

 Single Equality Scheme

**Single Equality Scheme 2018-2021**

**Contents:**

Scope of the Policy

Introduction

Background

Our Vision

Key Principles

Equality Legislation

Consultation and Involvement

Monitoring and Review Procedures

Reporting Procedures

Complaints Procedures

Appendix A – Single Equality Scheme (SES) Annual Report 2016-17

Appendix B – Single Equality Scheme (SES) Action Plan 2017-18

Appendix C – Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2017

**Scope of the Policy**

The policy applies to all students, staff, governing body members, contractors, parents, applicants and visitors or users of the college facilities.

Every member of the college community has a responsibility for promoting equality and diversity, tackling discrimination, harassment and victimisation and challenging stereotypes and inappropriate behaviour.

**Our Commitment**

Birkenhead Sixth Form College is committed to ensuring the promotion of equality of opportunity for all its employees and students.

The College aims to create an environment in which:

* All people are able to give and achieve their best
* There is no bullying and harassment, discrimination or victimisation
* All decisions are based on merit
* Creates a positive, inclusive atmosphere, based on mutual respect, respect for people’s differences and the challenging of stereotypes.

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

**Introduction**

We strive to provide equal opportunity in employment and study. The College is opposed to all forms of discrimination, whether direct, perceived, indirect or by association. Any behaviour or activity towards any person on the grounds of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (protected characteristics) and socio-economic background, which discriminates, causes harassment or results in victimisation will not be tolerated.

The College will comply with its legal obligations under all current and subsequent equality legislation. Our Single Equality Scheme (SES) sets out our approach to equality and diversity, both for ourselves as an employer of over 165 staff, and also as a Post 16 education provider in Wirral.

The Scheme and associated Action Plan will be developed over a three-year cycle with annual reviews and updated action plans reported to all College stakeholders. Details of the equality legislation applying to this document can be found in Section 4.

Equality of opportunity is embedded in all College policies and procedures and strategic planning. It is part of the lesson observation procedure and is included in schemes of work. Students with a disability or additional learning needs, have support and individual lesson plans, where appropriate. Self-Assessment Reports are required to include equality and diversity information.

The tutorial scheme focuses on important equality and diversity issues throughout the year and there are regular promotional displays and staff and student briefings.

New members of staff are required to undertake an induction session, on-line training in E&D and Safeguarding which includes Prevent.

**Background**

The College was established in 1988 and provides education for young people undertaking full or part time study. Applications are also welcome from students who belong to groups who share the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010. The College enrolled 1383 students in August 2017, aged 16-19 that travel to the College from all over the Wirral Peninsula, Liverpool and surrounding areas.

The College currently supports approximately 400 students with additional support needs. Support is tailored to each individual need, which may include one to one support in the classroom, support in the Learning Assistance Base, support sessions with a Dyslexia Tutor or support meetings with one of the Learning Support Team. The team also assist with examination concessions. ***(Please refer to the Public Sector Equality Duty Report for further information).***

**Our Vision**

The SES helps the College achieve our vision and provides a framework for action across all equality strands. It demonstrates a commitment to go beyond mere compliance with the Equality Act 2010 legislation. It moves towards mainstreaming by bringing together the College’s work into one place, consulting widely on it and putting in place a comprehensive Action Plan to ensure its commitments are carried out.

**Key Principles**

Valuing diversity and ensuring equality has benefits which include

* Greater employee satisfaction, which helps attract new staff and retain existing ones
* The enabling staff and students to achieve their full potential
* The provision of a positive working/ learning environment

**Respect**

The College will ensure that everyone working or learning there is treated fairly, with dignity, respect and with tolerance for different cultures, beliefs, values, faiths and for those without faith, respect for the rule of law, individual liberty, democracy and British values and that all individuals are valued.

**Support**

The College will strive to meet all staff and students’ needs and to remove barriers which are within the College’s control, which may prevent staff and students from different groups participating fully in college life and achieving their best outcome.

Staff and students will be given equal access to support in their work or studies and help to succeed.

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

**Inclusion**

In order to make the workforce and student profile more representative of the wider community the College will remove any barriers under its control which may hinder or prevent applications from groups sharing protected characteristics.

Diversity is not only valued by the College, but also celebrated and promoted within the curriculum and tutorial programme in order to widen students’ cultural understanding and prepare them for today’s multicultural/ethnic society.

**Integrity**

The policy requires staff and students to act with integrity at all times . Any inappropriate actions/behaviour will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with the spirit of the policy may result in disciplinary action.

