



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

Stephenson College is committed to achieving equal opportunities with dignity, courtesy and integrity, for all members of the College community, students, staff, visitors and organisations with whom the College works.

The College is opposed to any form of behaviour that discriminates on the grounds of gender, marital status, family responsibility, sexual orientation, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, religion, political affiliation, disability, social background, age, unrelated criminal conviction, trade union membership or activity or educational need.

The College will actively implement this policy to ensure that all students, staff and visitors learn and work in an environment which provides a safe, appropriate and supportive environment in which all individuals are able to pursue successfully their chosen activities.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES VALUE STATEMENT

The College is committed to the active promotion of equality and diversity in all of its activities and to the elimination of all forms of discrimination that may lead to anyone suffering disadvantage.

The College's primary purpose is to support learning. The potential of all individuals for lifelong learning towards personal development and achievement is recognised for learners and employees.

The College will ensure that all new learners and staff are made aware of its aims and values in relation to Equality and Diversity.

Key Principles

Everyone has the right to equality of opportunity.

In order to ensure that all students, staff, visitors and organisations with which the College works are treated with equality and fairness, and that their treatment is based solely on objective criteria, the College will ensure that equality issues are embedded into all its policies and procedures.

The College will treat all individuals with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a learning and working environment free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation. The College will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour against its staff, students, visitors, either from other employees, students or members of the public.

It is the responsibility of all members of the College community to promote equality and diversity and avoid unlawful discrimination.

The College seeks to embrace diversity in its student population which should reflect the community it serves.

The College seeks to embrace diversity in all its aspects and aims to employ a workforce which reflects, at all levels, the community it serves.

In seeking to achieve a balanced workforce at all levels, the College will ensure that no employee, job applicant or candidate for promotion will be disadvantaged, or treated less favourably because of conditions or requirements that are not related to the job. Reasonable adjustments will be made to arrangements and premises to ensure equal access for disabled students, staff or potential staff and visitors.

The College will establish Equality and Diversity Impact Measurements (EDIMS).

Specific Principles

Access to Learning

A clear statement of the College's commitment to equality of opportunity will be given in relevant College publications.

The College will work to ensure that there is no discrimination of any kind in relation to the recruitment and admission of students to courses. Recruitment patterns across curriculum areas will be reviewed and positive action, where appropriate, taken to increase the participation of under-represented groups.

The College will provide full-time and sessional childcare places. Systems for allocating places will comply with equal opportunity principles.

The College will provide appropriate financial support to students who can demonstrate financial need.

The College will work to ensure that all students have physical access to teaching, support and social areas within the College.

The College will take into account the needs of the local community and actively encourage representation from the local community in relevant policy-making and marketing forums.

The Curriculum

It is the legal and ethical responsibility of all staff to conduct their teaching and learning activities in a non-discriminatory manner.

All students will be provided with an effective Induction programme that familiarises them with the College's Equal Opportunity and Race Equality Policy and helps them to recognise the rights and responsibilities of themselves and others in relation to equality of opportunity.

The College will seek to ensure that resource materials and learning activities are free from discriminatory and stereotypical assumptions, images and language, and will act upon any that are brought to the College's attention. Exceptions may be made where such materials and activities are required for specific learning purposes.

All initiatives to increase and widen participation will be explored and supported to maximise learning opportunities for all.

The College will provide appropriate facilities to support students in becoming independent learners.

Under the protection of the relevant legislation, the College will encourage special course provision in those areas of the curriculum where groups of students are under-represented, eg women in Construction and Engineering.

The College will offer learning support in literacy and numeracy for all students who are identified as requiring it, learner support for all those who need it and English language support for those for whom English is not their first language.

The College will set targets for and monitor retention, achievement and progression rates for all students leading to positive action for under-represented groups.

The College is aware of the need for positive and non-stereotypical role models, especially in traditionally stereotyped vocational areas and it will seek to provide examples of these.

The College will promote, in teaching and learning, social inclusiveness and awareness of other cultures. It will employ teaching and learning strategies which will discourage prejudice and stereotyping, and not disadvantage particular groups of students.

The College will assist students who need more flexible arrangements in relation to examination and assessment.

In workplace assessment, the College will seek to reflect the College's policies on equality and diversity.

The College recognises the individual needs of learners and aims to support these needs in the interest of individual learners' goals. It seeks to provide suitable learning opportunities for all in the community.

Marketing, Publicity and External Liaison

The College will ensure that all marketing, publicity and recruitment procedures are designed to be non-discriminatory and welcoming to all.

The College will act to identify the needs of disadvantaged groups. This will include liaison with group representatives and market research.

