

# Equity & Inclusion Policy

Responsible Senior Manager: Vice Principal – Organisational Development & People

Effective Date: September 2022

Related Policies:

Approved By: Subject to approval by the Corporation (December 2022)

Next Review Date: Spring 2024

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 HSDC is an inclusive college. We are committed to realising the ambitions of our communities by raising aspirations, enabling achievement, and fulfilling dreams. We promote equity, diversity and inclusion. We change lives through education and learning. We empower people to always bring their full, authentic self to college. We celebrate difference. We actively challenge behaviour that does not align with our values of being an inclusive college. We are proud of the positive relationships within college, and with the local, national, and international communities we serve. We treat everyone with dignity and respect. Compliance with this policy should ensure that colleagues do not commit acts of discrimination.
- 1.2 Striving to ensure that the College environment is free from harassment, bullying or victimisation and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is a key aspect of promoting equal opportunities at HSDC.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to everyone who becomes or seeks to become a member of the HSDC community whether as a member of staff (permanent or temporary), applicants, students, parents / carers, contractors, Governors, volunteers, visitors or any other stakeholders. This policy applies to all HSDC activities.
- 2.2 At HSDC, we aim to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership or social class.

## 3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to make clear the expectations of HSDC in promoting equity and inclusion and celebrating diversity to ensure a consistently high quality and pro-active approach to fulfilling our responsibilities.
- 3.2 All members of the college community are required to abide by this policy and actions and words that are contrary to either the word or the spirit of this policy will be robustly challenged through appropriate disciplinary measures.

## 4. Legal Requirements

- 4.1 This Equity & Inclusion Policy is based on the Equality Act 2010, which defines the protected characteristics as:
- Age
  - Disability
  - Gender
  - Gender Reassignment
  - Marriage & Civil Partnerships
  - Pregnancy and Maternity

- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sexual Orientation

Whilst all nine protected characteristics apply in the employment duties of the Act, the characteristic of marriage and civil partnerships is not included in the education duties of the Act. It is unlawful to either directly or indirectly discriminate against a person on these grounds.

- 4.2 Other aspects of a person's identity, background or circumstances can cause them to experience discrimination, for example a person's socio-economic status, class, background, appearance or alternative lifestyle. HSDC is committed to advancing equity and eliminating discrimination on these and other grounds.
- 4.3 HSDC has an Equity & Inclusion Action Plan which is consulted on with key stakeholder and is published on the staff Intranet. The Equity & Inclusion Action Plan outlines our aims and plans in terms of equity and inclusion.

## 5. Marketing & Recruitment

- 5.1 College marketing and publicity material, recruitment and admission procedures will focus on the individual needs of students.
- 5.2 Marketing and publicity material will assure all applicants that they will be welcomed at HSDC. HSDC will identify courses where particular groups are underrepresented and implement strategies to promote equity and remove bias or potential discrimination.
- 5.3 HSDC has a strong equity and inclusion statement which is available for all applicants to view along with actions we undertake to provide an inclusive environment. Our recruitment processes are adapted to support the differing needs of applicants as required to ensure access for all. Recruitment advertising will take many forms to include underrepresented groups. All recruitment procedures, promotions, transfers and training for staff will be carried out in a fair and equitable manner.

## 6. The Curriculum and Student Experience

- 6.1 The curriculum includes course content, learning and teaching methods, work experience/ industrial placement and shadowing, and methods of review, assessment, and evaluation. HSDC will provide a curriculum that offers all students an equal opportunity to achieve their academic potential, and which ensures there is parity of esteem between all courses.
- 6.2 The curriculum of the College will promote positive images of all people, regardless of age, gender, ethnic group, class, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, physical or cognitive ability or other personal circumstances. In every course and subject the resource materials presented to students will be monitored and reviewed so that they are free of discriminatory attitudes, images and language (unless they are to be analysed critically in the context of the pursuit of equal opportunities) and promote good relations between people from different groups.
- 6.3 Any user of the College's Information Technology facilities, including E-Mail and the Internet, who creates or communicates any data or images that could be deemed as

offensive to other members of the College or is in contravention of the College's Prevent Duty will be subject to the College's disciplinary procedures.

- 6.4 HSDC will ensure that all students have equal opportunity to access pastoral and academic support, enrichment, facilities, trips, and visits.

## **7. Equal Opportunities in Employment**

- 7.1 The organisation will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, and opportunities for training, pay and benefits, disciplinary, grievance, and selection for redundancy.
- 7.2 Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability.
- 7.3 HSDC will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the organisation considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. HSDC will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. HSDC will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices, where required, for those with disabilities.
- 7.4 HSDC will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any barriers / bias that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

## **8. Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by HSDC**

- 8.1 HSDC will not discriminate unlawfully against customers using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by the organisation.
- 8.2 Colleagues should report any bullying, harassment, or victimisation by customers, suppliers, visitors (including parents / carers) or others, to their manager who will take appropriate action with the support of People Services.

## **9. Training**

- 9.1 HSDC will provide training in equity and inclusion to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision-making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.
- 9.2 HSDC will provide training to all existing and new colleagues and others engaged to work at the College. The College will provide additional training to managers to enable them to

deal more effectively with complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.

