**PHILOSOPHY**

This statement outlines the commitment of the staff, students and governors of Woolston 6th Form College to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the college community, in order that every member should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

We believe that equality is a key principle in treating people fairly and creating a society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential - irrespective of their:

* gender
* race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
* disability
* religious beliefs (including non-belief)
* sexual orientation
* age
* pregnancy or maternity
* participation in gender reassignment

The above are the so-called “protected characteristics”. To reiterate, we believe that no individual should be excluded from any aspect of the college life on any of these grounds, or suffer any other kind of discrimination.

For our college, this means not simply treating everybody the same - sometimes equality is about altering the approach according to the needs of the students, for example by supplying auxiliary aids and services as a “reasonable adjustment” beyond that which is normally provided. So we need to understand and actively tackle the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different members of the college, who include:

• students

• staff and volunteers

• parents/carers

• the governing body

• multi-agency staff linked to the college

• visitors, including applicants for posts

• students on placement

Further, we believe that we should actively seek to eliminate all instances of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, whilst promoting understanding both in college and within the community.

We believe that equality should permeate all aspects of college life and is the responsibility of every member of the college community.

**PRINCIPLES**

The college welcomes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). As such, we will have due regard to matters of equality and access, both on a day-to-day level and during the process of developing policies, making decisions and taking action, by considering whether these may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics. We carry out analysis around the issue of Equality seriously, rigorously and with an open mind.

Our aim is to nurture the development of a community in which diversity is accepted, respected, valued and celebrated.

We are committed to challenge and eliminate any behaviour that is judged to be discriminatory in any guise - whether written, verbal or physical, including emotional abuse, bullying and harassment.

Every effort is made to ensure that all members of the college community are valued and have the opportunity to develop their full potential, socially, physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually, within a context of mutual respect, justice and fairness.

While an inclusive approach to assessment is desirable where this is both feasible and valuable, it is equally true that the fairest and most positive way to provide for some people is to use a different approach. For learners, this might entail using different teaching approaches or equipment, whilst for adults it might entail making reasonable adjustments to their working conditions.

As a principle, we do not discriminate against, harass or victimise any student or potential student: in relation to admissions, in the way we provide education for our students, in the way we provide access to the educational and social opportunities offered, or by excluding a student from those same opportunities.

Further, we are mindful of these same responsibilities when entering into communications with and about past students.

In general terms:

we aim to ensure that all students:

* are helped to understand and accept the idea of equality, both through the ethos and practices of the college and through the curriculum
* are helped to access every area of the curriculum
* have access to appropriate resources, in order to help them make progress
* have access to an appropriate amount of staff time and a tailored mix of teaching and learning styles

we aim to ensure that all staff, in relation to students:

* encourage, and model, respect for all members of the college community and the local community
* provide appropriately differentiated learning opportunities
* use language/communication systems that are understood by all students
* administer sanctions and rewards without bias
* create an environment in which all students are given positive encouragement to succeed

we aim to ensure that all staff:

* encourage, and model, respect for all members of the college community and the local community
* are able to access relevant training opportunities
* have access to our systems of internal communications
* and potential staff encounter recruitment procedures that ensure equality of opportunity

we aim to ensure that all members of the college community:

* show respect for all other members of the college community and the local community
* have access to relevant and understandable information, including those in an alternative format where requested
* are given opportunities to use amenities and resources without prejudice
* are aware of their responsibilities in implementing this policy

**PRACTICE**

We seek to enact the above beliefs and principles in the following ways:

**With regard to the College Ethos** - we seek to:

* provide a safe and stimulating environment where every student feels accepted and secure;
* support and challenge students to develop academically, emotionally and socially to the best of their ability;
* Offer all students equal access to the curriculum, to college life and life in the community where individual differences are appreciated, celebrated, understood and accepted;
* equip all of our students with the skills required to function in the world of work and/or to live as independently as possible;
* value the achievements of all students, both in and out of college and provide opportunities to develop self-confidence and a positive self image;
* have regard and respect for the experiences, knowledge and cultural diversity that every young person brings to college;
* provide a supportive culture in which all staff are encouraged to extend, develop and share their expertise;
* encourage students to become good citizens, by developing caring attitudes and respect towards themselves, other people, their college and their community;
* encourage each student to take responsibility for his/her behaviour and to act as a good role model to others.

