

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

FOREWORD BY PRINCIPAL AND CHAIR OF CORPORATION

The City of Stoke on Trent Sixth Form College is committed to the principle of equality for all. The College’s aims encompass a determination to ensure that all members of the College have an equal opportunity to maximize their potential, are valued equally and are treated with respect. It seeks to ensure that in respect of both employment and education, all are provided in an environment in which diversity is valued.

This commitment to equality and diversity underpins and influences all areas of College activity. The College is opposed to discrimination of any form and is committed to the protection of its members from such unlawful activity.

The Single Equality Scheme provides the framework for the College’s commitment to:

- promoting equality of opportunity for current and prospective students and staff in a planned and proactive manner
- ensuring that there are no barriers to access, achievement and progress
- respecting and valuing the diversity of all who work and study at the College;
- Endeavoring to meet the needs of individuals and helping them to maximize their potential.
- Providing an environment of equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination.
- Providing an open, supportive working and learning experience of the highest standard.
- Responding to the needs of the local community.
- Celebrating diversity.
- Raising awareness and recognition of the nature and effects of prejudice, stereotyping and socio-economic disadvantage across the College.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the City of Stoke on Trent Sixth Form College’s revised Single Equality Scheme (SES) which demonstrates how the College will meet its legal duties in promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimization.

The SES lays out the College’s response to its statutory duties in relation to the Equality Act 2010. The Act replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It places a specific Equality Duty on public sector organisations. The new Equality Duty replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender. This Duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality)
- Religion or belief (this includes lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

The SES and its Action Plan is being revised in line with the new Act. It will be reviewed annually and updated action plans will be reported to College Stakeholders.

2. COLLEGE BACKGROUND

The City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College is a large Sixth Form College. It has around 1,700 full-time students aged 16-19, attracted from a wide area of North Staffordshire, the majority of whom live within the city itself.

The gender balance of students is almost equal (55% female, 45% male); approximately 19% are from the minority ethnic community and there is evidence of a growing intake from Eastern Europe.

The College’s mission is *“The young persons College; developing skills; inspiring excellence”*, where all students are encouraged to achieve their full personal and academic potential. The College provides effective support to boost the development, confidence and social skills of individual students.

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The College provides a rich mix of curriculum opportunities. Approximately 87% of student enrolments are to level 3 courses, 12% level 2 and 1% the foundation programme.

The College supports students with additional support needs. These include Diabetes, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Epilepsy, Spina Bifida, Crohns, ADHD, Hearing and Visual Impairment, Cerebral Palsy and Haemophilia.

3. LEGISLATION

One of the Main purposes of the Equality Act 2010 is to harmonise discrimination law and to strengthen it, bringing together and restating, existing discrimination legislation concerning sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age.

In addition there are significant changes in that there are new types of disability discrimination together with discrimination by association and perception.

The following pieces of legislation have been repealed:

- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The Equality Act has not altered the grounds on which discrimination can occur, but now covers nine categories which are known as ‘protected characteristics’ and in alphabetical order they are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

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The absence management process will be applied to all staff regardless of age.

Disciplinary and Dismissal

Considerations of age shall play no part when considering disciplinary action or the dismissal of an employee.

Flexible Working

Flexible working arrangements, including reduced working hours, may be considered at different stages of an employee's career as a means of helping the employee to better manage any issues that might arise outside the workplace. Consideration of age shall play no part in considering the outcome of such requests.

Pay and Conditions of Service

Salary levels or benefits will not be age related. The College recognises that incremental pay progression and other service-based rewards are an acknowledgement of the increasing experience and loyalty of staff. Pay structures that are based on automatic length of service entitlements up to five years are exempt from the legislation.

Performance Management

Considerations of age will play no part when assessing an individual's performance.

Recruitment and Selection

All employees will have equal opportunities in relation to the appointment to any job within the College, subject to the requirements of that particular role and the individual's skills, suitability and experience relevant to that role.

There will be no direct or indirect references to age as follows:

- The wording of adverts will not specify parameters such as number of years experience or holding a driving license, nor will words such as 'mature' or 'dynamic' be used.
- Job Descriptions and Person Specifications will not include any age related criteria or request particular qualifications (i.e. GCSE) which may disadvantage people of different ages.
- When short-listing, interviewing and assessing candidates assumptions will not be made and selection will be based on the skills and competence

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relevant to the job. No specific question relating to age will be asked, for example, how would you feel at being managed by someone much younger/older than you are?

