

GENERAL POLICY: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

This policy is biennially reviewed to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Approved by: Deputy Principal Reviewed by: Assistant Principal: Student Experience	
Date of Next Review	September 2025

This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex, Sexual orientation and Disability

1. Document Control

1.1. Document Details

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INTRODUCTION

Boston College is committed to raising awareness of equality and human rights, promoting diversity and combating all forms of inequality, disadvantage, prejudice, unfair discrimination, harassment and mistreatment within our community. This work is regarded as the responsibility of **all** staff, learners, governors, visitors and partner organisations of Boston College. The college is committed to ensuring that all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination are unacceptable and are challenged and that raising awareness of these standards takes a high profile throughout the organisation. All the College's policies and operational procedures aim to project equality of access and opportunity to all sections of our community.

PURPOSE

This document will act as College policy in our commitments to uphold the Public Sector Equality Duty Mandated by the Equality Act 2010, to ensure all learners (this term includes individuals across all provision types with an active college learning agreement including Apprenticeships), staff and stakeholders are treated with integrity and fairness and that equality and diversity are valued across the organisation. In addition, this document will be reviewed annually to ensure the College is fully compliant with current legislation and new trends within EDI. Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff and this will be monitored and reviewed by the EDI committee.

1. DUTIES

1.1 Duties under the Equality Act 2010

Boston College is fully committed to its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It continues to be ambitious when advancing and embedding Equality and diversity for all learners, staff, stakeholders, contractors and visitors and to challenging all forms of discrimination based on the promotion of fundamental British values.

1.2 In order to fulfil its commitment to promoting EDI across the College, as well as meeting its requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty, Boston College will:

- Implement necessary actions and training to ensure that equality is advanced and embedded for all, in line with a broad spectrum of corporate and curriculum policies, which guide the delivery of the whole curriculum and wider corporate business.
- Engage and communicate, both internally and externally, with learners, staff, visitors and the wider community where appropriate, in relation to the above.
- Ensure an organisation wide commitment to advancing and embedding EDI and that it is understood by all.
- Ensure that the EDI Policy is linked to the College's strategic plan.
- Ensure the principle of equal opportunities is embedded in service delivery and that gender equality is promoted
- Ensure that activities are fully accessible to people with disabilities in line with our public duty under the 2010 Equality Act.
- Monitor the effectiveness of policies and procedures through the College's self-assessment process.

- Ensure that the policy is informed by current legislation, the current Ofsted Framework for Inspection and is supplemented by the following College policy documents:

Staff Policies	Learner Policies	Staff and Learner Policies
Disciplinary Procedure and Code of Conduct	Admissions Policy	Bullying and Harassment Policy
Family Related Policies	Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedure	
Recruitment and Selection for all staff	Controlled Assessments Policy	
Grievance Policy	Examinations Procedure	
Training and Development Policy	Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure	
	Compliments, Concerns & Complaints Policy	

Accessibility

- An open commitment to providing an accessible website.
- All information used to market learning and employability opportunities will convey our positive attitude to EDI and made available in a variety of formats on request.
- Guidance and Admissions procedures will be clear, transparent and free from unfair discrimination.
- The College aims to provide support services during enrolment and on programme to help in the identification of additional student support needs where necessary.
- Effective plans in place to make the learning environment accessible, safe and welcoming for all groups of learners and staff in terms of timing and location of the provision, physical access, amenities and services.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Equality Act 2010 gives the key legislative requirements relating to EDI. The Act identifies nine protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and philosophical beliefs, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnerships. All nine characteristics are covered in the employment duties of the Act. The protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is not included in the educational duties of the Act. (Please see Appendix A – outlining each protected characteristic).

The Act outlaws unfair discrimination against an individual because of a protected characteristic and this includes the following types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination (including discrimination based on association or perception) – occurs when you treat a person less favourably than you treat another person because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination – occurs when a practice has the effect of putting people sharing a protected characteristic within the general group at a particular disadvantage.
- Harassment – occurs when someone behaves in a way that creates an offensive, hostile, degrading, humiliating or intimidating environment for a person, including in

relation to the provision of goods and services.