A summary of the College's Equal Opportunities Policies will appear in all College prospectuses and in public places throughout the College. Publicity material will, where practical, reflect the diversity of, and be made available to, the community and will be free from bias. Special facilities such as the nursery and learning workshops will be emphasised in publicity materials.

Support Services

Personal support will be provided for any student or employee who has been the recipient of harassment, bullying or any other form of discrimination. The College Counselling Service will provide a confidential service for all students which will be free from prejudice.

The Personnel Department will provide unbiased advice and guidance to employees on all issues connected with their employment and their personal and professional development.

Student Services will provide appropriate impartial advice and guidance to all students, and will also ensure that students have access to appropriate financial support.

Staff Training and Development

The College will make all employees aware of their responsibility for the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

The College will provide training for Governors and College employees in respect of equality of opportunity and implementation of the College Policy.

Staff training and development opportunities will be available for all staff, both teaching and support, full-time and part-time.

The College will take positive action to offer opportunities for training and promotion to groups of employees who are identified as disadvantaged.

The College Environment

The College seeks to create an environment in which all students, staff and visitors feel comfortable, irrespective of race, gender, class ability, etc.

The College will respond positively and courteously to all its students, staff and visitors from the first point of contact.

College facilities will be reviewed regularly to ensure that the needs of particular groups receive attention.

The College will cater for special dietary requirements where possible.

Provision will be made wherever possible for wheelchair access to all parts of the College. Accommodation strategies will take into account the access needs of those with physical disabilities.

The College will provide facilities for prayer, where resources permit.

The College will make reasonable adjustments to its premises and arrangements with the aim of avoiding any disadvantage.

Monitoring

The College undertakes to conduct comprehensive and effective monitoring of all aspects of staffing and the student body.

Staff

The College is committed to the collection of statistics, analysis of data and presentation of data, as well as monitoring on an on-going basis and as employment policy and practices change.

The College will use the two main forms of monitoring, ie the composition of the existing workforce and the recruitment process, looking at the workforce with reference to ethnicity, disability and gender, in particular.

The College will also categorise employees according to grade; contract type, ie whether full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary; age; length of time in post; place of work; salary; caring responsibilities. Records will also be kept of training, appraisals, promotions, regradings and discretionary pay awards.

After the employment relationship has ended, the College may retain statistics; data about the composition of the workforce, including appraisal and promotion records on an anonymous basis for the purpose of carrying out equal opportunities monitoring, and may also look at reasons for resignation and resignation rates.

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.

Students

The College will monitor the recruitment, retention and achievement of students in relation to age, ethnicity, disability and gender. Reports will be made to the Senior Management Team and to the Corporation Board. Appropriate action will be taken where necessary.

The College will analyse learner satisfaction questionnaires according to age, ethnicity, disability and gender. Reports will be made to the Senior Management Team and to the Corporation Board. Appropriate action will be taken where necessary.

The College will require at Division, Section and Programme level the incorporation of the Equal Opportunities Policy in the planning and renewal of provision.

The College will analyse complaints and grievances in relation to Equal Opportunities.

The College will monitor compliance with the Equal Opportunities and Race Equality Policy through the Equality and Diversity Committee.

Recruitment and Selection of Staff

Recruitment for all positions within the College will be carried out in a manner which accords with Equal Opportunities practice.

The long-term aim of the Policy is that the College establishment should broadly reflect the make-up of the available-for-work population of North West Leicestershire. Positive action targets will be set where appropriate.

Members of interviewing panels will be made familiar with the College's Equal Opportunity Policy and the recruitment procedures. Training in appropriate procedures and practices will be given.

The criteria for selection and progression of existing employees will be determined solely on the basis of the requirements of the job.

Positive Action

The College undertakes to follow positive action measures allowed by law to rectify disadvantages in employment revealed by monitoring.

Positive action, allows the College to:

- provide facilities or services (in the form of training, education or welfare) to meet the special needs of people from particular under-represented groups;
- target job training at particular groups that are under-represented in a particular area of work;
- encourage applications from groups that are under-represented in particular areas of work

Positive action strategies are intended to be temporary measures only. They must be kept under regular review, and they cannot be used once the special needs have been met, or if under-representation no longer exists. The College will ensure that when using positive action as a strategy, it falls within the law.

If an employee, student or visitor believes they have not been treated fairly, due to prejudice, or discrimination, they should follow the College's grievance and complaints procedures.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with legislative developments and the need for good practice, using the local consultation/negotiating arrangements within the College.

Legislative Framework

Key legislative requirements relating to equality are identified in the following:

- Disability Discrimination Act
- Equal Pay Act
- Human Rights Act
- Race Relations Act
- Sex Discrimination Act
- Part-time Workers
- Fixed-term Workers