

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Commitment

Lowestoft Sixth Form College is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. We aim for a College culture of awareness, understanding, tolerance and respect. We recognise and value the diversity of our community and actively promote celebration of this diversity.

All job applicants, employees, prospective students, current students, parents/carers and other stakeholders shall receive equally favourable treatment regardless of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, faith or religion. In addition, none shall be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements other than those of a genuine educational or occupational nature or those that are imposed by external agencies.

The College will, therefore, as an employer, operate an equal opportunities policy in the recruitment, selection, training and promotion of staff at all levels. The College is committed to making its workforce more diverse, taking positive action where appropriate, and welcomes applications from under-represented groups. Criteria and procedures are monitored and reviewed to ensure that individuals are recruited and selected on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Equality and diversity is included in the induction of new members of staff. Whole staff training and training for particular groups in equality issues takes place regularly. All staff should carry out their duties in compliance with the College's Equality and Diversity Policy.

The College will, therefore, as a provider of educational services, offer equal opportunities for access to its courses, within its Admissions Policy. Criteria and procedures are monitored and reviewed to ensure that students are recruited on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Selection procedures and criteria should not emphasise conditions which discriminate against any groups or individuals.

In reviewing and developing its provision, the College will pursue equality of access. Diagnostic testing, course literature and learning materials should be free from bias. Support to meet specific needs (eg physical access, language support) should be embedded wherever possible. Students may use their first language in circumstances where appropriate.

Staff and students shall clearly understand that the College affirms its opposition to all forms of discrimination, bullying and harassment. Staff and students throughout the College should help to create a climate which leads to a sense of well-being, confidence, security and identity in all members of the College.

2. Equality Act 2010

The College recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010, which identifies the following protected characteristics: gender, age, disability, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race and religion or belief.

The College, as a public authority, is subject to the general equality duty and therefore in the exercise of its functions, will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful 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.

The College will publish annually sufficient information to demonstrate our compliance with the general equality duty across our functions. The College will also prepare and publish equality objectives and details of engagement undertaken to achieve these objectives (by 6th April 2012 and at least every four years thereafter).

3. Responsibilities

Governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring the College stays within the law and meets all its legislative duties, including the general and the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 and all subsequent legislation;
- Reviewing progress on the College's equality objectives on a regular basis
- Striving to ensure that the membership of the Governing Body reflects the diversity of the communities served by the College;
- Monitoring equality and diversity reporting

The Principal and senior management are responsible for:

- Taking the lead in the promotion of an inclusive College culture of awareness, understanding, tolerance
- Implementation of the 2010 Equality Act, including the general and the specific duties and all subsequent legislation, and of the Equality Policy
- Monitoring and reviewing equality information
- Approving the membership structure and membership of the Equality and

Diversity Committee:

- Producing an annual Equality and Diversity Report.
- Ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities and are given appropriate support and training to enable them to carry out their duties.
- The Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for:
Championing Equality and Diversity by disseminating information about

equality issues within the College to the area of the College that they represent

- Communicating views and ideas on equality issues from that area of the College that they represent
- Encouraging and supporting teaching and learning activities across the College that promote equality and diversity;
- Writing (in consultation with and aided by other relevant staff) the College's Equality and Diversity self-assessment report and Annual Report which analyses and assesses progress towards equality in the College as a whole;
- Providing a forum to address issues raised by staff and students;
- Making suggestions and recommendations for changes to College policies and practices in order to promote inclusive practice;

All staff are responsible for:

- the promotion of an inclusive College culture of awareness, understanding and tolerance
- Challenging inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour by students;
- Contributing to self-assessment reporting on how equality and diversity are promoted in their areas
- Endeavouring to ensure that wall displays do not contain negative or stereotyped images of particular groups. Wherever possible wall displays should be used to promote equality and diversity.
- For teaching staff, Developing schemes of work, lesson content and resources which recognize and promote inclusion;
- Regularly reviewing the promotion of equality and diversity in individual subject areas and add to and improve the opportunities identified in the scheme of work

Students are responsible for:

- the promotion of an inclusive College culture of awareness, understanding and tolerance
- Behaving in a way which does not discriminate against, bully or harass any individual or group;
- Contributing to the promotion of equality and diversity throughout the College;
- Reporting incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Other Stakeholders (for example, parents/carers, contractors, visitors) are responsible for

- Behaving in a way which does not discriminate against, bully or harass any individual or group;
- Complying with the College's Equality and Diversity policy.

4. Communication

The College will publicise this policy widely amongst students, staff, governors and other stakeholders through our website and intranet. The College will endeavour to produce the policy in other forms in response to reasonable requests.

The College's commitment to equality will be made clear in the prospectus and strategic plan.

The student induction programme will highlight the College's commitment to equality and diversity and make them aware of their responsibilities and the procedures that they can follow if they believe that they have experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment. Equality and diversity will be reinforced throughout the pastoral and academic curriculum.

5. Breaches of this Policy

Students and staff who do not comply with this policy may be subject to the College's disciplinary procedures.

6. Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Dignity at Work Policy and Grievance Policy
- Student Voice

7. Monitoring

This policy will be monitored regularly. The College will report on equality and diversity within its annual self-assessment report. Our progress in meeting the legislative requirements of the Equality Act 2010 will be published on our website on an annual basis.