**With regard to the students - we will strive to promote / provide:**

* student empowerment
* the right of all students to be valued, respected, consulted and listened to
* opportunities for social interaction of students with their peer group as well as those of similar ability and need
* appropriately differentiated learning opportunities
* access to an appropriate curriculum for all students by making reasonable adjustments (in terms of equipment, staff time, teaching styles) to the way the curriculum is delivered
* respect for the needs of students who use alternative/augmentative communication; staff will learn and use signing and symbol systems as appropriate
* participation by all students in extra-curricular activities, including educational visits
* a safe and secure learning environment for all students in which the only risks taken are those that are assessed, planned and part of an agreed and structured educational programme
* the right of all students to privacy and confidentiality where appropriate
* respect for the dignity and safety of all students at all times
* the provision of adequate and appropriate food at meal times for all students; individuals will not be discriminated against on the basis of cultural practices, religious belief, medical needs
* opportunities for students to develop a sensitive understanding of their peers, to acknowledge their needs and to be supportive in meeting them wherever appropriate
* opportunities for all students to help others where appropriate and to accept help themselves where necessary
* purposeful, positive relationships between students and their peers, students and staff, students and volunteers, visitors, representatives of various support agencies, governors, etc.
* respect and value for students’ own belief systems and cultures, and for those of other people.
* recognition of the differences that exist between people in terms of culture, colour, religious belief, language, sexual orientation, age, gender, ability, socio-economic and marital status etc. and that such diversity is enriching

**With regard to the Curriculum** - we strive to ensure that the curriculum both supports the values of the college and meets legal requirements. The curriculum will therefore promote:

* flexibility in response to individual needs
* cultural diversity
* the right of all students to make progress
* respect for our own and other people's lifestyles
* an interest in both the immediate and the world community
* high expectations
* co-operation and collaboration
* positive self-image
* differing learning styles

**With regard to members of staff and prospective members of staff** - we will adhere to all employment law and guidance provided by the LA, with particular reference in this document to:

* people with so-called “protected characteristics” as set out in the Equality Act 2010, for example, we will not ask health-related questions of applicants before job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work

**With regard to the College** **organisation and provision** - we recognise that the above has implications for organisation and provision, particularly with reference to:

* curriculum provision (broad and balanced but also inclusive, relevant, practical, creative, differentiated and appropriate)
* teaching resources – which reflect cultural and lifestyle diversities
* staffing ratios which reflect individual need
* access to all areas of the college building so that curriculum entitlement can be met
* therapy provision e.g. SALT, physiotherapy, OT, etc. according to specified need
* specialist equipment which facilitates access to the curriculum and meets other wide ranging needs
* planned inclusion/integration programmes - within classes, the college as a whole and other establishments
* alternative and augmentative communication systems
* the safety and dignity of all students at all times
* allocation of adequate time for students to meet given targets and to fulfil given tasks

**On a day-to-day basis** - we will pay particular attention to the following issues:

* communication strategies (promotion of positive attitudes towards languages other than English, and strategies other than those that are verbal)
* opportunities to experience different environments, systems and cultures from across the world, particularly those that are represented by the college and wider school populations
* the inclusion of visits to local resource bases e.g. museums, galleries, specialist centres, which will broaden students’ experience of other cultures
* acknowledgement of religious practices, diet, dress requirements etc. in order that no student is unwittingly isolated from any area of the curriculum
* exploration and sharing of ideas or interests which spring from students’ own cultural experiences, traditions and lifestyles
* grouping of students to allow for collaborative learning between students of mixed ability, gender, race, etc.
* the need to avoid reinforcing stereotypes
* opportunities for students to express opinions, make choices, and question stereotypes based on gender, race, disability, etc.
* teaching styles and resources which reflect the wide range of cultures, languages and life-styles represented in our community and which are neither stereotypical nor discriminatory in any way but which present positive images
* inclusion of topics, themes and assemblies which address diversity and unity
* access to all aspects of the hidden and overt curriculum, where appropriate, for all students
* 'equality' in terms of both provision and outcome

