

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Policy Statement

The College is committed to a policy of equal access and opportunity for all regardless of age, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, social background, religion or special need.

General Aim

Plumpton College affirms that all people are of equal worth and thus is committed to the removal of barriers that prevent members of the community from gaining access to and/or maximum benefit from provision offered by the College. This can best be achieved by working to minimise or remove the effects of:

Stereotyping

i.e. expectations of staff or students based on some preconceived ideas or categorisation of persons based upon age, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, social background, religion or special need.

Bias

in promotional materials
in curriculum design
in curriculum materials
in curriculum time-tables

Lack of provision

to promote positive outcomes e.g. language support, learning support, religious, dietary and other requirements, or facilities for those with a physical disability.

Rural isolation

to investigate solutions to removing barriers to participation caused by transport difficulties.

1.1 Policy Statement : Age

The College is committed to adopting flexible strategies and practices that cater for all ages and takes into account individual's circumstances and varying needs. Students and staff of all ages should benefit from College life.

1.2 Policy Statement : Gender, Marital Status or Sexual Orientation

The College is committed to a policy of eliminating discrimination on grounds of gender, marital status or sexual orientation.

1.3 Policy Statement : Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

The College defines students with learning difficulties and disabilities as those who require different and/or extra support and/or consideration due to physical, medical, sensory, emotional, behavioural and/or learning difficulties.

The College is fully committed to the view that people with learning difficulties and disabilities have the right to the same aspirations as others e.g. employment, active citizenship and personal development.

1.4 Policy Statement : Ethnic Origin

The College welcomes all students and staff regardless of their 'race' and will ensure that all College publicity material reflects this.

All staff and students have a responsibility to counter racist attitudes and behaviour.

The College's race equality policy is at Appendix A.

1.5 Policy Statement : Harassment

The College is committed to the elimination of ageist, disablist, racist and sexist behaviour. Offensive language and images, sexual and racial harassment will not be tolerated.

1.6 Policy Statement : Curriculum Provision

The College is committed to ensuring the curriculum provision addresses access, differing opportunities for assessment, and programme review.

2. Principles : General

2.1 College Publicity

An Equal Opportunities statement will appear in all College literature. Publicity material relating to the College will be designed to reflect the diversity of the College community. Where appropriate, publicity material will be published in minority languages and in relevant publications. Special efforts are made to ensure that College publicity reaches all sections of the community. The College's Marketing department will ensure these requirements are met in all publicity and marketing materials. The College's Marketing Department and Admissions Officer will ensure that childcare facilities/support is available to all prospective learners.

2.2 Student Recruitment

Student recruitment trends across the whole College will be reviewed and the recruitment of under-represented groups in particular programme areas will be encouraged. This will be monitored in programme team meetings, programme team/Senior Management Team review. Annually, the Management Information Systems Officer will produce a College summary for the Academic Board.

2.3 Student Induction

All students and staff are informed of the College Equal Opportunities Policy and the complaints procedure that they can take in the event of perceived unfair treatment.

2.4 Student Services/Development Tutors

The College Student Services and Development Tutors will provide counselling, guidance and careers advice to help address the needs of all students.

2.5 College Facilities

These are regularly reviewed to ensure that the needs of all students and staff are considered and met within the limitations of the College's financial and other resources. The Director of Resources will consider equal opportunities issues annually in the resource development plan.

2.6 Work Placement and Work Experience

College staff will encourage employers to adopt a positive approach to students on work placement, regardless of learning difficulties, age, gender or ethnic origin. Employer and work placement providers will be given copies of the College Equal Opportunities Policy, and the implications of the Policy and the operational consequences will be discussed with employers or workplace providers.

2.7 Learning Resources Centre

The Learning Resources Centre services to students and staff are reviewed frequently to ensure that the needs of all groups are taken into account. All groups are encouraged to use the Learning Resource facilities. All students and new staff receive induction in the use of the Learning Resources Centre.

2.8 Data

The College Marketing Department will take responsibility for gathering and updating baseline data for the local community relating to gender, ethnic origin, disability, age and any other significant local factors.

2.9 Inclusive Learning

The College will seek to incorporate the principles of Inclusivity in all College activities.

2.10 Refectory

The Refectory strives to meet the dietary needs of all students and staff.

2.11 Student Committee

Activities are encouraged to reflect the diversity of the College's student body.

2.12 Curriculum Review and Development

The College's teaching teams are asked to review the content of their courses to reflect and incorporate the tenets of the Equal Opportunities Policy. This will be through the tri-annual programme team meetings and the annual programme/Senior Management Team meetings.

2.13 Staff Development

Staff development is available to all staff: part-time and full-time. New members of staff receive the Equal Opportunities Policy as part of the induction to the College.

2.14 Recruitment and Selection

The College strives through the implementation of its Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure that prospective employees are not discriminated against on the grounds of ethnic or national origin, 'race', colour, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

2.15 Trade Unions

The Trade Unions represented within the College all have policies or guidelines which promote Equal Opportunities and actively discourage discrimination against any groups.

2.16 Teaching and Learning Observations

As part of the College's teaching and learning observation process, observers will be asked to monitor the implementation of equal opportunities in teaching and learning.

2.17 Specific Aims

To promote an atmosphere of acceptance within the College community.

To offer a curriculum which ensures that all students are able to achieve their full potential.

