



THE  
**BEDFORD**  
COLLEGE  
GROUP

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# Equality and Diversity Policy

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Bedford College Group recognises that providing equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and promoting a culture of inclusion are vital to our success. We want our staff and students to reflect the diversity of the local communities that we serve. We aim to be a place where people can be free to be themselves no matter what their identity or background. We aim to create a learning and working environment which values individuals equally and does not disadvantage individuals by discriminating on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender), and sexual orientation.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all current and potential students and staff working at The Bedford College Group, external partners, visitors or contractors who visit our premises.
- 2.2 The term 'student' applies to all types of learner that study as part of the Bedford College Group, including full time, part time, apprenticeship and HE.

## 3. Statutory Duties

- 3.1 The Bedford College Group will abide by its current statutory duties for students and staff, in line with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and resulting duty to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - advance equality of opportunity
  - foster good relations between different groups.

## 4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 All staff and students - Staff and students are responsible for their own conduct and should ensure that their behaviour does not make any other person feel uncomfortable. Every member of staff and every student has a responsibility to question their own prejudices and assumptions. It is the duty of all staff and students to avoid unfair discriminatory practices, to challenge them in others and to accept personal responsibility for abiding by this policy.
- 4.2 The Corporation - The College Governors are responsible for ensuring that all sites within The Bedford College group comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Single Equality Duty. The Corporation members are responsible for setting the policy framework for The Bedford College Group and for monitoring the delivery against the key priorities and targets in the Single Equality Scheme.

4.3 The Group Executive - The Executive has the overall responsibility for the operation of the policy. The Executive is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan, that all services, functions and policies promote equality.

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee - The Committee is chaired by Deputy CEO (Education) and has cross-Group representation. Its key responsibilities include:

- Identify priorities and agree objectives in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion matters affecting staff and students, lead on actions and review their impact;
- Challenge the College Group on its practice, approach and development of equality, diversity and inclusion, in particular where progress is limited or in support of underrepresented or disadvantaged individuals or groups.

4.5 Line Managers - Line Managers are responsible for ensuring their staff understand how equality, diversity and inclusion apply to their work and how to report any perceived discrimination or unfair treatment. They also allocate development opportunities for their staff on a fair, objective basis based on individual and organisational needs. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring their part-time and associate staff are not disadvantaged in any way and that complaints of discrimination or offensive behaviour are dealt with promptly.

All Managers are responsible for ensuring a proactive dialogue about equality and inclusion practices with partner organisations, contractors, customers, students and employers providing work experience and employment to students.

4.6 Employers and External Partners – Employers and external partners with which The Bedford College Group works must comply with this policy and share the College Group’s commitment to equality, diversity & inclusion.

When drawing up agreements or contracts with employers and external partners, The Bedford College Group ensures that relevant parties are made aware of the above requirements and ensures that appropriate policies and procedures are in place regarding equality and diversity.

Employers are able to access training support as part of the service provided by the college when taking on an apprentice. College staff are responsible for ensuring that the employer and the apprentice understands their part in promoting equality and diversity in the workplace.

4.7 Visitors, Contractors and Sub-contractors - Visitors, contractors and sub-contractors must comply with this policy.

College staff who meet visitors and/or employ contractors and sub-contractors are responsible for making them aware of this policy.

## 5. **Students**

5.1 Recruitment and admissions

The Bedford College Group will ensure that:

- recruitment and publicity materials are designed in a range of formats to ensure they are free from bias and stereotypes, and encourage applicants from all groups in the community;
- open evenings and information events avoid reinforcing stereotyped expectations in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability and other characteristics about who might be interested in particular subject areas and courses;
- applicants for courses are considered on the basis of their ability to meet the entry criteria, as specified in course information;
- applicants are not treated less favourably because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation;
- applicants are interviewed on the basis of their academic ability and/or potential to succeed;
- application and enrolment procedures give students the opportunity to identify any additional learning support available for their needs;
- where assessment(s) form part of the application process for a particular course, all applicants will take the same assessment(s), with adjustments being made for identified additional learning needs;
- new students are made aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy and the behaviour expected of them during induction, through the student handbook and the information published on the Moodle website.

