



**SINGLE EQUALITY
SCHEME POLICY**

POLICY NUMBER: OC23

Reviewed February 2012

Bexhill College Single Equality Scheme 2012 – 2015

As an educational provider, Bexhill College has a legal requirement to promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination in relation to disability, gender and race. This single scheme covers all the protected equality characteristics, extending to age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Our single scheme is based on our previous, separate schemes for disability, race, and gender. We will be reviewing the priorities in the Single Equality Scheme with the help of users and stakeholders. The Single Equality Scheme is central to our College mission and strategic plan.

This document will be of interest to Bexhill College staff, stakeholders and others with a wider interest in Bexhill College role as an education provider. This document outlines the College's objectives and the ways in which Bexhill College intends to deliver them.

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1. Bexhill College – An Introduction

Bexhill College is one of the most successful Colleges in East Sussex. It has a strong history of academic achievement and responsiveness to learner needs. The College has succeeded in delivering an A Level pass rate that equalled or exceeded the National Average year on year and prides itself on successfully meeting the individual needs of all its learners with individualised programmes.

The Ofsted Inspection in November 2010 graded the College as 'Good' and identified a trend of continuing improvement. Equalities analysis shows that success rates are consistently close to or above the national average and academic performance is less variable across the College for all groups.

The College has around 1500 full time 16 – 19 learners and around 500 adults on part time courses. It has around 200 staff and a turnover of £6.5 million.

The College has a commitment to providing high quality teaching and learning for all its students. It is committed to extending life-long learning in key areas and raising skills and qualification levels in the local area. Bexhill College offers over 100 different courses from entry to level 4, from 14 – 16 year olds in partnership with offers provision both on the main site and in the community. The College is committed to providing opportunities across all groups within the community.

2. Vision

'Outstanding College, Outstanding Opportunities'

This vision encapsulates the essence of the equalities agenda as the College strives for all to achieve their goals.

3. Mission

Bexhill College provides outstanding educational opportunities for the young people and the wider community of Rother & Hastings.

4. Strategic Aims

- 1) To deliver, in partnership, an engaging, demanding and exciting full time 14-19 programme
- 2) To achieve outstanding results that places the College in top 25% nationally
- 3) To provide high quality personalised support that enhances learning
- 4) To provide enriching opportunities which develop learners broader skills and increase their enjoyment, achievement, future participation in society and contribution to it
- 5) To maximise available technology to enhance the management and delivery of teaching & learning

- 6) To retain a well-qualified staff, committed to continuous relevant professional development
- 7) To promote and celebrate diversity and in so doing respect and value the individual
- 8) To maintain the college's strong financial base as 'outstanding'
- 9) To continually promote a safe and inspirational learning environment

Values

The College is committed to four values which represent the way in which we achieve our objectives. These identify the expectations we have of students, staff and managers in terms of the way the College operates. These are:

- Teaching and Learning is our First Priority
- Equal Opportunities for all Learners
- Achieving Excellence
- Meaningful Partnerships

These values aim to create a culture where differences are respected and diversity is welcomed and celebrated. We value our students and challenge discriminatory and inappropriate behaviour and attitudes, throughout our work, we take positive action to promote good relations and prevent inequality.

5. Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 rationalises and builds upon existing equality legislation which provides for a number of general duties. To:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups, men and women, people with and without a disability
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people even where this may involve treating disabled people more favourably

The Equality Act 2010 also introduces the Single Equality Scheme which requires Bexhill College to:

- Set equality objectives in relation to the nine protected groups (Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Gender, Sexual Orientation)
- Demonstrate how equality has been considered in College planning, procedures, practices and policy making
- Use of procurement procedures to promote equality
- Produce and publish an annual Self Assessment Report and Action Plan outlining the College's aspirations regarding equality and diversity
- Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of College life and the core of how the College thinks and behaves

6. Scoping the Single Equality Scheme

In drawing up the Scheme we have taken account of other public bodies such as LSIS, the YPLA and Ofsted as well as learners, staff and parents. The following College groups have been consulted and an Action Plan drawn up: Senior Leadership Team (SLT) College Management Team, Equality Core and Full Groups. The Scheme has been shaped and is underpinned by the established principles contained in the College's Vision, Mission, Strategic Objectives and Values

7. Delivering, Monitoring, Reviewing and Reporting on the Scheme

Management

The Corporation designates the Principal as having overall responsibility for Equality & Diversity issues. The Student Support Manager has responsibility for Equality & Diversity issues with students. They are managed by the Director of Teaching & Learning. The Personnel Manager has a responsibility for equality issues amongst staff.

