Equality and Diversity

Statement of intent and objectives

2025 - 2029

Vision

To be at the centre of prosperous and ambitious communities, where our extra-ordinary team build powerful collaborations to create transformative and inclusive learning opportunities that equip students, employers and partners with the skills, knowledge and resilience to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Mission

To be the college our communities need us to be

Inclusion is at the heart of our values

Inclusive practice is at the heart of our values:

Respect – people can be themselves and are accepted for who they are without judgement.
Ambition – we encourage everyone to be ambitious for their futures regardless of their starting point.
Integrity – everyone can succeed regardless of their background or characteristics.
Collaboration – diversity makes for higher performing teams where everyone has a voice.
Compassion – we will seek to understand and make sensitive adjustments where we need to.

Why do we care about equality and diversity?

There are a number of reasons why we care deeply about equality, diversity and inclusion. This is not about what the law tells us to do but **what the right thing to do is.**

Research shows that more equal societies are better for everyone. Communities will only thrive and prosper when **every** member of that community is able to succeed. As a college rooted in its communities with a mission that challenges us to be the college our communities need us to be, equality, diversity and inclusion is central to the achievement of our objectives.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is about being **valued for who and what we are.** Feeling as though **we can be ourselves** helps us to achieve without obstacles or being restricted by anyone's biased expectations of our ability.

Inclusion for our students means:

Removing the barriers that our learners and apprentices may experience and providing experiences, spaces and opportunities that recognise individual needs, meeting them where they really are rather than at a place where we might want them to be. Inclusion means involving our learners in decisions that affect them true to the philosophy 'nothing about me without me.'

Inclusion for our staff means

Our staff will feel a sense of belonging to the college, knowing they can participate with dignity and respect, free from harassment and bullying in an environment that recognises and celebrates diversity and difference, recognises the need for flexibility and where employees are encouraged and empowered to succeed in their careers.

Celebrating difference and diversity means that we are a more creative, inclusive place to learn and work.

We celebrate the fact that our students, staff, governors and external organisation partners are from different backgrounds with different experiences; because of this:

- We will make better decisions as we draw on the experiences and outlook of our diverse college.
- Listening to different points of view means that we create a culture of respect for one another, where everyone can have a voice.
- Working and learning with people who are different to me, means that I develop my own knowledge and understanding of life in Modern Britain.
- Understanding difference and diversity means that we are better prepared for the world of work.

Our approach means that **we can identify quickly where inequalities may exist**. We will monitor our data and speak to staff and students continually to make sure that where gaps in staff and students' experiences and outcomes exist, we can:

- Identify them quickly.
- Ensure any differences in experiences and outcomes are eliminated.

Linked documents

This statement of intent should be read in conjunction with the college's inclusion strategy 2026-2028 which will provide far more information about how equality, diversity and inclusion relates specifically to our students and their learning journey.

What does this mean in practice – our objectives?

For students and their learning:

We want our students to leave us equipped with the skills to be successful in the workplace and in life. We know that part of being successful is being able to work, live and thrive in diverse communities and workplaces.

What we intend to do:

We are an organisation where:

- Students feel able to be themselves and be accepted for who they are without judgement.
- Students who need extra help are given it so they don't get left behind.
- We are interested in who our students are and how their backgrounds may affect their learning.
- Diversity is celebrated, understood and diversity of thought encouraged.
- Respect is rooted in our culture.
- Harassment and bullying are not tolerated – face-face, online or behind 'someone's back' – we will not accept that 'jokes or banter' excuse this type of behaviour.
- All students can take part in all aspects of their journey with us, with dignity and ease.

How we achieve this in practice?

- Ensuring that every learning space and all teaching practice is neurodiversity aware, trauma informed and relational.
- Developing a curriculum offer that enables everyone regardless of their starting point to access learning.
- A tutorial programme that embraces difference and understanding and challenges prejudice and stereotypes.
- Support where needed for students to access their provision and have their individual needs met.
- Individualisation of a programme of study, where needed, to meet the needs of the individual.
- All students regardless of their starting point, progress into meaningful and positive destinations linked to their study.
- Pastoral support works hard to remove barriers to learning, outcomes and progression.
- Teaching that adapts to the individual needs of our students and promotes independence and enables students to make sustained progress, succeed and thrive.
- A learner voice framework that ensures that students' voices are listened to and acted upon.

