



**Buckinghamshire
College Group**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021-22

Responsible Officer:	Executive Director - Human Resources
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 **Buckinghamshire College Group** is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion for all, and eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Buckinghamshire College Group celebrates and values the diversity of its learners and employees and is committed to equality of opportunity for all. The College operates a zero tolerance policy in respect of all forms of discrimination.
- 1.2 The aim is to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members and potential members of the college community, including but not limited to:
- a) Staff
 - b) Students
 - c) Governors
 - d) Applicants for jobs
 - e) Applicants for courses
 - f) Contractors
 - g) Employers
 - h) Work placement providers
- 2.2 All of these groups of people will be expected to adhere to this policy. Where staff or learners are working or studying in locations other than our campuses they will still be subject to the policy.
- 2.3 Behaviour outside working time and outside our campuses may also fall within the scope of the policy. Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously and may lead to disciplinary action.
- 2.4 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with trade unions, being the NEU, UCU and UNISON.

3. Statement of Policy

The policy's purpose is to:

- 3.1 Provide equality, fairness and respect for all creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued.
- 3.2 Not unlawfully discriminate in line with the 9 protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010:
1. age
 2. disability
 3. gender reassignment
 4. marriage and civil partnership
 5. pregnancy and maternity
 6. race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
 7. religion or belief
 8. sex (gender)
 9. sexual orientation
- 3.3 Commit to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Foster good relations between all who work or learn at Buckinghamshire College Group, or use its

services. Every employee, worker or self-employed contractor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

- 3.4 Recognise this is an evolving document that will be reviewed and updated in light of continuing involvement of, and consultation with, both existing and potential Buckinghamshire College Group users, partners, community groups, voluntary organisations and individuals with interests in our work. This policy is intended to continuously adapt to new developments and legislations, and to reflect our growing understanding of existing and emerging issues.
- 3.5 Recognise the serious nature of any discriminatory events and their impact on the individual/group involved including those who may witness the incident. All incidents will be taken seriously and consideration will be given as to whether a multi-agency approach using child protection procedures is required.

4. Policy Aims

- 4.1 The aim is for our workforce, governors and students to be truly representative of all sections of society. For our employees, students, customers and for all stakeholders to feel respected and able to give their best.
- 4.2 In particular, Buckinghamshire College Group strives to:
 - 4.2.1 Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
 - 4.2.2 Encourage the participation of learners of all abilities.
 - 4.2.3 Provide a safe and welcoming physical, virtual and learning environment.
 - 4.2.4 Develop its facilities and courses to improve access and widen participation.
 - 4.2.5 Offer support to meet individual learner and employee needs.
 - 4.2.6 Ensure its recruitment processes are fair and transparent.
 - 4.2.7 Ensure that the College is an environment that is free from discrimination, bullying or harassment and victimisation.

5. Buckinghamshire College Group's Commitment

- 5.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to everything we do at Buckinghamshire College Group. We aim to celebrate diversity and support everyone to overcome the barriers to their full inclusion and participation in society. We are committed to embracing equality and tackling discrimination in all its forms. Through our commitment, we will ensure that all views are considered and the environment in which we live and work is truly inclusive.
- 5.2 The College commits to:
 - 5.2.1 Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the College
 - 5.2.2 Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued. This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the College provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. All staff should understand they, as well as the College, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

- 5.2.3** Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the College's work activities. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the College's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice. Further, harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
 - 5.2.4** Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
 - 5.2.5** Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
 - 5.2.6** Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
 - 5.2.7** Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
 - 5.2.8** Monitoring will also include assessing how the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.
- 5.3** This policy demonstrates how Buckinghamshire College Group will meet its commitment to equality of opportunity. In doing so it has three key functions: -
- 5.3.1** Analysis of local/regional/national demographics (current trends and predictions).
 - 5.3.2** Monitoring and action planning to identify issues and ensure that any negative impacts are eliminated, or minimised where possible.
 - 5.3.3** Encourage through positive action, initiatives that will promote the full engagement of under-represented groups.
 - 5.3.3.1** Utilise the 'Action Not Words' campaign to its fullest extent and create EDI champions through the EDI steering group.
 - 5.3.3.2** Empower staff and students to speak out and stop discrimination instantly using our 'call it out' scheme.
 - 5.3.3.3** Hold regular meetings with the EDI steering group committee to hold the College to account and promote EDI initiatives.
 - 5.3.3.4** Work with the Community and different charities to support our communities.

6. Performance and Monitoring

- 6.1** Buckinghamshire College Group will monitor the effectiveness of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy through the following policies and guidelines, but not limited to:
- Dignity in the Workplace (staff)
 - Grievance Policy (staff)
 - Complaints Policy (all)
 - Student Anti-Bullying Policy (students)
 - Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy (students)
 - Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (students)
 - PREVENT Policy (students)
 - Work Experience & Employability Policy for Students
 - Guidelines on Professional Boundaries and Standards for Staff
 - Recruitment Procedure
 - Flexible Working Policy
 - Digital Learning Strategy
- 6.2** Buckinghamshire College Group will consider equality, diversity and inclusion issues in all aspects of College life and business and ensure that all College policies and procedures are developed to positively support and develop equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 6.3** Buckinghamshire College Group will develop links and partnerships with external community organisations to support the development of equality, diversity and inclusion in our locality.
- 6.4** Monitoring will also include assessing how the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

7. The Specific Duties

- 7.1** The public sector equality duty was created by the Equality Act 2010 and replaces the race, disability and gender equality duties. The duty came into force in April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. It applies in England, Scotland and in Wales. The general equality duty is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act.

