



Policy Name and Number:	07 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Procedure
Version Number:	3
Approval date:	21 st April 2026
Exec Lead:	Executive Director People and Culture
a. Responsible Person for policy review: b. Responsible Manager for policy implementation (if different):	HR Manager
How does the policy link to the Strategic Plan Aims and Themes: <u>Aims:</u> 1. <i>Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment</i> 2. <i>Beneficial Partnerships</i> 3. <i>Sustainable SMART Campuses</i> 4. <i>Inclusive, Thriving Community</i> 5. <i>Financial Sustainability</i> <u>Themes:</u> a. <i>Sustainability and the environment</i> b. <i>Happiness and wellbeing</i> c. <i>Digital transformation</i> d. <i>Equality, diversity and inclusion</i>	Aims: 1,2,3,4,5 Themes: A,B,C,D
a. Related Policies and Procedures: b. Related Legislation:	Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Positive Student Behaviour Policy & Disciplinary procedures Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure Grievance Policy and Procedure Disciplinary Policy and Procedure Equality Act 2010
Consultation Process: <i>eg, T&I / CPSE / HR / SPBD / Exec</i>	Exec – Approved 21/04/2026
Approving Authority:	Exec Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporation/Committee Approval <input type="checkbox"/>
Policy Review Frequency:	Annual
Effective Date:	21 st April 2026
Date of Next Revision:	20 th April 2027
Scope: <i>(Describe what and to whom the policy applies, and any exemptions. i.e. staff, students, stakeholders, visitors, volunteers, contractors)</i>	This policy applies to staff, students, governors, volunteers, contracts and visitors.
Policy classification:	Public (website): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal: SharePoint <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governor Portal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Canvas <input type="checkbox"/>
Key Updates/Changes from previous policy: Active links to all corresponding policies replacing the appendices in the previous document. Updates to SLT lead and responsible manager	

Policy Name:	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Procedure	Policy Number:	07
--------------	--	----------------	----

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Oaklands College is committed to ensuring an inclusive community where every individual is respected and valued. It aligns with the principles of dignity, equity, and justice, ensuring students, staff, governors, and visitors experience a supportive environment free from discrimination, harassment, and inequality. By integrating the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, the College emphasises its dedication to eliminating biases, advancing equal opportunities, and cultivating harmonious relationships across diverse groups. This is a framework for embedding fairness and respect in all aspects of institutional life.
- 1.2. The Executive Director People and Culture is responsible for leading on equality, diversity and inclusion across the College; however, the whole College community has a duty to abide by the key principles contained in this policy.

2. College Vision, Mission, KPIs and Objectives

- 2.1 **Vision:** To be a sustainable educational trailblazer inspiring our learners and our wider community to achieve their potential in a changing world.
- 2.2 **Mission:** To prepare every learner for work, a rewarding career, and life's opportunities. By treating every student as the individual they are, with care, passion and understanding in a professional, contemporary and community-focused environment they'll value and enjoy.
- 2.3 This policy aligns with **Strategic Aim 1.**

Deliver continuous outstanding teaching, learning, and assessment to all learners and employers.

This policy also aligns with **Strategic Objectives:**

- a. Deliver outstanding teaching, learning, assessment and enrichment providing an environment that builds skills and knowledge
- b. Inspire our learners to attend, learn and achieve above the national quartile
- c. Drive a professional culture of continuous improvement through high quality training, coaching and performance management to sustain outstanding quality of education
- d. Achieve high levels of satisfaction among all key stakeholders to raise the profile of Oaklands

- 2.4 This policy aligns with **Strategic Aim 2.**

Create new and strengthen existing mutually beneficial partnerships to deliver the highest quality educational offer to increase economic prosperity.

This policy also aligns with **Strategic Objectives:**

- a. Continue to grow our sector leading and employer endorsed centres, in partnership with key partners that are locally and regionally relevant and recognised nationally and internationally
- b. Continually develop our curriculum strategy to meet employment and economic priorities by increasing participation in education and skills to progress people into or within work

Policy Name:	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Procedure	Policy Number:	07
--------------	--	----------------	----

- c. Further develop our recognition as a collaborative educational group that increases its number of strategic partners to develop skills, promote productivity and prosperity in the region
- d. Continue to strengthen our strong and respected brand that listens and responds to all its stakeholders

2.5 This policy aligns with **Strategic Aim 3.**

Continue to develop our estate so that it is recognised as world class in terms of quality, sustainability and the promotion and practice of evolving leading-edge technologies.

This policy also aligns with **Strategic Objectives:**

- a. Continue to progress the transformational Oaklands College estate masterplan and strategy to maximise our assets to the benefit of our stakeholders, ensuring they meet our 7 S design principles: -Smart, Sustainable, Safe, Sector employer engaged so that developments have relevant industry input and support, Stakeholder engaged, Strategic, Social corporate responsibility
- b. Create a digitally SMART campus through embracing current and future technologies and industry best practice.

