

Equality and Diversity Policy

Rationale

The College is committed to the success of all our students. This document maps out the principles and structures that will contribute to that aim.

Guiding principles

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value

We see all learners and potential learners as of equal value:

- whatever their level of ability/disability
- whatever their age
- whatever their economic position or status
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their religious affiliation
- whatever their sex, gender identification or gender reassignment
- whatever their sexual orientation
- whatever their marital, partnership or family status (including maternity and paternity).

Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between members of the College community irrespective of their gender identity or sexual orientation and an absence of sexual harassment.

Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development

Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development, irrespective of their marital, partnership or family status (including maternity and paternity), or their gender identity, sexual identity, ethnicity or race.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist in accordance with Principle 1.

Principle 6: We consult widely

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life.

The College's contribution to Community Cohesion

Learning, teaching and the curriculum

Through high standards of learning, teaching and curriculum provision that support high standards of attainment, promotes shared values and builds students' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, religions or beliefs, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. There will be high expectations of success, with all students expected and encouraged by teachers and parents to achieve their potential. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity will be integrated across the whole curriculum, including in the pastoral curriculum. In tutor periods and through extra-curricular activities students will learn about national, regional, ethnic and religious cultures, the connections between them and between the UK and the wider world and explore the concept of community cohesion and the different forces that bring about change in communities over time.

Other means will include:

- opportunities across the curriculum to promote shared values and help students to value differences and to challenge prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping. As well as the methods described above, there are opportunities across the curriculum and in a very wide range of academic subjects to explore and evaluate equality and diversity issues
- a programme of curriculum-based activities whereby students' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through fieldwork and visits, for example to places of worship, and meetings with members of different communities. Curriculum based activities will also encourage learners to value diversity and develop a better understanding of UK society, for example by challenging assumptions and creating an open climate to address sensitive and controversial issues.

- support for students for whom English is an additional language (EAL), and specific support for their teaching staff, to remove barriers to effective learning, enabling the students to be integrated and achieve the highest possible level in English.
- the pastoral programme which involves members of the local and wider community and promote the engagement of learners and shared understanding.
- equality and diversity events which will be held with the Student Council and the Equality and Diversity Group to raise awareness of all students of equality and diversity issues.

Equity and excellence

The College has a focus on securing high standards of attainment for all students, therefore maximising the performance of students whatever their ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic status, abilities and interests, this ensures that students are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential.

Progress is evaluated by analysing assessment results to keep track of the relative performance of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group. Schemes are used successfully, for example to raise the aspirations of students from families less likely to go to university. In line with existing practice, the College has effective approaches in place to deal with incidents of prejudice, discrimination, bullying and harassment. Monitoring whether students from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others is accompanied by appropriate support and discipline policies in place to deal with this, students are involved in evaluating the success of the college and in implementing these policies as members of the Equality and Diversity Group. This has now developed into a specific group staff who promote equality and diversity issues within the College, celebrate key weeks (such as Disability Awareness Week) and work with other internal groups to promote greater understanding between students and staff of different backgrounds. These groups include the Gender Sexuality Alliance and Christian Union.

Preserving Staff and Student Welfare

The College takes its responsibility to preserve the safety of students and staff seriously. COVID-19 has drawn additional importance to the needs of students and staff who fall under protected characteristics, and are subsequently most vulnerable to the serious repercussions of catching the disease. This includes those categorised by the NHS as clinically vulnerable for example as a result of a medical condition, age or weight. Staff who feel they need additional support in order to attend work are entitled to a risk assessment, to be completed with their line manager, to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Students considered vulnerable should speak to their Head of Year for advice in line with the most up to date government recommendations.

Engagement and extended services

The College benefits from partnership arrangements, through the Woking Federation of Schools and Colleges and the S7 organisation of Surrey Sixth Form Colleges. Through these organisations we share good practice and offer students opportunities to meet and learn from and with other young people from different backgrounds. Benefits are also gained through international links by raising motivation levels and stimulating the interest of students, parents and trustees. Links are made via email, the internet, visits abroad, exchanges and the use of video conferencing software to ensure access is available for all appropriate staff and students regardless of disability or additional needs. These opportunities develop partnerships and joint projects with other schools and communities internationally. This is carried out through the work of various curriculum departments and through extra-curricular activities like World Challenge. Teachers and governing bodies/trusts also benefit from links with different Colleges and schools – in particular where opportunities are available to broaden their experience by working with different groups of students, teachers and trustees. The shared use of facilities also provides a means for

students to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport, drama, music, festivals, volunteering activities and College trips.

Partnership activities with parents and the local and wider community include:

- working together with community representatives, for example bringing community representatives into College to work with the students or to support learning in the pastoral programme or other extra-curricular or pastoral activities
- local engagement through links with community groups and organisations, enabling them to play a role in the school and encouraging pupils to make a positive contribution in the local area using organisations like the Woking Lions Club
- ESOL and IT delivery on formal courses and through drop-in sessions at the Maybury Community Centre, in local workplaces and for 'hard to reach' students in local community settings
- ensuring that the student voice is heard and able to effect change: by involvement of students in the governance and organisation of the College through the Student Council, this facilitates their participation and ability to make a difference in College, in their local community and beyond
- enabling students to take responsibility and to evaluate how well the College is building community cohesion
- maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the College and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police, different religious groups and social care and health professionals
- developing links with work placed learning providers and other employers
- supporting local schools as governors/trustees
- placements for pupils in voluntary community based activities and organising charity events
- engagement with parents through curriculum evenings and events tailored to suit the needs and requirements of the College and parents for example the 'Meet the Tutor' Evening and Higher Education Evening

Extended services

We are committed to providing services to our students outside of the classroom in order to maximise the learning potential of all our students. These services include:

- departmental study support, lunchtime workshops, undergraduate mentors and Easter revision sessions
- LRC-based support providing a learning environment for study and research support
- pastoral care – through the setting of aspirational targets and 1-1 to care by tutors
- provision of counselling, religious and other support for students needing personal help
- learning support for students with identified (though external notification or from initial diagnostic testing) learning needs
- consultation with students, parents, families and the wider community about the activities and services they provide to ensure they meet the needs of all groups.
- working in federation with other schools to build greater interaction and diversity into the daily lives of their school and wider community
- working with local voluntary and community groups to build stronger relationships with the community, and gain expertise in working with different groups who are already established in their area.
- supporting local schools through assembly talks and motivational College interviews
- support for all parents through providing information, advice and guidance in respect to student progress.