- Victimisation – occurs if you treat someone badly because they have been involved in a claim or complaint about discrimination.
- Discrimination arising from disability – occurs when you treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and cannot justify such treatment.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments (for disabled people) occurs when an organisation fails to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person to avoid the disabled person being placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person.

The Act requires the college to have due regard to the three aims of the general duty:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The first part of this duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation applies to all nine protected characteristics while the rest of the duty applies to eight of the protected characteristics and excludes marriage and civil partnerships.

The Equality Act states that meeting different needs includes taking steps to take account of an individual's disabilities.

The Act describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people of different groups.

Boston College is fully committed to the promotion of EDI and continues to be ambitious when advancing and embedding Equality and Diversity for all learners, staff, stakeholders, contractors, and visitors and challenging all forms of discrimination based on the promotion of fundamental British values in line with the 2010 Equality Act. Boston College actively wishes to encourage participation in education and training both internally and externally by staff/learners from all backgrounds and groups including those generally under-represented in Further Education and Higher Education.

Examples of under-represented groups include the following:

- People who are unemployed or who have been out of the labour market because of domestic, childcare or other caring responsibilities
- Learners who are or have been 'Looked After' especially those in the care of the local authority
- People who speak English as an additional language
- People that have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual people
- People in low income groups

- Black and minority ethnic groups (BME) including Gypsies, Romas, Travellers
- People with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those with mental illness and those with sensory and/or mobility impairment
- People without formal qualifications
- People with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Ex-offenders
- Part-time and temporary workers
- Unskilled manual workers
- Males or females in an environment predominantly consisting of the opposite sex.

3. SPECIALIST STAFF

For the College to fully meet its commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty it is vital that each member of the College takes responsibility for following and supporting this policy. The policy applies to all College stakeholders including: learners, governors, employees, agents, contractors, volunteers and visitors. Staff, Governors, partners and volunteers are provided with information about this policy during their mandatory EDI training. Contractors are informed of their responsibilities during the contracting process. To realise our commitment to EDI it is important that those in different roles across the group understand their role in its success.

3.1 Governors

The governing body carries the ultimate responsibility, under the law, for ensuring that the College meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. In particular governors will:

- Set and maintain the strategic direction for EDI.
- Monitor performance and targets through regular reports.

3.2 Staff

Each member of college staff is responsible for supporting this policy and the law. Every role has an EDI component and staff will:

- Apply and embed the vision and values of this policy in their work and roles.
- Support and enable learners to follow this policy.
- Take appropriate and immediate action in the event of incidents of harassment, unfair discrimination or misbehaviour alerting or involving if necessary senior staff.

3.3 Learners

Learners are expected to support our commitments to EDI and follow this policy by:

- Treating everyone with respect, fairly and with understanding, making them feel welcome
- Abiding by the law
- Using language carefully, without swearing or inappropriate language, and not say rude, hurtful or disrespectful things about other people
- Reporting any concerns they have for themselves or others
- Resolving differences and disagreements amicably (attacking or threatening to attack anyone is a serious disciplinary offence).

4. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CODE OF PRACTICE

4.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Teaching & Learning

The College is committed to inclusive learning and embedding EDI in all aspects of the curriculum; in doing so we recognise that all learners are individuals with individual learning styles and support needs. It will therefore provide a diverse range of learning opportunities to facilitate access and achievement for the whole community. Adherence to this policy will ensure:

- Course and training opportunities will be made accessible to as wide a range of learners as possible, by enhanced flexibility in both delivery and timing. Procedures for accreditation and assessment will be flexible and responsive to the needs of the whole range of learners who attend College locations. This will include supporting those learners for whom special arrangements and/or facilities may be required during examinations or assessments.
- Learners will understand their own rights and responsibilities; and the rights and responsibilities of others under the Equality Act 2010, which will prepare them for future employment and life inside and outside of the College.
- The content and resources of college programmes will be regularly examined by staff to ensure they do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any learner group.
- Individual learning targets will be matched to the learners' needs but will stretch and challenge learners to aim high in all that we do, in order to add value, increase achievement rates and maximise success. Learners will understand their targets and the steps required in order to achieve them.
- Tracking of progress of all groups of learners will be carried out by staff to eliminate achievement gaps. Regular monitoring and data analysis will be used to inform planning and development of the curriculum by Senior Managers, Directors of Learning, teaching staff and the Quality Team. Any gaps that are identified will be addressed by using a range of inclusive strategies matched to learners.
- Where possible, the content and resources of college programmes should be enhanced by including positive acknowledgement of the contributions made to society by all cultures.
- Courses / training content and methods of delivery will be examined to ensure that they address the needs of all learners. Ways of modifying curriculum delivery to facilitate access for individuals with additional support needs will continue to be sought and embedded.
- Additional support will be provided for all learners requiring it, subject to available resources. Reasonable adjustments will be carried out where appropriate.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion are considered when recruiting to Apprenticeship provision, whilst delivering training and whilst working with employers and their apprentices.

4.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Staff Development

All College staff will have equal access to training and development opportunities throughout the induction process and staff development programmes. Staff will also be made aware of the EDI Policy through mandatory training. In addition, staff development will support and facilitate good practice in embedding EDI objectives. To facilitate opportunities for all, information and publicity concerning training opportunities will be widely available to all staff.

4.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Recruitment and Selection of Staff

College employees will not discriminate unfairly and illegally, directly or indirectly, in making selection decisions. As such:

- All staff are trained in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and at least one member of every interview panel has online Safer Recruitment training.
- All applications will be assessed according to clear pre-stated criteria which will be both objective and job related.
- Any applicant who is classified as having a disability will be given the opportunity to discuss ways of overcoming any problems of access or any other issues relating to their disability through reasonable adjustments.
- Candidates will only be asked health-related questions during the interview process when this is necessary to support the candidate through that process or if it refers to specific requirements of the post (e.g. heavy lifting).

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Corporate monitoring of the policy will be the responsibility of the EDI Committee. Programme Areas and departments will be responsible for the local monitoring and implementation of the policy through procedures and practices, reporting through the planning process and to the EDI Committee, as required. This will include:

- Regular reports assessing progress in meeting objectives.
- The Annual EDI Report
- Self-assessment at programme and College level
- Learner and Staff surveys
- Data analysis
- Monitoring of formal complaints
- Reporting to governors
- Collecting and disseminating examples of good practice
- Quality Improvement Plan
- EDI Committee with objectives managed for impact.
- Observation of Teaching and Learning
- Staff and Student feedback

APPENDIX A

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS – LIST AND DEFINITIONS

1. AGE

A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year-olds) or range of ages (for example 18- to 30-year-olds).

2. DISABILITY

A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

3. GENDER REASSIGNMENT

The process of transitioning from one sex to another. This is when you are treated differently because you are trans in one of the situations covered by the Equality Act. The treatment could be a one-off action or as a result of a rule or policy. It doesn't have to be intentional to be unlawful.

4. MARRIAGE OR CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

5. PREGNANCY OR MATERNITY

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

6. RACE (Includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality)

Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

7. RELIGION OR BELIEF

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

8. SEX

A man or a woman. This is when you are treated differently because of your sex, in certain situations covered by the Equality Act 2010. The treatment could be a one-off action or could be caused by a rule or policy. It doesn't have to be intentional to be unlawful.

10. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

APPENDIX B

OBJECTIVES

1. To further develop and promote a socially inclusive, diverse and accessible college for the recruitment of staff and students.
 - Analysis of learner recruitment, retention, achievement success and progression by protected characteristics.
 - Analysis of staffing profile in relation to recruitment, workforce profiling/diversity.
2. To continue to identify, prioritise, address and reduce any significant gaps in retention, and destination between groups of learners.
 - Analysis of impact measures with clear start and end points.
3. To ensure EDI and British values continue to be fully and explicitly developed within the curriculum and that all discrimination, bullying or harassment is challenged appropriately.
 - Evidenced via quality processes, lesson observations, learning walks, student voice and survey feedback mechanisms.
 - Staff development and support to equip staff to be confident and able to take an active part in the above.
4. To work with employers and engage with the local community in activities that enable all to have a greater understanding of the local diverse communities.
 - Raise the profile of employer and community engagement activities.