2.6 This policy aligns with **Strategic Aim 4.**

Further enhance our caring, accessible, inclusive, and thriving college community, committed to fairness, health, and success.

This policy also aligns with **Strategic Objectives:**

- a. An educational group that is at the forefront of, and leading in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity by embedding effective practices in all we do
- b. Nationally accredited as an employer of choice that promotes a consistent culture of trust, innovation, enterprise, and teamwork, where both staff and students feel valued and recognised
- c. Renowned for delivering a safe and secure environment that allows learners to thrive
- d. Delivering more than just a qualification, through enrichment and work experience activities that develops a portfolio of skills learners require to progress to their chosen destination

2.7 This policy aligns with **Strategic Aim 5.**

Deliver good or outstanding long term sustainable financial health, through growth, that enables reinvestment in our students, staff, and estate to support our aspirational goals.

This policy also aligns with **Strategic Objectives:**

- a. Ensure we have constant access to effective data sources and management information to enable swift and evidence-based decision making
- b. Maintain effective management and control as well as audit compliance to meet regulatory requirements

3. Purpose/Policy Statement

3.1 The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy embodies the College's foundational principles of fairness, accessibility, and mutual respect. Its purpose is to establish actionable

Policy Name:	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Procedure	Policy Number:	07
--------------	--	----------------	----

guidelines that address legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 while promoting inclusivity in learning, teaching, and employment. The policy aims to implement strategies that eliminate unlawful discrimination and enhance the understanding of diversity. Through its practical framework, the College aspires to create an impact that transcends compliance, building an environment where individuals thrive irrespective of their protected characteristics. This ensures equitable outcomes and supports sustained organisational development.

4. Implementation/Communication/Training

- 4.1 The implementation of the policy is facilitated through clear communication and robust training programs tailored to meet the needs of students, staff, and other stakeholders.
- 4.2 Induction sessions and ongoing professional development workshops reinforce the policy's principles, ensuring widespread understanding and adherence.
- 4.3 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) events and initiatives foster active engagement, while the integration of the policy into operational practices ensures its practical application. Additionally, the policy is made accessible via multiple platforms, such as SharePoint and the College website, to maintain transparency and inclusivity.

5. Monitoring Impact

- 5.1. The College has established systematic monitoring mechanisms for evaluating the policy's impact. Data on student outcomes, staff recruitment practices, and grievances are analysed regularly to identify trends and address disparities.
- 5.2. The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy Group oversees this process, providing termly reports to stakeholders.
- 5.3. Feedback from consultations, training sessions, and the Student Voice mechanism further informs policy adjustments ensuring this policy remains effective and responsive to the evolving needs of the College community.

6. Context

- 6.1. The Equality Act 2010 outlines our responsibilities to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 6.2. The Equality Act 2010 brings together several pieces of legislation and expands the number of protected groups which are categorised below:
 - Age
 - Being or becoming a transsexual person
 - Marriage and Civil Partnership
 - Pregnancy and Maternity
 - Disability

Policy Name:	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Procedure	Policy Number:	07
--------------	--	----------------	----

- Race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

7. Single Equality Scheme

7.1. This policy, also known within the public sector as a Single Equality Scheme, describes our unified approach and strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across the College community, our legal obligations and how we will achieve this.

7.2. The purpose of the Single Equality Scheme is:

- **Compliance** – To meet statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- **Unified Approach** – To bring together policies on race, disability and gender into one cohesive document, simplifying compliance and implementation
- **Action Planning** – To see clear actions, targets and goals for promoting equality within the College
- **Fostering Good Relations** – To promote positive attitudes, understanding and good relations between different groups across the College community
- **Inclusion** – To ensure all policies and practices are fair, inclusive and respect diversity for all within the College community
- **Mainstreaming Equality** – To ensure equality is embedded into the culture of the College, rather than treated as a separate, optional duty.

7.3 The College will not tolerate behaviour which breaches this policy and procedure and will initiate action against those who do not meet the standards of behaviour required. This may be the provision of support and training, or action of a disciplinary nature.

8. Meeting our Duties

8.1. We will seek to ensure Governors, staff, students and stakeholders are aware of this policy the actions needed for its implementation. We will do this in the following ways:

- Ensuring everyone is aware of the value placed on equality of opportunity and that action will be taken in the event of any breach of this policy
- Allowing governors and staff sight of relevant and appropriate information which can assist with planning, implementing and monitoring actions
- Publicity materials, schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources present appropriate and positive messages about age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and cultural diversity
- Everyone can access appropriate support and facilities
- Applicants for employment are drawn from a wide pool, with positive action to encourage applications from under-represented groups
- Recruitment and promotion procedures are designed and implemented to eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Staff development activities meet the particular needs and enhance the skills of individuals of all under-represented groups

9. Equality and Eliminating Discrimination

9.1. We aim to eliminate unlawful discrimination and break down institutional barriers before they can impact on people. We will remove unforeseen barriers swiftly and sensitively as soon as they become apparent.

