

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



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1 INTRODUCTION

Birkenhead Sixth Form College is fully committed to achieving equality of opportunity and to celebrating cultural diversity. The College treats all its students and staff with respect and dignity, and provides an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

The College will not tolerate any form of prohibited behaviour or activity which discriminates or causes harassment to any person on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (protected characteristics) and socio economic background. Incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation or unlawful activities will be dealt with through the College Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.

The College is fully committed to advancing equality of opportunity for all students and staff, meeting all students' needs, encouraging them to achieve their full potential and to raising educational standards. It aims to create a positive, inclusive atmosphere, based on mutual respect and respect for people's differences and the challenging of stereotypes. The College will give consideration to what action it can take to support people who are socially disadvantaged by addressing social barriers.

The College is also committed to making its workforce more representative of the Community it serves and to making full use of the skills and knowledge of people from different groups. It aims to foster good relationships between people of different groups and to improve staff moral and performance.

2 AIMS OF THE POLICY

The College aims to promote equality of opportunity and a fair and positive attitude towards everyone who is a member of the College. Whilst the College wishes to differentiate between individuals in order to meet their needs it will not discriminate on any of the following grounds:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex and sexual orientation
- socio-economic background

Equality of opportunity will be applied consistently across all aspects of service delivery, including admissions, student development, learning support, curriculum development, teaching, learning and marketing.

The College will comply with its legal duties under all current equality legislation.

Every student, member of staff, and Governor, within College will have responsibility for promoting equality and diversity and tackling discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

The College will ensure that every governor, member of staff, and all students are made aware of their duty to avoid discriminatory practices, to discourage them in others and to accept personal responsibility for the application of the policy.

The College will consult with students, members of staff, people who share protected characteristics (and associated support groups), people from different socio-economic backgrounds, stakeholders and College partners and use the outcomes to guide future action.

The College aims to promote an environment of positive working relationships and to ensure that all members of College are treated with dignity and respect.

The College values diversity. It aims to employ a workforce that reflects the Community it serves and is committed to inclusive education and to enabling College staff and students to achieve their full potential. It will do this by making any reasonable, appropriate adjustments to ensure that people who share protected characteristics are not placed at any substantial disadvantage.

As an employer, the College will ensure that the principles of equality and diversity are applied to recruitment, redeployment, staff development and promotion.

3 BIRKENHEAD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE'S COMMITMENT

Birkenhead Sixth Form College is committed to and will promote fair and positive attitudes towards people from groups who share protected characteristics.

All reasonable, appropriate adjustments to provisions will be made to ensure that people from groups who share protected characteristics are not substantially disadvantaged.

The College will comply with its statutory duties under the current equality legislation.

The College will strive to meet all students' needs, identify and remove barriers, within the College's control, which hinder or prevent students or staff from achieving their full potential and raise educational standards.

The College will take specific action to tackle any differences between different groups in their achievement levels and progress, in the use of disciplinary measures against them (including suspension), in admissions or in assessment.

The College is committed to creating a positive, inclusive atmosphere, based on respect for people's differences, to challenging and preventing unlawful discrimination.

The College will ensure that all curriculum and tutorial teams actively seek opportunities within their programmes to celebrate diversity, widen students' cultural understanding and prepare them to be effective citizens in today's multi-ethnic society.

The College will strive to make the workforce more representative of the local community by removing any barriers, within the College's control, which might hinder or prevent applications from people from groups who share protected characteristics.

The College is committed to improving staff morale and performance and to avoid losing able staff by making full use of the skills and knowledge of people from different groups.

4 THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Act provides protection for people from groups which share protected characteristics and prohibits:

- direct discrimination (including dual discrimination, associative and perceived discrimination)
- indirect discrimination
- harassment
- victimisation

The Act provides the power to allow proportionate action to be taken to address disadvantage or under-representation or to meet the particular needs of those who share a protected characteristic.

5 PUBLIC SECTOR DUTIES

Single Equality Duty

The Single Equality Duty places a legal requirement on public bodies to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is unlawful under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The duty requires the College to measure the impact of policies, procedures and services and to consider in advance how it can ensure that its users can appropriately use and access its services to meet their particular needs.

6 CAREERS

The College's commitment to equality and diversity is reflected in its Careers Programme which has a clear and ambitious vision for providing high quality and inclusive careers advice, information and guidance for all. The Careers Programme reflects the progressive building of knowledge and skills for future learning and destinations. This reflects the College's BePART educational philosophy which incorporates high expectations for achievement and progress. The careers team includes a SEND Careers Link who ensures targeted support for vulnerable and disadvantaged students and for learners with special educational needs or disabilities. Specific and individualised wrap-round support in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015 enables all learners to make effective transitions.

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