How you will see this in action?

- Students with a range of personal characteristics, learning together and working in teams with respect and kindness.

- Age is not a barrier to accessing learning – we have courses for everyone regardless of age.
- Appropriate and timely support is in place for students who experience financial hardship.
- Bullying, mockery and cruelty are not acceptable and always dealt with swiftly and appropriately.
- Harassment of any kind is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Support for those with experience of local authority care to ensure that any hardship they may have previously or currently experienced does not impede the chances of them securing a positive and prosperous life.
- Students accepted and celebrated for who they are.

What does excellence look like?

- Students tell us they feel respected and fully included.
- All students, regardless of their background, personal characteristics or their circumstances achieve as well as each other and have the same chance to progress and achieve their career ambitions.

For staff and their working environment

We want to be a workplace where people feel valued and able to make a contribution to the success of the organisation. We know that diverse teams produce more creative thinking, more focussed problem solving and better results, as such we will ensure that our staff team is reflective of our student and wider community.

What we intend to do.

We are an organisation where:

- There is a culture where colleagues can be themselves without judgement or prejudice.
- Colleagues are treated with respect and dignity.
- Everyone's contribution is valued.
- All colleagues feel able to challenge and have their voice heard.
- A healthy balance between work and life outside of work is promoted.
- We will work hard to offer opportunities to those furthest from the jobs market.
- We all live by our values and are positive role models for colleagues and students alike.
- Workplace 'banter' that may make others feel uncomfortable is not tolerated.
- Harassment and bullying are dealt with swiftly and robustly.

How we achieve this in practice?

- Positive working relationships with our recognised trades unions.
- Performance management processes that take account of individual circumstances.
- An annual staff survey that allows staff to tell us the kind of organisation we are.
- Organisational policies and procedures that have respect at their heart.
- Flexible working arrangements to help people balance work and life outside of work.
- A culture where people are thanked for their contributions.
- Targeting job roles and opportunities to those furthest from the jobs market.
- Using supported internships and apprenticeships as an entry into working at the college.
- Staff development processes and systems that encourage people to grow.
- Opportunities for progression and development are transparent and fair.

How you will see this in action?

- Deadlines are negotiated with consideration for others and their priorities.
- Collaborative working across teams.

- Respect for individuals and their role – colleagues regardless of the job they do are treated as an equal.
- An 'open culture' where reporting of bullying and harassment are encouraged.
- Line management that is honest, open and supportive.
- Senior leaders that are accessible and act as positive role models.
- Leaders will be receptive to ideas and suggestions for improvement.

What does excellence look like?

- Colleagues tell us they feel valued and respected.
- Colleagues recommend the college as an inclusive and respectful place to work.
- All colleagues regardless of their personal circumstances are supported to be high-performing members of our team and given equal opportunities to develop and progress.
- A collaborative and supportive culture where all colleagues work together to achieve college objectives.
- Pay and reward structures that are fair and transparent.

For our leaders and managers

We want our leaders and managers to embody our values and promote and celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion. Our leaders will ensure that our processes, procedures and working practices encourage a culture of inclusion and belonging, they will understand where the gaps may be and be proactive in addressing them.

What we intend to do.

We are an organisation where:

- Resources are used to create equity for staff and students.
- Leaders build and value diverse teams.
- Leaders seek to understand the circumstances of individuals so that issues can be addressed compassionately.
- Leaders are open, honest and transparent in working with their teams.
- Bullying and harassment of colleagues by leaders must never happen.
- Leaders thank their teams for their efforts.
- Leaders do not place undue pressure on colleagues.
- Leaders communicate well with their teams.
- Senior leaders are visible, open and honest.
- Governors take an active oversight of the work that the college does to ensure inclusion and equity.

How we achieve this in practice?

- A development programme for leaders that enables them to be effective.
- A leadership forum to ensure collaboration and understanding of organisational goals.
- An annual staff survey where we ask staff their perceptions of leaders.
- A planning and self-assessment process that involves all team members.
- Formal structures for raising concerns and having those concerns taken seriously.
- Equality impact assessment processes so that we can assess the impact of our decisions.

How will you see this in action?

- Leaders who listen with compassion and without judgement.
- Leaders who are willing to be flexible to meet the needs of their team and our students.