Redundancy

Any redundancy selection policy used will be based on objective criteria.

Harassment

All members of staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect and the College will not tolerate bullying and/or harassment in any form.

Retirement

There is no compulsory retirement age.

Training and Development

Considerations of age will play no part in an individual’s access to facilities made available by the College for promotion, training or career opportunities.

7.2 DISABILITY

Background

According to The Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

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People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

Disabilities may include:

- Physical Disabilities such as diabetes, epilepsy, Crohn’s disease, hearing and visual impairment, cerebral palsy, haemophilia or other chronic health conditions
- other disabilities which may affect learning including dyslexia, dyspraxia, Asperger’s Syndrome, attention deficit disorder etc
- any other physical or mental condition which affects an individual’s ability to participate in college life.

Previous disability discrimination has been replaced with two new types of discrimination which are:

Indirect disability discrimination
Discrimination arising from disability

In summary under the Equality Act 2010 this means that it is unlawful for an employer to:

- Discriminate **directly** by treating a job applicant or employee less favourably than others **because of** a particular disability. However, positive discrimination in favour of a disabled job applicant or employee is not unlawful.
- Discriminate by treating a job applicant or employee **unfavourably** because of something **arising in consequence of disability** unless it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Discriminate **indirectly** by applying a provision, criterion or practice that disadvantages job applicants or employees with a particular disability unless it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Fail to comply with the duty to make **reasonable adjustments** where a disabled job applicant or employee is placed at a substantial advantage.
- Subject a job applicant or employee to **harassment related to disability**.

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- **Victimise** a job applicant or employee because they have made or it is believed they intend to make a disability discrimination complaint under the Equality Act or because they have done or intent to do other things in connection with the Act.

Direct discrimination can occur where an employer treats an employee less favourably than he treats or would treat because the employee **associates** with a disabled person, for example, because an employee’s son is disabled.

An employer treats an employee less favourable because it **perceives** that the employee is disabled, for example, an employer wrongly thinks that the employee is suffering from depression and dismisses them as a result.

Unfavourable treatment need not be because of the disability itself for there to be discrimination arising from disability. The treatment must be because of something **arising in consequence of the disability** such as the need to take a period of disability related absence. The EHRC Code explains that the consequences of a disability include anything which is the result, effect or outcome of the disabled person’s disability.

College Commitment

The College will take a proactive role in changing cultural attitudes to disability and ensure that reasonable adjustments are in place in anticipation of the needs of members of the college. This will underpin actions which will seek to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- eliminate disability related harassment
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and foster good relations between disabled and non disabled members of the college
- encourage participation by disabled people in education and employment opportunities at the college
- take account of the disabled people’s disabilities, even where this involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people (NB this is an

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To provide training and raise awareness in order to eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation based on sexual orientation

8. ACTION PLAN

All of the 9 protected characteristics will be included as part of the Single Equality Scheme action plan. The action plan will focus on all aspects of College life including communication, physical access, transport, planning, marketing and publicity, purchasing, admissions, retention, achievement, assessment, support and guidance, curriculum development, teaching and learning strategies, recruitment, training and retention of staff and community relations.

The Action Plan will be communicated to teaching and support staff via staff meetings, staff training days, the weekly newsletter and other internal communication methods. Communication with students will be via Student Forum, Student Council, The Weekly Bulletin, information screens and other internal communication methods.

9. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Information is sourced from several areas and includes:

- Analysis of student enrolment, success and achievement.
- The opinions and issues of staff and students. These will be collected via satisfaction surveys, suggestion schemes and representatives of the Equal Opportunities Committee.
- Impact Assessments on Policies and Procedures
- External reviews such as by Ofsted
- Annual Equality and Diversity Report to the Corporation
- Records of T&L Observations
- Annual report on accusations of racism

10. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

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13. RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Staff Harassment Policy

Staff Grievance Procedure

Student Bullying and Harassment Procedure

Student Disciplinary Procedure

Student Complaints / Concerns Procedure

14. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIA'S)

Equality Impact Assessments will be used to ensure that new and existing policies and procedures do not affect people in an adverse way.

These will be carried out as part of a rolling programme, with all new policies and procedures being appropriately assessed as they are developed and existing policies assessed over time.

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