## 10. Responsibilities

- 10.1 The Governing Body designates the Principal as having overall responsibility for equity matters at HSDC. The Vice Principal supports the Principal in overseeing the Equity, & Inclusion Forum, including chairing the termly meetings of the Forum.
- 10.2 Governors are responsible for ensuring that:
- A link Governor is appointed who works with the Executive Team and the Equity, & Inclusion Forum to champion equity and inclusion.
  - They are aware of the Governing Body's statutory responsibilities in relation to equality legislation as an employer and service provider.
  - The membership of the Governing Body strives to reflect the diversity of the communities served by the College.
  - They respond to monitoring information on colleagues, students and applicants and agree a course of action.
- 10.3 The Executive Team (ET) is responsible for ensuring that:
- They are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to equality and diversity legislation.
  - All policies, procedures are equality impact analysed.
  - Procedures for challenging all forms of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and unacceptable behaviour are widely promoted.
  - The Equity & Inclusion Forum effectively carries out its responsibilities.
  - A positive, inclusive ethos is created encouraging feedback which is reviewed and appropriate action taken.
  - Colleagues understand the significance of equality, diversity and inclusion and know how to incorporate them into their work.
  - Progress is made on the Equity & Inclusion Action Plan and Governors are informed and advised of progress via the Curriculum, Quality & Learning Committee.
- 10.4 Managers and colleagues are responsible for ensuring that:
- They are aware of the College's statutory duties and policies and procedures are implemented with regard to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
  - They challenge inappropriate behaviour by students, colleagues, partner contractors, work placement providers and other contractors.
  - Student induction programmes and tutorial programmes reflect the College's commitment to promote equality of opportunity.
  - Curriculum activities actively embed equity and diversity issues.
  - Staff induction, continuous professional development and performance management reflect the College's commitment to equity & inclusion.
  - They participate in and promote appropriate equity and diversity training.
  - They provide teaching, learning and assessment methods, support and resources that meet the individual needs of students.
  - They uphold and engage with the College policy on equity and inclusion.
- 10.5 Equity, & Inclusion Forum members are responsible for ensuring that:
- Equity & Inclusion objectives and the action plan are implemented.
  - They encourage and support the development of policies, which seek to ensure the removal of prejudice and discrimination.

- The content and operation of equal opportunities policies and schemes are monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.
  - Monitoring information is collected, analysed, and published, and the action plan developed.
  - Appropriate training and development are provided to stakeholders to support the appreciation and understanding of equity and diversity issues.
- 10.6 Students / parents / visitors / contractors are responsible for ensuring that:
- They adhere to the College policies and commitment to equity and inclusion.
- 10.7 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against colleagues or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the College's disciplinary policy. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.
- 10.8 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against colleagues by customers (including students / parents / visitors) must be reported immediately for appropriate action to be taken.

## 11. Grievances

- 11.1 If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the College's grievance procedure to make a complaint.
- 11.2 The College will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.
- 11.3 Use of the College's grievance procedure does not affect your right to make a complaint to an employment tribunal. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months beginning with the act of discrimination complained of.

## 12. Procedures

- 12.1 It is the responsibility of all members of the College community to ensure that the Equity & Inclusion Policy is fully implemented, and that action is taken in instances of a breach of the Policy.
- 12.2 In order to further promote the Equity & Inclusion Policy, the College will monitor student and staff recruitment, the curriculum, assessment procedures and student achievement, and take appropriate action to address any issues arising. Monitoring reports will be regularly considered by the Equity & Inclusion Forum which will meet once every term and convene exceptional meetings if required.
- 12.3 All allegations of a breach of the Equity & Inclusion Policy must be reported to a member of staff. Students may report an allegation to any member of staff, including their tutor, Head of Student Progress, Deputy Principal, Vice Principal Students, Learning & Quality or a member of the Health & Wellbeing / Student Progress team. Staff should report allegations to their line manager and/or People Services. Where the allegation is against the line manager then it should be reported to another manager. At HSDC we have an [equality@hsrc.ac.uk](mailto:equality@hsrc.ac.uk) email account where reports of any breaches to the policy can be made. This account is monitored by People Services.
- 12.4 The appropriate member of the Executive Team must be informed of all allegations/incidents. In all cases, the appropriate member of the Executive Team will investigate the



allegation to ascertain the facts and will attempt to resolve minor issues through reconciliation including a verbal or written apology to the victim. A written record of the incident / allegation will be kept confidentially within People Services.

- 12.5 Where it appears to the appropriate member of the Executive Team that there has been a serious breach of the Equity & Inclusion Policy or where a minor issue is unresolved, the matter must be referred to the Principal/Vice Principal Organisational Development & People, who will consider appropriate action under the student disciplinary procedure, the staff disciplinary policy and if appropriate refer the matter to the police.
- 12.6 In carrying through these guidelines, all colleagues and students must take great care to ensure that they deal with the effects the incidents have on all those concerned; that they provide support to those wronged; and all those wronged are not disadvantaged.

## 13. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be monitored periodically by the College to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. In particular, the College will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the College will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, and any subsequent legislation.