- Leaders who start and finish meetings on time.
- Leaders that understand that we all have a life outside of work.
- Leaders who are clear and consistent.
- Line managers who meet staff on a one-to-one basis regularly to discuss performance in a collaborative and empowering way.
- Leaders who encourage and welcome challenge.
- Leaders who consult and collaborate rather than dictate.
- Leaders who reflect on their own practice and seek to improve.

What does excellence look like?

- Colleagues tell us that their leaders fully demonstrate the college's values.
- An established culture of mutual respect and understanding.
- An established culture of inclusion and collaboration.
- Excellent communication within and between teams.

For places and spaces – our environment

We want our spaces and our environment to be accessible and inclusive, this principle will be embedded into the design and development of new spaces and in the refurbishment and development of existing spaces.

What we intend to do.

We are an organisation where:

- Everyone can access our buildings, facilities and equipment with dignity.
- Imagery used in our marketing materials and in our displays celebrates diversity and difference.
- Technology is used creatively to ensure people can be included.
- Staff have an awareness of individual needs and plans are put in place to meet them.
- We consult with staff and students about the design of our spaces.
- There are quiet spaces for those who need them, this includes space for contemplation and prayer.
- Our online space is as inclusive as our physical space.

How we achieve this in practice.

- For students with an identified need, an individual needs assessment which identifies what steps we need to take to support success and progression.
- A learner voice programme that actively seeks feedback on our environment for learning and socialising.
- Adaptation of resources to make sure they are accessible.
- The use of images that are real students so that students see someone that they can relate to.
- Being proud to be a disability confident employer.
- Respect for the college environment is enshrined within our code of conduct and behaviour policy.

How you will see this in action.

- Funding will never be used as an excuse for inaction.
- Students with a range of disabilities learning and socialising within a mainstream college.
- Students being supported in class and in wider activities to access the whole curriculum.
- Entrances that enable people to access our buildings regardless of their needs.

- Toilets and changing rooms that enable trans or non-binary students to access facilities with dignity.
- Access to quiet spaces for staff and students who may have sensory issues.
- Access to spaces for contemplation and prayer.
- Access to specialist transport for those who cannot access college buses.

What does excellence look like?

- Our students and staff tell us that all our spaces are inclusive and accessible.
- Buildings and spaces designed collaboratively with their users.
- Spaces that work for everyone.
- An environment that celebrates difference and diversity.

The legal context – The Equality Act 2010

As a publicly funded body we are bound by the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty. This requires us to have due regard for the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act states that meeting different needs and compliance with the three aims of the duty means that in some cases this may mean treating people more favourably than others. This is sometimes referred to as 'levelling the playing field'. An example of this might be the provision of specialist equipment to a student or staff member with a disability to ensure they can access their course or their work successfully.

The following are the nine protected characteristics listed within the equality duty, in addition the college's board have approved that they will treat care experience as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

In addition, the college works in an area of significant socio-economic deprivation and as such will include economic disadvantage as part of its statement of intent for equality and diversity. Governors approved the inclusion of care experience as a protected characteristic at their meeting in February 2023,

Our statement of intent sets out how we will reduce inequalities between those that have more and those that have the least. It will prioritise the welfare and success of students whose life circumstances are particularly difficult, this includes young people who have experience of local authority care, who have a social worker, or who have or continue to be affected by childhood trauma.

Our statement of intent identifies how we will meet our public sector equality duty and how we will ensure that we are an inclusive, supportive, environment where regardless of personal circumstance individuals will be supported to thrive.

Each year the college will publish a report on how well we are doing against our equality objectives and how we are meeting the public sector equality duty. Areas for improvement will be identified and incorporated into an annual development plan which is overseen by the equality, diversity and inclusion steering group.

Roles and responsibilities

The senior leadership team will take responsibility for ensuring we meet our objectives, all staff have a responsibility to embed the principles within this statement of intent and will be provided with mandatory training to do so.

Operationally the college has an Equality and Diversity steering group chaired by the vice principal: communication, engagement and student experience with representation drawn from across the college, the steering group will oversee the implementation of the college's equality and diversity action plan and be formally responsible for reviewing how well we are doing to meet the objectives stated within this document and our equality duty.

How well we are doing will be monitored by the standards committee and workforce development committee of our corporation board.