Governmental support and guidance

Local authorities, voluntary and community organisations are encouraged to play important roles in supporting the College in discharging its duty to promote community cohesion. The College will work in partnership work with funding and local authorities to gain appropriate support and information and look to them for practical support and assistance to promote community cohesion, for example through the identification of relevant local contacts and facilitating links with other colleges schools and organisations.

Structures

1. The Academy Trust designates an Equality and Diversity Officer as having overall responsibility for equality and diversity issues, including the monitoring of equality impact measures. The Equality and Diversity Officer will ensure regular reports are made to the Academy Trust.
2. In recognition of the fact that implementation of robust equality measures requires time and expertise, the College will dedicate appropriate time to staff specialising in this work and publicise these appointments throughout the College.
3. There will be a College Equality and Diversity Group chaired by the Equality and Diversity Officer or appointed member of staff.
4. The remit of the Equality and Diversity Group will be to promote policies and practices that ensure a College environment in which equality flourishes. To this end, it will develop policies related to the curriculum, student intake, the built environment, student services etc, which seek to ensure the removal of prejudice and discrimination. It is the responsibility of all staff and students to uphold the College policy on equality and diversity.
5. Employment policies and procedures will continue to be dealt with through existing consultation/negotiation arrangements, as appropriate.
6. The Equality and Diversity Group will periodically reflect key measures of College performance in terms of equality and diversity issues, community cohesion and diversity events.

Communicating the policy

The College ensures awareness of and support for the contents of this policy through regular consultations and communication. Examples include:

- induction programmes for new students and staff
- staff meetings
- staff development/training sessions
- various publications, e.g. the College Bulletin

Complaints

If a student is concerned about the application of this policy or believes that they have received unfair treatment, the student should try to resolve the situation informally in the first instance (e.g. by seeking advice from her or his tutor). If the situation is sufficiently serious, if an informal approach proves unsuccessful or if an informal approach is considered to be inappropriate, then a formal complaint may be made in accordance with the College's Complaints Procedure.

Linked statements Policies and procedures

- Admissions
- Complaints
- Confidentiality
- Data Protection
- Disability equality
- Grievance
- Harassment
- Parental, maternal, paternal and adoption leave
- Part-time staff
- Recruitment and selection of staff
- Recruitment selection and redundancy
- Sickness leave
- Students support and disciplinary documents

In respect of the issue of Equality and Diversity the College will comply with the recommended guidance as agreed by AoC, ACM, and Unions, and these documents are available on request.

This document is intended to be a live document and the following appendix will be used as the key operational document in terms of ongoing College practice in relation to equality and diversity issues.

Grievance

If an employee or student believes they have not been treated fairly, due to prejudice, or discrimination, they should follow the Grievance Procedures.

Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Objectives

The College will, in accordance with its Public Sector Equality Duty, publish its annual Public Sector Equality Duty Report (PSEDR) by 31 January of every year.

The PSEDR will provide information on students, in particular with regard to enrolment, exam results, student survey responses and expected student outcomes. The data will be broken down by group characteristics wherever the relevant data can be judged as providing conclusive information. Staff information will also be published, provided the College employs 150 staff or more.

The PSEDR will also publish the College's Equality Objectives and the progress that has been achieved in reaching these objectives.

Finally, the PSEDR will inform on additional developments within the College towards

- eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advancing equality of opportunity
- fostering good relations

Progress and achievement of the annual Public Sector Equality Duty Report (PSEDR) are monitored by the Equality and Diversity Officer in line with the College Quality Calendar.

Woking College Equality Targets

The College is working towards the achievement of the following two targets for 2020-2023:

Target One

To continue to close achievement gaps between genders and ethnic groups

Target Two

To promote encourage more active student engagement in equality and diversity issues such as awareness of transgender issues and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Progress and achievement of the Woking College Equality Targets are monitored by the College’s Self-Assessment Report, reports to trustees and the annual Public Sector Equality Duty Report.

Review

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

Key related legislation

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty 2011

Were changes made to the Policy when received? If YES complete the Partial Equality Analysis table.

Questions for all Policies Is it likely that the Policy Revision could have a negative impact:-		Please Tick Box	
		YES	NO
1.	On minority ethnic groups?		x
2.	Due to gender?		x
3.	Due to disability?		x
4.	Due to sexual orientation?		x
5.	Due to their religious beliefs (or none)?		x
6.	On people due to them being transgender or transsexual?		x
Additional questions for Policies relating to Staff Is it likely that the Policy Revision could have a negative impact:-			
7.	On people due to their age?		x
8.	On people due to their marital or civil partnership status?		x
9.	On people with dependants/caring responsibilities?		x
Date of Review	Nov 2020	Did you make changes?	x

If YES please speak with Vice Principal as a full Equality Analysis may be required.

LBE/Equality & Diversity Policy: Nov 2020
Last Review: Nov 2020
Next Review: Nov 2023