All managers are responsible for the implementation of the Scheme together with the College's Equality & Diversity Policy and Race Equality Policy. The College is responsible for providing managers with the necessary resources and training. It falls, in particular, on College managers to set the standards and do all they can to ensure that all members of the College and potential members of the College are treated fairly, encouraged to disclose individual needs and are given the support and respect they need to do their jobs and learn. They should:

- Ensure that members of staff are aware of this Scheme and associated policies and that it is referred to when appropriate, in discussions during induction process and at probation and appraisals and at other relevant meetings
- Implement the Scheme within their areas of responsibility and provide appropriate awareness and direction on the key issues
- Always seek advice and guidance from the Equality & Diversity officer or the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team when in any doubt about the implementation of the Scheme

The DoTL will ensure that the Equality & Diversity Self Assessment Report and Action Plan, together with the results of Equality & Diversity and Race Equality monitoring are presented annually to the SLT, Personnel Committee and Strategic Planning Committee. The relevant Chairs will ensure that these reports are brought to the attention of the Corporation

Infringements of the Scheme, Equality & Diversity Policy and complaints relating to Equality & Diversity will be dealt with via the Grievance and Disciplinary policy and procedures and the Dignity at Work Policy and procedures [staff] and Complaints Policy and procedures [students and parents]

All Staff

All members of staff need to help create a climate of inclusivity which embraces diversity and challenges inequality, prejudice and discrimination. All members of staff should have an awareness of the Single Equality Scheme, Equality & Diversity Policy, the Race Equality Policy

8. Monitoring and Review of the Scheme

The College undertakes to conduct comprehensive and effective monitoring of all aspects of staffing and the student body in relation to Equality & Diversity

Monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with best practice recommendations, particularly from bodies such as the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) Equal

Opportunities Commission (EOC), and Disability Rights Commission (DRC), and with regard to data protection principles

9. Equality Impact Assessment

Staff and students are invited to review College practices, policies and Equality Groups procedures from equality and diversity perspectives through the College's Equality Groups. The Full Equality Group meets once every term to review equality and diversity issues arising from Curriculum and Pastoral areas

Equality reviews of College policies have been undertaken through structured equality impact assessments by members of the Equality Core Group. In addition, where appropriate wider reaching equality reviews have been initiated by policy and procedure originators for example the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

10. Communication

The Scheme and the College's Equality & Diversity and race Equality Policies will be communicated in the following ways:

To the public (including learners, work placement providers and staff):

- Our commitment to the Scheme will be highlighted in our prospectus, and annual Self Assessment Report
- A summary of the results of our monitoring information will be included in our annual self assessment report where this does not breach individual confidentiality
- Our annual E&D report is published on the College website along with the action plan which outlines our specific Equality objectives for the year

To learners:

- All learners will receive a summary of Equality & Diversity and Race Equality Policies and Single Equality Scheme. The induction programme for learners will highlight the College's commitment to equality, the action to be taken by learners who suffer discrimination and the action to be taken against such perpetrators of discrimination
- Tutors will reinforce this information during tutorials and lessons

To work placement providers:

- All work placement providers will receive a summary of their responsibilities under the Scheme and Equality & Diversity Policy and will signify their understanding of, an agreement to, these responsibilities
- The College will promote the requirement of learners from under-represented groups to providers

To staff:

- All staff will receive a full copy of the Scheme and Equality and Diversity and Race Equality policies as part of the Staff Handbook. Equality training is also part of induction for new staff
- Policies and information on the Single Equality Scheme is published/available on the portal and College website
- Staff training takes place within the College training programme each academic year on equality issues.

11. Equality Objectives and Actions

Equality Objectives 1 – Create, sustain and celebrate an inclusive and diverse work and learning environment which advances equality of opportunity for everyone.

