, gender and disability.

Equality and Diversity Forum: Students can discuss equality issues that affect them and this is fed back to the Equality and Diversity Committee.

College Recognised Unions: As the recognised unions in the College, UCU, Unison, and AMiE have key roles to play in promoting, representing and monitoring equality issues. As democratic and member-led organisations they have a well-established history and practice of promoting equality from a grass roots perspective, both nationally and within the institution. At a college level, the unions also work closely with the Senior Leadership Team on equality issues – advising, negotiating and representing their membership through both formal and informal channels, including regular Joint Consultative Group meetings and representation on the Equality and Diversity Committee.

REPORTING ON THE POLICY

The Single Equality policy is available on the staff intranet and student intranet and College website

- The Single Equality Policy and public sector duty once approved by the Corporate Governing Body, will be published on the Intranet and reviewed annually
- The policy will be monitored through the Finance and HR Committee in terms of staff and through the Curriculum and Standards Committee in terms of students

- Review of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan at Equality and Diversity Committee meetings and monitoring of targets.
- Minutes of the Equality and Diversity Committee are available on the Intranet.

Appendix 1

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Equality and Diversity is a feature of all our policies as evidenced below:

Admission of Students Policy
Admission of Students with Complex Needs Procedure
Capability Procedure
Customer Complaints Procedure
Grievance Procedure [Staff]
Harassment Policy and Procedure (Staff)
Homeworking Policy
Induction Policy and Procedure
Lone Working Policy
Mental Health Policy (Students)
Redundancy Procedure
Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy
Safer Recruitment of Staff Policy
Sickness Policy
Staff Disciplinary Procedure
Student Anti-Bullying Policy
Student Charter
Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy
Student Disciplinary Procedure
Tutorial Policy
Stress Management Policy

Appendix 2

Protected Characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010

Race Equality

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the College has a general duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful race discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people from different racial groups

The College also has specific duties to help it meet the general duty. These are:

- To monitor by racial group the number of teaching staff in the College
- To take reasonable practical steps to publish annually the results of this monitoring.

Disability Equality

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) outlaws discrimination against disabled people in employment, provision of education, provision of goods or services to the public, disposal or management of premises and provides for regulations to improve access to public transport.

The DDA 1995 has been amended by the DDA 2005 to place a duty on all public sector authorities including education bodies to promote disability equality. This duty ensures that all public bodies build disability equality into the way in which they carry out their business.

This means that the College must, in carrying out all functions, have due regard to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful.
- Eliminate disability related harassment.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encourage participation by disabled people in College life.
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

The College also has specific duties to help it meet the general duty. These are:

- To report annually on progress made.
- To review and revise the equality scheme every three years.
- To provide a statement of how disabled people have been involved in developing the scheme.
- To assess the impact of policies and practices on disability equality and where improvements can be made.
- To gather information relating to disabled staff and learners.
- To produce an action plan detailing the steps that are going to be taken to meet the general duty.

Gender Equality

Under the Equality Act 2006 the College has a general duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
- Produce an equality scheme that makes clear the values, principles and standards that guide our approach to equality.

The College also has specific duties to help it meet the general duty. These are:

- To consult staff and learners as appropriate in drawing up the equality scheme.
- To gather information that is relevant as to how our policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace.
- To be aware of the causes of any gender pay gap.
- To monitor progress of actions and publish annual reports on progress.
- To conduct and publish gender impact assessments.
- To review the implementation of the scheme at least every three years and revise accordingly.

Other Equality Legislation

Under the Equality Act 2010 the College also has responsibility to address the following areas of equality:

- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Religion and belief
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

The College has a responsibility to address other types of discrimination that are not direct. These include:

- Associative discrimination – this is discrimination against an individual because she/he associates with another person who possesses a protected characteristic
- Discrimination by perception – this is discrimination against a person because others think she/he possesses a protected characteristic.
- Harassment – College employees are entitled to complain of behaviour they find offensive, even if it is not directed at them.
- Harassment by a third party – the College is potentially liable for harassment of its staff or learners by people not employed by the College. (Example: harassment of a learner on work experience.)

APPENDIX 3

Action undertaken by the College. The College has:

- Created a “Triple A” website which promotes equal opportunities and is accessible to all.
- Promoted faith awareness, reflection and prayer through a multi-faith prayer room, talks on religion and a recognition of religious festivals.
- Actively embedded equality and diversity in all Schemes of Work, preparing students for work in a diverse society.
- Created a one-stop equality and diversity section on the Teaching and Learning Portal that provides resources, tips and guidelines for classroom use.
- Developed systems to provide equality and diversity data: it collects, monitors and analyses equality and diversity data gathered via learner application and admission process, including data related to learner retention, success and achievement. The data is used to compare success and retention between different groups and address discrepancies between groups.
- Taken steps to monitor learner experience through questionnaires, focus groups and national learner surveys. Staff experience is sought through staff questionnaires.
- A week-long celebration of diversity annually.
- Installed ramps and automatic doors to ensure accessibility for all.
- Increased equality and diversity disclosure data from staff from 59.9% in January 2011 to 98.9% in October 2011.
- Developed a referral system which flags up learners with disabilities at the Application stage and involves Learner Services, the Health & Safety Team and Estates in ensuring appropriate provision is made for those students.
- Appointed an Equality and Diversity Officer to promote equality and diversity across the College.
- Ensured that it’s Equality and Diversity Committee meets regularly and monitors equality and diversity performance, including monitoring and analysing data on student enrolment and success by gender, race, age and disability. It also monitors staff recruitment in terms of age, race, gender and disability. Membership of the Committee includes student representation.

- Established an Equality and Diversity Forum where students can discuss equality issues.
- Undertaken NLDC projects including off-site ESOL courses with BME learners and women-only groups in the community ensuring it reaches a wide spectrum of learners including learners from deprived communities.
- Ensured all marketing and promotional material is inclusive and accessible including visuals which generate interest and engage staff and learners.
- Provided training for staff at induction and as part of its CPD programme. It has started a rolling programme for a new qualification: NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Equality and Diversity.