## 5.2 Teaching and learning

The Bedford College Group will ensure that:

- the range, content and delivery of the curriculum reflect the needs of students and the community and promote widening participation;
- all aspects of teaching are sensitive to, and promote, equality and diversity, including language used, timetabling, delivery methods, materials, group organisation and activities;
- teaching and learning materials and delivery methods avoid prejudice, stereotypes and bias, and unnecessary gendering;
- teaching and learning promote the diversity of our society and the local community;

- resources are available in formats appropriate to the needs of individual students, including the use of specialist equipment where appropriate;
- equality and diversity and access for everyone to develop their potential are embedded in the teaching and learning approaches;
- there is an ethos and learning environment which is inclusive and enables students to feel comfortable and valued as an individual.

### 5.3 Support services and facilities

The Bedford College Group will:

- provide a range of support services and facilities which will enable students from a range of backgrounds and with different needs to participate fully in college life, including:
  - pastoral support
  - additional support with learning, for example English and maths
  - additional learning support, for example dyslexia, hearing and autistic support specialists
  - financial and welfare advice
  - personal counselling
  - careers advice service
  - social, recreational and catering facilities
  - prayer facilities;
- ensure that its support services and facilities are publicised to students and potential applicants through recruitment and publicity materials, the College website, the student handbook, and at induction;
- seek to make continuous improvements to physical access to all of its buildings and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that students, staff and visitors with access requirements due to disability are not disadvantaged.

## 6. **Staff**

### 6.1 Recruitment and selection

The Bedford College Group will:

- when a vacancy arises, prepare a person specification identifying the essential and desirable levels of qualifications/training, knowledge/ experience and skills/ abilities required for the job;
- advertise jobs internally and/or externally to attract applicants who meet the person specification;

- consider applicants on the basis of their suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the requirements set out in the person specification.

## 6.2 Training and development

The Bedford College Group will:

- identify annually training and development needs through the Development Review and training and development planning processes;
- make available a range of training opportunities to meet these needs;
- include Equality and Diversity training as part of the induction for new staff.

## 6.3 Working environment

The College will:

- make reasonable adjustments to premises or working arrangements to ensure that employees are not disadvantaged on the grounds of any protected characteristics.

## **7. Harassment, victimisation and discrimination**

7.1 The College will not tolerate harassment, victimisation or discrimination and has procedures in place to deal with such incidents.

7.2 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 personal tutor in the first instance. Alternatively, they may discuss the issue with Student Services, who will advise and assist them should they wish to pursue the matter through the student grievance or anti-bullying procedures.

7.3 The Student Anti-Bullying Policy details forms of bullying, including those driven by prejudice, how incidents are reported and investigated, and outcomes. All staff have the duty to promote anti-bullying attitudes and that bullying of any form is unacceptable, and to take action to ensure that bullying incidents are taken seriously and dealt with promptly using the anti-bullying procedures.

7.4 Staff who feel that they have been unfairly treated within the scope of this policy may raise their concern through the staff grievance procedures.

7.5 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. Monitoring**

8.1 The College monitors the outcomes of its students and staff by protected characteristics

and for vulnerable groups. The outcomes are reported to the Group Executive and to the Corporation.

8.2 Monitoring at course level is integrated into the course review and self-assessment processes. Course teams and programme areas monitor enrolment, retention and achievement results. They evaluate the results in their self-assessment reports and, where there are disparities for groups of people, identify actions to eliminate barriers and improve equity of outcomes. These actions are fed into quality improvement plans and monitored regularly.

## **9. Related policies and procedures**

9.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Bedford College Single Equality Scheme and Action plan
- Admissions Policy
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- Student Anti-Bullying Policy
- Student Grievance Procedure
- Student Disciplinary Procedure and Code of Conduct
- Staff Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Staff Grievance Procedure
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Equality Impact assessment process.