**Equality Legislation**

The Equality Act 2010 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

Proportionate action can be taken to address disadvantage or under-representation or meet the needs of those who share protected characteristics.

**Types of unlawful discrimination**

**Direct discrimination:** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.

In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**Indirect discrimination:** is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic, such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**Institutional discrimination:** refers to the unjust and discriminatory mistreatment of an individual or group of individuals by society and its institutions as a whole, through unequal selection or bias, intentional or unintentional; as opposed to individuals making a conscious choice to discriminate.

**Associative discrimination:** refers to discrimination based on an individual's association with another person belonging to a relevant protected group. The relevant protected groups are Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.

**Perceptive discrimination:** refers to discrimination based on a perception that an individual is a member of a relevant protected group

**Discrimination arising from disability:** occurs if a disabled person/group is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability which cannot be justified.

The Act describes a disabled person as anyone with a physical , or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term, adverse effect upon their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Individual discrimination** occurs when an individual makes a decision, based on prejudice, against an individual from another group.

**Victimisation** occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he/she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he/she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

**Harassment** is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

There are three types of harassment which are unlawful under the Act;

* Harassment related to a protected characteristic
* Sexual Harassment
* Less favourable treatment of someone because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex

A person can complain of behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed to them, even if they don’t have the relevant protected characteristic themselves. Harassment related to perception and association is also covered

**Failure to make reasonable adjustments** This duty arises whenever any aspect of the employer's working practices or premises puts a disabled employee at a substantial disadvantage, when compared with employees who are not disabled. A failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments constitutes discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

**Duty to make reasonable adjustments and our Public Sector Duties**

The duty to make reasonable adjustments is a unique feature of disability discrimination law.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments to any provision, criterion or practice that they apply and to physical features of their premises, to accommodate the needs of disabled employees and job applicants.

This duty arises whenever any aspect of the employer’s working practices or premises puts a disabled employee at a substantial disadvantage, when compared with employees who are not disabled.

This legislated duty places a legal requirement on public bodies to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, the need to:

* Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is unlawful under the Act.
* Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
* Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

**Consultation and Involvement**

Consultation and involvement are ways of ensuring the College get the input it needs to fulfil the various statutory duties explained in this SES. The College regards consultation and involvement as a fundamental and vital part of the development and implementation of the SES and Action Plan. The College will be consulting and involving staff, students and the Local Governing Body that share protected characteristics and other stakeholders to ensure that the College promotes equality in everything that we do.

**Monitoring & Review Procedures**

We have a statutory duty to monitor and review:

• any adverse or differential impact on equality for staff and learners of different

 protected groups.

• by reference to those protected groups, the admission and progress of

 students and the recruitment and career progress of staff.

The College has a duty to publish the results of the monitoring undertaken. ***(Please refer to our Public Sector Equality Duty Report).***

Equality and Diversity monitoring will be extended to include data necessary to assess adverse impact on people who share a protected group.

The College is aware that disclosing information about protected characteristics can be a very sensitive issue and will follow advice and good practice. Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity will be paramount. The College hopes that the equality and diversity data collected will be used to create positive change. Organisations contracted to deliver College services will also have to demonstrate their commitment to comply with their responsibilities under equality legislation.

The Director of HR and Senior Management Team will oversee the development and implementation of the SES and Action Plan, with support from the Equality & Diversity Co-ordinator. There is a commitment to update the Action Plan annually, and to revise the SES at least every three years.

Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of both documents will rest with the Equality and Diversity Committee, reporting to the Senior Management Team and ultimately the Local Governing Body. Information will also be shared with all staff, students and other stakeholders to facilitate improvements aimed at proactively developing positive actions in relation to groups sharing protected characteristics.

The College Strategic Plan operates on a three-year cycle, and it is intended that the SES will be complementary to this development and planning cycle.

**Reporting Procedures**

The College has a statutory duty to report annually on the scheme’s progress. An annual report will be presented to the Local Governing Body and Student Ambassadors on the implementation of the SES. A revised SES Action Plan will also be presented to the SMT, Local Governing Body and Student Ambassadors each year, reflecting the work completed in the previous plan.

Copies of the SES, Action Plan, Annual Report and Public Sector Equality Duty Report will be published on the College website and intranet. All information will also be made available in alternative formats on request.

**Complaints Procedures**

The College welcomes contact from stakeholders, individuals and/or organisations that wish to discuss any issues relating to the SES. All complaints or concerns will receive a response in line with the College Complaints Procedure. Further details can be obtained by contacting Reception on telephone number 0151 652 5575. Further details about the Complaints Procedure can be located on the College website at www.bsfc.ac.uk.