



# EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

## 1. Policy Statement

Oaklands College is committed to promoting equality and diversity and a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work.

The College aims to be an inclusive organisation, where diversity is valued, respected and built upon, where students, staff, and other stakeholders are expected to behave in a way which makes people feel accepted, comfortable and safe.

The objective of this policy is to outline the College's approach to fulfilling this commitment and to make it clear to all parties what they may expect from the College and equally what the College expects of them.

## 2. Scope

The commitments within this policy apply to students, staff, the Corporation, volunteers and users of the College. The policy also forms the standards the College sets for work with other organisations and visitors with regards to achieving equality, for example work placements and employers, collaborative partners and contractors (both in terms of employment and as a service provision of education).

## 3. Context

This Equality Policy reflects the harmonised and strengthened content and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the College's further statutory responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duties. The Act (and this policy) identifies nine 'Protected Characteristics'.

These are:

- **Age:** (older people, younger people, people of an age group)
- **Disability:** (not limited to physical or sensory impairments, mental health disability, some long-term medical condition)
- **Gender reassignment:** (transsexual people, transgender people)
- **Marriage and civil partnerships:** (a person who is married, a person who is a civil partner)
- **Pregnancy and maternity:** (pregnant women, women on maternity leave, women who have recently given birth)
- **Race:** (colour, nationality, ethnic or national backgrounds, heritage)
- **Religion or belief:** (any religion or lack of religion, any religious or philosophical belief or lack of belief)
- **Sex:** (women and men - gender)
- **Sexual orientation:** (gay and lesbian people, bisexual people, heterosexual people)

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In line with the Equality Act 2010, the College will fulfil the duties of eliminating and not tolerating the following and will have procedures in place to deal with any incidents of these:

**Discrimination** - when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have. It is also recognised as potentially occurring through association to another individual who may be discriminated against because of their protected characteristic.

**Harassment** - when an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct which has the purpose (intentional) or effect (unintentional) of:

- violating a person's dignity, or
- creating an uncomfortable, intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

**Victimisation** - when a person experiences disadvantage because they have supported someone in making a complaint or an allegation of discrimination, or because they personally have made an allegation of discrimination.

Oaklands College have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism:

*"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."*

## 4. Strategy

**The College will:**

- Ensure the principles of equality and diversity are evident in all College policies, systems and practices and ensure that these do not unfairly disadvantage or discriminate individuals either directly or indirectly
- Create an environment which values differences, raises aspiration and provides an opportunity for everyone to achieve
- Value the different contributions made by students and staff and make use of their diverse backgrounds and experiences to enhance the service provided
- Encourage and foster good relations between people from different groups
- Increase staff awareness of unconscious biases
- Actively encourage the recruitment of staff and learners from all groups within the community
- Take positive action to promote equality of outcomes for students and staff
- Develop an implementation plan with specific equality and diversity impact measures and targets that review progress annually

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- Carry out impact assessments to ensure that College policies or procedures do not have any adverse effect on learners and/or staff from particular groups or backgrounds
- Provide awareness raising, training and guidance for staff and learners on equality and diversity issues
- Create an environment that eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Take disciplinary action against learners or staff if the policy is deliberately or wilfully breached.

### 5. Responsibilities and compliance

#### (i) The Corporation are responsible for ensuring that:

- Positive action is taken to ensure that the membership of the Corporation reflects the diversity of the communities served by the College.
- They are aware of and take ownership of the College's responsibilities as outlined in this policy and equality legislation, notably the Equality Act 2010.
- Before making any major strategic decisions the Corporation should consider equality issues in relation to students and staff

#### (ii) The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that:

- The College Strategy encompasses our commitment to equality of opportunity
- The Quality Improvement Plan has equality at its core
- The College recruits and retains an inclusive and diverse workforce which is appropriately developed to ensure each individual has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and thus improving the performance of the whole organisation

#### (iii) The College Management Team is responsible for ensuring that:

- They promote this policy amongst their staff and ensure compliance
- That actions within their departments contribute towards the college meeting its Public Sector Duties
- All programmes of learning offered, whether existing or new, will be regularly reviewed through the SAR and curriculum planning processes to examine how far they meet the needs of all students with particular reference to equality of opportunity
- They take appropriate action where necessary to assist minority or underrepresented groups to increase participation, retention and achievement tailored to any patterns within curriculum areas (e.g. gender bias)
- Teaching observation reports include an evaluation of how successfully equality and diversity is embedded and advanced within each lesson
- Business Support areas analyse their service and resources against the commitments within this policy and take action to make improvements or adjustments accordingly.

#### (iv) All staff are responsible for ensuring that:

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- They are aware of this policy and duties in relation to all of the protected characteristics and the College's Public Sector Duties under the Equality Act and they attend all mandatory Equality and Diversity Training.
- They demonstrate sensitivity to issues of diversity and that they attend and complete staff training to help their understanding of the issues in this area
- Whatever their role, they challenge, within their ability, inappropriate behaviour of any person wherever it might occur within the college
- They conduct themselves throughout their employment in a way that positively supports this policy and protects the college's reputation and embraces the College value of "Valuing Diversity"

(v) **Students are responsible** for ensuring that:

- They attend induction, enrichment and tutorial activities concerning equality and diversity and fulfil their responsibilities towards other students and members of staff
- Their coursework reflects sensitivity to issues of equality and diversity and does not include any discriminatory content
- They refer cases of inappropriate behaviour by any staff, visitors or fellow students to a member of staff, act as good role models to peers and challenge inappropriate behaviour where they are confident in so doing

## 6. Staff Development and Awareness

The College will provide periodic training and awareness raising to staff and students through:

- Appropriate face to face and online Equality & Diversity induction courses
- Providing informative materials and information on the intranet and around college (e.g. in the weekly bulletin) which embrace and promote Equality and Diversity
- Providing training to staff through inset days and managers conferences which will raise awareness and ensure that Equality & Diversity is embedded in everything we do

## 7. Implementation and Monitoring

As an employer the College monitors and reviews the effectiveness of its Equality and Diversity policy:

- Through regular equality and diversity committee meetings
  - With the involvement and consultation of appropriate groups and stakeholders in its review and on-going development
  - Through the publication and implementation of a single equality and diversity action plan covering all protected characteristics
  - By reviewing and implementing best practice
- ✓ The Corporation has responsibility for the monitoring of the Equality and Diversity Policy and any associated action plans.
  - ✓ The Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for the monitoring the implementation of the policy and advising on actions that need to be taken by the College.

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- ✓ Equality and Diversity Champions across the College have responsibility for promoting Equality and Diversity across the College and sharing good practice.

The policy is underpinned by the College Value and Behaviours;

### Achieving Student Success through Valuing Diversity

- ✓ Treat people fairly
  - ✓ Respect differences
  - ✓ Recognise the contribution that others make
- Has procedures in place to deal with incidents of discrimination, Harassment, and victimisation
    - Students who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against, or otherwise treated unfairly within the scope of this policy, may raise their concerns with their tutor or Student Services.
    - Staff who feel that they have been unfairly treated within the scope of this policy may raise their concern with their line manager or if this not possible through the grievance procedures.
    - Staff or students whose conduct breaches this policy through discrimination, harassment or victimisation of others will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure for staff or students, as appropriate.

## 8. Related policies and procedures

- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Student Behaviour Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Recruitment and selection policy and procedure
- Grievance policy and procedure
- Disciplinary policy and procedure
- Maternity, adoption, paternity, shared parental leave and parental leave policy and procedure