**With regard to the contact with Parents and Carers** - we will strive to provide:

* a welcoming environment for all parents who visit the college
* information about the college e.g. the prospectus, available in languages other than English, on request
* translation of written information for parents whenever required
* access to an interpreting service e.g. for parents whose first language is not English or for those who have other specific requirements e.g. hearing impairment, particularly for events such as medicals and annual reviews
* regular events that have a cultural focus e.g. assemblies, themes, festivals, to which parents are invited and encouraged to contribute
* opportunities for parents to be involved at classroom level in the promotion of differing cultures where appropriate and to be valued as a resource for information and the sharing of experiences
* opportunities for parents to come into college to discuss their son/daughters progress
* opportunities for parents to access training offered by college
* access for all parents to the college's policies on request
* opportunities for parents to be involved in a voluntary support capacity e.g. leisure groups, fundraising, project-work, art, swimming, etc.
* opportunities for parents to be nominated for election to the governing body and to be involved in fund-raising and social groups
* an environment in which parents feel that staff have made a genuine effort to understand their circumstances and to respond appropriately

**With regard to the college environment - we will strive to provide:**

* a warm, bright, friendly and welcoming environment
* an environment which ensures the health and safety of all who come into the college building
* storage of equipment so that it is accessible to all who reasonably need to use it
* adaptations designed to ensure equality of access for all to most parts of the college e.g. ramps, grab-rails, low door handles, toilets which will accommodate wheelchair users and those who need additional support/walking aids, good lighting, well-marked boundaries (e.g. door frames, doors, walls)
* play areas which are bright, pleasant and safe to use, and which take account of individual need
* display board material which reflects the cultural diversity and the needs of individual members of the college and the community at large
* display and notice boards which are at an appropriate height
* displays which includes reference to the work of all students who are involved in the life of the college
* display material which is of good quality, relevant, meaningful and age-appropriate
* display material which incorporates materials relevant to those who experience sensory loss e.g. which include textures, smells, and sounds
* recognition of all achievement through certification, reward and display (of photos, work, cups, etc.)
* an environment which is free of all offensive graffiti, literature, notices, propaganda, etc.
* a range of environments which take account of specific needs e.g. low arousal, clutter/distraction-free for students on the autistic spectrum; bright, visually stimulating for those who have sensory impairments, etc.
* opportunities for students to assist in creating a learning environment which reflects their needs and opinions

**RESPONSIBILITIES, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

* Equality at Woolston 6th Form College is the responsibility of every member of the college community - each member will be briefed on their responsibilities, and will be personally responsible for their own actions
* However, ultimate responsibility for compliance with Equality Law lies with the Governing Bodies. As such, consideration of issues of equality will be included in all discussions leading to policy decisions made by the Governing Body, and these will be minuted by the Clerk
* The Head teachers will accept day-to-day responsibility for the promotion and maintenance of Equality practices, and report to the Governing Bodies at least annually, although the Governing Bodies may request a review at any time
* Student progress will be monitored as an ongoing process in line with the college’s Assessment, Recording and Reporting Guidance document - and analysed to consider whether any individual learners or groups of learners are being disadvantaged in any way
* We will adhere to Local Authority policy in all matters to do with Equality, and update this Statement of Equality when the need arises, or when new legislation is introduced
* We will publish Equality Data annually, in line with its Public Sector Equality Duty
* Equality Objectives will be set and reviewed alongside the Equality Data

*See also:*

The Equality Act 2010

Local Authority Policies and Guidance

Equality and Human Rights Commission

**Date: September 2020**