Currently we have:

- Ensuring Equality & Diversity training is comprehensive and effective and the College community understands the part they play in advancing equality of opportunity
- Celebrating diversity through marketing activities such as the prospectus, website and College events such as the annual presentation evening
- Promoting equality issues through the Equality & Diversity group which includes representatives from all areas of the College including Governors

In the next 3 years we will:

- Undertake more work with parents regarding College Equality objectives and the part parents play in ensuring these are adhered to

Equality Objective 2 - Seek to challenge inequality, prejudice and discrimination

Currently we have:

- Policies relating to Complaints, Bullying and Harassment and Dignity at Work
- Full evaluation of the achievement and standards of all learners leading, where necessary, to action planning and improvements
- Challenging targets set for students with regard to prior achievement and data is used to monitor and plan effective interventions for different groups of learners
- Analysis of equality & diversity across staff for race, gender and age
- Equality & Diversity Implementation measures are reported on at the College's Personnel and Strategic Planning Governors' Committee meetings

In the next 3 years we will:

- Analyse data relating to underperformance of students from particular ethnic minority and social groups more effectively at curriculum level as part of the self assessment process. Currently data is analysed at cross College level in more detail
- Analyse complaints in more detail with regard to the protected characteristics of Equality Act and act accordingly
- Analyse the staff profile in more detail to take account of all the protected characteristics in the 2010 Equality Act

11.1 Equality Objectives 3 – Treat all members with respect and dignity, and seek to provide an environment free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation, including by association and perception. The College will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour against its members, either from other members or from members of the public

Currently:

The tutorial programme encourages discussion of a range of equality and diversity issues and celebrates key events such as Black History month or raises awareness of others such as Holocaust memorial day

In the next 3 years we will:

Work with students and staff and the broader College community on the 2010 Equality Act and association and perception discrimination, in relation to how the College's Scheme can be implemented most effectively

Appendix One

Types of Discrimination: Definitions

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perception discrimination below) or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see discrimination by association below). An example of direct discrimination.

Discrimination by association

Already applies to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Now extended to cover age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perception discrimination

Already applies to age, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Now extended to cover disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

Already applies to age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership; now extended to cover disability and gender reassignment. Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in your company that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if you can show that you acted reasonably in managing your business, i.e. that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. A legitimate aim might be any lawful decision you make in running your business or organisation, but if there is a discriminatory effect, the sole aim of reducing costs is likely to be unlawful. Being proportionate really means being fair and reasonable, including showing that you've looked at 'less discriminatory' alternatives to any decision you make. Annex 1 contains an example of indirect discrimination.

Harassment

Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual". Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

Third party harassment

Already applies to sex; now extended to cover age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The Equality Act makes you potentially

liable for harassment of your employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of your company, such as customers or clients. You will only be liable when harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions, you are aware that it has taken place, and have not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint. There is no longer a need to compare treatment of a complainant with that of a person who has not made or supported a complaint under the Act. See Annex 1 for an example of victimisation.

Appendix Two

The Protected Characteristics: Key Points

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

Age (no change)

The Act protects people of all ages. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if you can justify it, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employees to justify direct discrimination.

Disability (new definition and changes)

The Act has made it easier for a person to show that they are disabled and protected from disability discrimination. Under the Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, which would include things like using a telephone, reading a book or using public transport.

As before, the Act puts a duty on you as an employer to make reasonable adjustments for your staff to help them overcome disadvantage resulting from an impairment (e.g. by providing assistive technologies to help visually impaired staff use computers effectively). The Act includes a new protection from discrimination arising from disability. This states that it is discrimination to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (e.g. a tendency to make spelling mistakes arising from dyslexia). This type of discrimination is unlawful where the employer or other person acting for the employer knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person has a disability. This type of discrimination is only justifiable if an employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Additionally, indirect discrimination now covers disabled people. This means that a job applicant or employee could claim that a particular rule or requirement you have in place disadvantages people with the same disability. Unless you could justify this, it would be unlawful. The Act also includes a new provision which makes it unlawful, except in certain circumstances, for employers to ask about a candidate's health before offering them work.

Gender reassignment (new definition)

The Act provides protection for transsexual people. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected – so a woman who decided to live as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered. It is discrimination to treat transsexual people as less favourably for being absent from work because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment than they would be if they were absent because they were ill or injured.

Marriage and civil partnership (no change)

The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.

Pregnancy and maternity (no change)

A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. During this period, pregnancy and maternity discrimination cannot be treated as sex discrimination. See Annex 1 for an example. You must not take into account an employee's period of absence due to pregnancy-related illness when making a decision about her employment.

Race (no change)

For the purposes of the Act 'race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief (no change)

In the Equality Act, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief. Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.

Sex (no change)

Both men and women are protected under the Act.

Sexual orientation (no change)

The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people.