



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Statement of Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion:

For Esher College, embracing diversity and ensuring equality is fundamental to the culture and values we wish to promote in all those who study, visit and work within our institution. We value diversity highly, recognising that we are an institution comprised of a range of different individuals, all of whom bring different ideas, cultures, histories and perceptions.

The purpose of this policy document is to outline our intentions and commitments under four clear goals. These goals relate to the protected characteristics of age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identification, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership status; pregnancy or maternity. They also relate to learning difficulty and socio-economic status.

An accompanying handbook is available on the Portal and our website to provide practical guidance and information on the detail of working practices in relation to this policy. The policy should also be viewed in conjunction with our staff and student Policies for Addressing Bullying and Harassment, Complaints Procedure, and Grievance Procedure as appropriate.

As an educational institution our goals are:

GOAL 1: To promote a culture of respect: upholding the rights of individuals and groups to hold their own values and views, whilst ensuring these rights are not presented in a way that intimidates, degrades or impacts negatively on the rights of others.

GOAL 2: To value the differences between us and actively celebrate the diverse backgrounds of students and staff.

GOAL 3: To challenge expressions of prejudice and seek to rectify any discriminatory practices or behaviour.

GOAL 4: To ensure that we meet our legal obligations. We will publish our objectives outlining our goals in relation to our legal obligations, focusing on the Equality and Diversity Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Staff involved in the production of the policy:

- Becky Voller (Equality and Diversity Officer)
- Daniel Hards (Assistant Principal)
- Clarissa Wilks (Link Governor for E and D)
- Equality and Diversity Committee (comprising of staff and Student Union)
- Senior Leadership Team

Equality and Diversity Statement in practice:

Goal 1: To promote a culture of respect

We will:

- 1.1 ensure that staff, students, visitors and other relevant stakeholders are informed overtly about our commitment to equality and diversity and our expectations with regard to respecting others.
- 1.2 ensure that staff and students are encouraged to play an active role in instilling a culture of respect and promoting equality and diversity issues.
- 1.3 seek to encourage applications from prospective students, staff and governors that will foster diversity.
- 1.4 produce a handbook that outlines best practice with regard to supporting staff, students and visitors from the range of protected characteristics, ensuring that it is kept up-to-date.
- 1.5 ensure that this policy and the handbook are inclusive with regard to accessibility (i.e. they will be made available in different formats to suit particular needs, on request).
- 1.6 ensure that our environment signifies that everyone is welcome at Esher.

Goal 2: To value the differences between us and actively celebrate the diverse backgrounds of our college community

We will:

- 2.1 ensure that our institution is inclusive, advancing equality of opportunity. We will work systematically to challenge potential differences in outcome for different groups. We will provide an environment where staff, students and visitors will want to study, work and visit, regardless of who they are.
- 2.2 monitor our provision with the aim of continuously improving equality of opportunity.
- 2.3 ensure an inclusive approach to the recruitment and professional development of staff.
- 2.4 ensure an inclusive approach to the recruitment and enrolment of students and their academic progress.
- 2.5 review the impact of policies, practices and procedures in relation to stakeholders and the protected characteristics.
- 2.6 use the annual SAR as a vehicle to review and identify actions in relation to our E and D provision, including review of our equality objectives. We will publish this on our website.
- 2.7 seek ways to celebrate the diverse nature of our college community, ensuring at least one main focus/event per academic year.

2.8 invite students and staff to set up groups and/or to share information relating to protected characteristics in order to enrich understanding within the college community.

2.9 ensure that students, staff and visitors that might require special provision in relation to their protected characteristics, either regularly or on specific occasions, are supported in their needs, as far as is within our capabilities to do so.

Goal 3: To challenge expressions of prejudice and seek to rectify any discriminatory practices or behaviour

We will:

3.1 actively challenge discriminatory and/or prejudicial behaviour. The College will always investigate incidents, be they on campus or on College business (please see the Student Code of Conduct for further information).

3.2 seek legal advice and take legal action where appropriate, though if possible issues will be resolved in an informal manner.

3.3 work to build a culture where staff and students feel comfortable to report incidents and we will ensure that staff and students are clear who to approach if they feel an issue of discrimination or prejudice has occurred, be it in relation to themselves or third parties.

3.4 ensure that, in a situation where complaints are made that staff, students and other relevant stakeholders are treated with respect and kindness; be they the complainants or the accused. As part of this we will maintain confidentiality wherever possible (please see Policies for Addressing Bullying and Harassment for further information and use it alongside this document).

3.5 preview new policies/procedures to check for any potential discriminatory components and we will consult with stakeholders with relevant declared protected characteristics, as appropriate.

Goal 4: To ensure we meet our legal obligations

We will:

4.1 meet all of our obligations under The Equality Act, 2010

4.2 ensure that the Corporation understands the College's legal obligations

4.3 the Corporation, in partnership with staff, students and Link Governor, monitors the institution in terms of its compliance to legal duties.

4.4 ensure that the Principal, with support from the Corporation, gives a consistent lead on all Equality and Diversity issues, making sure that the Policy and the law are followed by all relevant stakeholders, including staff and students.

- 4.5** regularly review our performance with regard to legal obligations (in part through the SAR process) and amend the Equality and Diversity Policy and review the handbook whenever there are changes to the law, or, at the minimum, every three years.
- 4.6** ensure all staff receive Equality and Diversity training as appropriate to meeting their professional and legal obligations.
- 4.7** ensure that the compliance data is published annually on the College website.
- 4.8** ensure that we challenge expressions of prejudice and seek to rectify any discriminatory practices or behaviour (see Goal 3).

Approved by the Strategy and Policy Committee 28/02/18