In summary, those subject to the general equality duty must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination in the area of employment, also covers marriage and civil partnership.

8. Responsibilities

- 8.1** Everyone has a responsibility to give full and active support, ensuring:
- The policy is understood and implemented.
 - Their behaviour always takes into account the uniqueness of others.
 - Everyone is treated with respect, courtesy and dignity.
 - Behaviour not in accordance with the policy is challenged and acted upon.

- 8.2** The Governors of Buckinghamshire College Group have responsibility to:
- Exceed its statutory responsibilities for equality and diversity through its own actions and behaviour in all aspects of its affairs. Promote equality and diversity throughout the other nine principal responsibilities.
 - Approve and review the College's equality and diversity strategy and adopt agreed performance indicators for implementation.
 - Abide by the legal obligations in relation to equality and diversity which it must understand and comply. Including actively promote equality in a number of defined areas.
 - Ensure that agreed policies are progressed and actioned throughout the college.
 - Review the annual equality monitoring report detailing work during the year, identifying the achievement of agreed objectives and summarising data on equality and diversity that colleges are required to produce (e.g. on staff recruitment and promotion).
 - Ensure that the HR strategy takes into account equality and diversity. Specific equality and diversity responsibilities fall on the remuneration committee (or equivalent) in respect of the determination of pay and other rewards.
 - Ensure that the search committee should agree its own approach to equality and diversity in relation to appointing new members, and should take full regard of the implications of the college's overall equal opportunity and diversity policy, including any measurable objectives that may be relevant.
 - Report fully on actions of equality and diversity in the operation of governance.
- 8.3** The Principal has overall responsibility for (and delegates to the Executive team):
- Giving a consistent and high profile lead on all equality issues.
 - Promoting the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy both internally and externally.
 - Ensuring that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is fully implemented.
- 8.4** The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, chaired by the Executive Director - Human Resources is responsible for:
- The co-ordination, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
 - Establishing and implementing an annual Single Equality Scheme action plan for the organisation, setting and monitoring equality, diversity and inclusion impact measures.
 - Organising, promoting and running the celebrating equalities, diversity and inclusion activities for staff and students.
- 8.5** The Executive Director - Human Resources is responsible for:
- The implementation and monitoring of this policy.
 - Ensuring that other organisations working within or for the College work according to the requirements of The Equality Act 2010.
 - Ensuring that the College's employment policies, procedures and practices are implemented in accordance with the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
 - Working directly with the Vice Principal - Learning and Quality (and delegates) to ensure the effectiveness of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion steering group.
 - To ensure that the gender pay reporting is completed and reported in line with Government deadlines
 - To ensure that ethnic pay gap reporting is completed and reported in line with Government deadlines.
 - Reporting on EDI impact of key policies as agreed with recognised Trades Unions.
- 8.6** All employees of Buckinghamshire College Group are responsible for:
- Operating within this policy at all times.
 - Advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
 - Challenging inappropriate language and behaviours.

- Completing mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion training.
- Ensuring that they abide by and promote the ethos of the dignity and respect in the workplace and work within the guidelines of disciplinary policy.
- Working to ensure that we recognise, support and promote the wide-ranging talents we have within our College, through ensuring that our environment is one that listens, and one where everyone can reach their full potential. Remove barriers to success, and create a platform that enables our people and their talents to drive forward the success of our College.

9. Complaints

9.1 Any member of staff or applicants for employment who believes they have experienced or observed discrimination should seek advice and support from the Executive Director - Human Resources or an HR Representative. Any member of staff may raise their concerns through the College's Grievance Policy and/or Dignity in the Workplace Policy as appropriate.

Any governor who believes they have experienced discrimination should seek advice and support from the Clerk to Corporation.

Any other member of the College Community, including students or applicants for courses, contractors and work placement providers, who believe they have experienced or observed discrimination, should raise their concerns with the Executive Director - Human Resources or an HR Representative.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with trade unions.

Details of the College's Grievance and Disciplinary policies and procedures can be found on the College Intranet/Human Resources. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – in the first instance, usually their line manager.

Use of the College's Grievance and/or Disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months from the alleged discrimination taking place.

10. Equality Impact Statement

10.1 We have a duty to consider the impact of changes on groups with Protected Characteristics (race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership).

What are the overall aims of the change? Why are you proposing it?	This policy outlines College guidelines for staff and students when dealing with equality, diversity and inclusion issues
Given the aims of your proposal, what issues does your data/information highlight?	The policy enables data collection into EDI issues that will be analysed.
How could the proposed change affect positively/negatively on groups with protected characteristics?	The policy outlines staff responsibilities re PREVENT in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

What actions will you take to mitigate any negative impact?	Potential impact in relation to issues concerning incidents. Monitored through complaints and employee relations cases.
Is there any potential negative impact justified in light of wider benefits of the proposal	No
Recording final decision	Executive and Corporation
Has the policy taken into consideration the requirements of GDPR regulations? Are there any actions that need addressing, eg; data sharing agreement; has data consent been considered; data retention timescales?	Yes, outlines staff and student guidelines for collection of sensitive personal data for monitoring purposes