



**Forster**  
**Community College**  
Inspiring Learning and Supporting  
Communities to Prosper

## Equality & Diversity Policy

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## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

This policy is an integral part of the College's Core Values and it applies to all stakeholders at Forster Community College (FCC) including staff, learners, Trustees, Volunteers and Partner Organisations.

FCC will support this policy through guidance, support and training for all staff.

### **Our Commitment**

At Forster Community College we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all learners, staff and carers receiving services from the College, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the College feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in College life.

The achievement of learners will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support learners, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At FCC we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Our vision for equality and diversity is clear; we want all our learners and staff to reach their full potential. Through adult and community learning and staff development we want to support our communities so that they flourish and are motivated to make a positive contribution to the local region and national economy.

### **1. Scope of Policy**

1.1 This policy covers all aspects of the work of the College, including employment, teaching and learning, governance arrangements, career guidance, collaboration with external stakeholders, procurement and other areas.

### **2. Key Principles**

2.1 Commitment to ensuring equality in all areas of practice. It is the policy of FCC to treat all applicants for employment, staff, learners and customers fairly. In development of this policy the College was guided by Equality Act 2010 that covers the following 'protected characteristics':

- age
- disability (including mental health and clinical obesity)
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment (people having or who have had a sex change, transvestites and transgender people)
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity

The college will ensure that no requirement or condition will be imposed without justification which could disadvantage individuals purely on any of the above grounds.

2.2 Determination to tackle discrimination in all its forms. The College will provide a safe and positive environment and will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour within the College Community. The College will ensure that all manifestations of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying on the grounds of any of the 'protected characteristic' are appropriately dealt with under this policy.

2.3 Advancing equality of opportunity between people from different groups. The College will seek to provide a positive environment that enables all different groups of people to achieve, particularly those with lower success rates compare to other groups.

2.4 Celebration of the diverse nature of society. The College aims to recruit a learner body that is representative of the local community and to employ a workforce, and have Trustees that reflect the community it serves.

2.5 Fostering sustainability, wellbeing and good relations between people from different groups. The College will create positive opportunities for people from different groups to exchange cultural experiences and contribute to social progress that recognises the needs of everyone.

### **3. In the Curriculum, the College will:**

3.1 Promote planning, teaching and learning styles and resources that encompass the concept of equality, diversity and inclusion.

3.2 Commit to narrowing achievement gaps between different groups of learners.

3.3 Promote learning material free from any form of discriminatory assumptions, images and languages and provide facilities that will encompass the individual needs.

3.4 Provide the opportunity for learners to achieve mutually agreed goals (individual learning plans) and wherever possible adapt the learning environment in order to maximise the learner's potential.

### **4. In Marketing and provision of information, the College will:**

4.1 Promote its services to under-represented individuals and groups.

4.2 Base curriculum design and delivery on individual educational need and provide appropriate support systems.

4.3 Provide flexibility in terms of modes of attendance and provide information in a variety of public and community venues and in a variety of alternative formats.

### **5. In Recruitment and Selection, the College will ensure that:**

5.1 No applicant or employee is treated less favourably than another in terms of selection for employment, working conditions.

5.2 Ensure that recruitment and selection procedures do not directly or indirectly discourage or discriminate against groups with 'protected characteristics' who may wish to apply for vacant posts.

5.3 All staff responsible for, or involved in, the recruitment and selection of staff will be familiar with the FCC Equal Opportunities Policy and other related policies including the Safer Recruitment Policy and procedures and will act in accordance with its equality requirements.

### **6. Arrangements for implementation**

6.1 The College will consult with users and stakeholders regularly about this policy.

6.2 Ensure that the outcomes of actions, for example equality targets or positive actions in relation to 'protected characteristics', are achieved and published so far as is reasonable and practicable.

6.3 Where appropriate and reasonable, set up working groups, forums and networks that enable it to embed and advance the principles of this policy.

## **7. Monitoring**

7.1 Local and national data will be collected, reviewed and used effectively to monitor, plan and develop our services.

7.2 College policies will be reviewed regularly to ensure their currency and effect.

7.3 FCC may, where appropriate and reasonable, set up other monitoring practices that enable it to check its performance against this policy.

## **8. Accountabilities**

8.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for agreeing the principles of the policy and providing challenge and support to the principle where appropriate.

8.2 The CEO has the overall day-to-day responsibility for overseeing the management of the policy and any concerns arising under the policy.

8.3 Line managers are responsible for applying the policy within their areas of responsibility and for dealing with any concerns raised under the policy.

8.4 FCC Equality and Diversity Representatives are responsible for implementation and review of the policy and providing guidance in relation to any concerns raised under this policy. The Equality and Diversity Group is responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy.

8.5 Everybody has a responsibility to apply all principles of the policy in their area of work and staff may, from time to time, be given specific work related to objectives of this policy.

## **9. Relationship to other Policies**

9.1 The Equality and Diversity Policy applies across all other policy areas, as defined within the scope of this policy and will take precedence if there are any practices or criteria inconsistent with this one.

## **10. Monitoring and Review**

10.1 The College will undertake regular surveys with learners, staff and its partners by categories linked to 'protected characteristics' as far as reasonable and practical. The data will be analysed and presented to Equality and Diversity Group at least annually.

## **11. Training and Development**

11.1 The training and development needs of staff will be considered as part of the arrangements for performance management. Staff training opportunities will be funded and made available within the normal working day, where possible.

## **12. Breaches of the Policy**

12.1 Breaches of the policy will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary provisions set out in the relevant College policy.

12.2 The College does not accept or condone discrimination of any nature, either direct or indirect.

12.3 No forms of discriminations will be tolerated; any incident of discrimination will be investigated and dealt with through Disciplinary Procedure. All staff are responsible for ensuring that incidents of discriminatory behaviour are recorded and referred to the relevant member of the Senior Management Team.

## **Appendix I**

### **Types of discrimination**

#### **Direct discrimination**

This occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.

#### **Associative discrimination**

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic (for example, a mother of a disabled child). Previously applying to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, it now extends to cover age, disability, gender reassignment and sex, although it does not apply to marriage and civil partnerships or pregnancy and maternity.

#### **Perceptive discrimination**

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. Previously applying to age, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, it now extends to cover disability, gender reassignment and sex, although it does not apply to marriage and civil partnerships or pregnancy and maternity.

#### **Indirect discrimination**

Indirect discrimination can occur when an employer has a condition, rule, policy or a practice in the company that applies to everyone but which particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if employers can show they acted reasonably in managing their business. Previously applying to age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership, it now extends to cover disability and gender reassignment, but does not apply to pregnancy and maternity.

#### **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**

The Equality Act makes Employers potentially liable for harassment of their employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of the company, such as customers or clients. Employers will only be liable when harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions and they were aware that it has taken place but did not take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again. Previously applying to sex, it now extends to cover age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. It does not, however, apply to marriage and civil partnerships or pregnancy and maternity.

#### **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. It exists for all Protected Characteristics.