Policy Name:	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Procedure	Policy Number:	07
--------------	--	----------------	----

9.2. For more information related to the legislation and protected characteristics, please see the [Equality Act 2010](#).

10. Harassment and Bullying

- 10.1. We aim to foster an environment in which all members of the College community can work and study effectively. Bullying and harassment of any kind is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. The College will eliminate all forms of bullying and harassment, should they become apparent.
- 10.2. For more information, please see the [Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure](#) and the [Positive Behaviour and Student Disciplinary Policy](#).

11. Good Practice in Staffing Issues

- 11.1. We will ensure current and prospective staff are treated equitably, fairly and without discrimination in their working lives, by applying all equalities legislation to our Human Resources practices.
- 11.2. We will screen our policies for equality impact, as appropriate, and will take action where necessary and continue to promote equality of opportunity through our recruitment procedures, including the use of positive action and the monitoring of retention of staff.
- 11.3. For more information, please see the [Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure](#).

12. Training

- 12.1. Both compulsory and non-compulsory equality, diversity and inclusion training programme will be provided to support this policy.
- 12.2. Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion is a part of induction for all new staff and students.
- 12.3. Training events will be publicised and monitored as part of the College's quality review of staff and students' development.
- 12.4. For more information on training, please also see the [Staff Development Policy and Procedure](#).

13. The Equality Duty

- 13.1. The College will consider the needs of all individuals when shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to employment.
- 13.2. Our decision making will be robust, transparent and fully consider the impact of our proposal on all equality groups.
- 13.3. While the Equality Act does not explicitly require Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to be conducted, we will consciously consider the three aims of the Equality Duty when making decisions:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and person who do not share it

- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- 13.4. The following principles explain what is essential for the Equality Duty to be fulfilled when making decisions
- Knowledge – staff need to be aware of the Equality Duty; what is expected of them and how they can achieve the College’s expectations
 - Timeliness – the duty must be complied with before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration or a decision is taken
 - Real consideration – Consideration of these aims must form an integral part of the decision-making process. We must prove we have given the proposal serious consideration and applied ‘due regard.’
 - Sufficient information – The decision maker must consider what information they have and what might be needed to give proper consideration to the Equality Duty. The EIA is conducted by completing the main questions:
 - Aims and objectives of the proposal
 - Outcomes and impacts of the proposal
 - Minimising the negative impacts
 - Maximising the positive impacts
 - Incorporating or disregarding feedback
- 13.5. During the decision-making process, the writer of the policy must ensure they have:
- Not unlawfully discriminated
 - Engaged with stakeholders
 - Engaged in an evidence-based decision-making process
 - Paid due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duties
 - Considered the impact of the proposal on equality groups

14. Publicity and Awareness

14.1. The College will ensure all staff, students, visitors, stakeholders, contractors and suppliers are made aware of our Single Equality Scheme and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and will be publicly available on our website. The Scheme will be drawn to the attention of students and staff at induction. The College will continuously develop its methods of publicising the scheme to students.

15. Positive Action to Promote Choice, Opportunity and Progression

15.1. We will ensure equality of access to the delivery of our programmes of learning and that all members of the College community can learn, teach, train and succeed in a mutually supportive environment. There will be equality of access to employment through the use of positive action within the scope of the Equality Act 2010. Applicants for posts at the College are routinely asked prior to interview if special adaptations to enable participation are required; those applicants with a protected characteristic are guaranteed an interview for a post if they meet the essential requirements.

15.2. In terms of procurement, the College will ensure that:

- All partners, contractors and consultants are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in service provision
- Our procurement policy does not exclude smaller groups and that consultants and contractors demonstrate good practice
- Suppliers and contractors are aware of and comply with the College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and procedure
- Equality clauses are added to all contracts and service specifications

Policy Name:	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Procedure	Policy Number:	07
--------------	--	----------------	----

16. Complaints relating top Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 16.1. Staff and students will be made aware of the complaints procedure via induction and it will be available around the College.
- 16.2. We will monitor the equality data of complainants and use this information to ensure there are no discrepancies in the level or type of complaints from different equality groups.
- 16.3. In the case of a complaint relating to a student, this should be raised via Quality in conjunction with [Positive Behaviour and Student Disciplinary Policy](#).
- 16.4. In the case of a complaint relating to a member of staff, please refer to the [Grievance Policy and Procedure](#).

17. Consultation and Communication

- 17.1 As we continue to develop the scheme, we will consult with a range of stakeholder, including, but not limited to:
- Students
 - Parents
 - Staff
 - Governors
 - Employers
 - Community and voluntary groups
- 17.2 Our stakeholders will be informed of events, developments and initiatives as they arise. Specific events will be developed throughout the year which will help the College achieve its equality duties and gather feedback from our stakeholders.