To remove discrimination in any form that denies individuals the opportunity for fulfilment, with the consequent loss to society of their skills and abilities.

3. Principles : Specific to Age
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The College will:

- 3.1 offer learning programmes which are open to any post-16 age range.
- 3.2 offer learning programmes aimed and devised for specific age groups and needs.
- 3.3 offer an admissions system which will offer guidance taking into account the particular needs of students.
- 3.4 offer an Accreditation of Prior Learning/Achievement service where appropriate.
- 3.5 ensure that those involved in recruitment, enrolment and teaching programmes guard against pre-conceived expectations of different age groups.
- 3.6 encourage the integration of different age groups where mutually beneficial.
- 3.7 ensure that tutors acknowledge that applicants may have family commitments and provide where possible a flexible programme of study within existing courses.
- 3.8 provide support systems to all students taking into account their particular needs.
- 3.9 monitor student enrolment by age.

4. Principles : Specific to Gender, Marital Status or Sexual Orientation

The College will:

- 4.1 review recruitment trends across the College.
- 4.2 time-table certain learning programmes to enable those with family responsibilities to participate.
- 4.3 in undertaking pre-course interviewing, take into account the full range of study options and facilities available when informing students of their potential learning programmes.
- 4.4 support job sharing where possible.
- 4.5 publicise childcare or support facilities.
- 4.6 assess the need for single sex learning programmes in non-traditional areas.
- 4.7 ensure that the environment and facilities do not limit equality of opportunity through being orientated towards one gender.

- 4.8 monitor student enrolment by gender.
- 4.9 monitor staff application and recruitment by gender.

5. Principles : Specific to Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

The College will:

- 5.1 ensure that students with learning difficulties and disabilities are given an opportunity to visit the College so that they can make an independent decision as to whether the environment is suitable.
- 5.2 undertake to provide support and guidance about alternative provision where the College is unable to meet the needs to prospective students.
- 5.3 continue to improve access and relocate classes where possible.
- 5.4 ensure that all health procedures in the College take account of people with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- 5.5 seek to ensure that, wherever possible, participation in all students' social activities is encouraged and that activities support the philosophy of equality of opportunity.
- 5.6 raise the levels of awareness and expertise among staff regarding learning difficulties and disabilities and institute an ongoing programme of staff development.
- 5.7 encourage programme teams to review teaching materials and activities to ensure that they do not portray negative images of disabilities.
- 5.8 offer all members of staff who may have a student with learning difficulties and disabilities in their class guidance and support.
- 5.9 monitor student enrolment by disability.
- 5.10 monitor staff application and recruitment by disability.
- 5.11 integrate students with learning difficulties into mainstream programmes where possible.

6. Principles : Specific to Ethnic Origin

The College will:

- 6.1 respond to and encourage activities that are culturally diverse.
- 6.2 support and encourage activities that reflect the multi-cultural background.
- 6.3 identify language barriers and offer support.
- 6.4 provide guidance for students from all cultural backgrounds on the full range of study options available and access to all courses from which they will benefit in relation to their prior knowledge and achievements.
- 6.5 recognise and validate overseas qualifications by Accreditation of Prior Learning/ Achievement process wherever possible.
- 6.6 seek to forge closer links with members of local and overseas communities.
- 6.7 monitor student enrolment by ethnic origin.
- 6.8 raise levels of awareness regarding ethnicity amongst staff and students.

7. Principles : Specific to Harassment

The College will:

- 7.1 take immediate action to counter any activities which threaten others.
- 7.2 strive to provide a safe environment free from harassment of any nature.
- 7.3 treat all complaints seriously and with respect.

8. Equal Opportunities Co-ordination and Implementation

The Director of Studies has responsibility for co-ordinating Equal Opportunities issues within the College and for ensuring that agreed objectives are implemented and targets achieved in specific timescales.

The Director of Studies will liaise with staff to ensure the commitment and actions contained in the Policy are realised.

All staff have the responsibility for identifying students with learning difficulties and disabilities and for providing or seeking support appropriate to the needs of students.

9	Equal Opportunities Monitoring
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Monitoring of equal opportunities is undertaken by the Academic and Quality Sub-Committee.

Monitoring and Review reports will be presented to the Academic and Quality Sub-Committee at least once during the academic year by the Management Information Systems Officer. Programme leaders will reflect on equality of opportunity issues in their tri-annual programme meetings and report on their action to address issues at the annual programme team/Senior Management Team review meeting.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee has a responsibility to review, monitor and promote the equal opportunities and race policies in relation to employee issues. The Academic Committee has a responsibility to review, monitor and promote the equal opportunities and race policies in relation to teaching and student issues.

APPENDIX A

PLUMPTON COLLEGE RACE EQUALITY POLICY

1. Our commitment

The College strives to ensure that everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect.

We will work towards the elimination of racism whether overt, covert, or by omission, and we will ensure that individuals and communities have equal access to our learning programmes and facilities. This policy reflects the College's commitment to equal opportunities and it places an obligation on staff to promote good practice. The College will treat all complaints seriously, with respect and empathy.

2. Our statutory duties

Under the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000), the College has the following general duties:

- eliminate unlawful race discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

The College also has the following specific duties:

- prepare a written statement of its policy for promoting race equality
- put in place arrangements for implementing the policy, publicising its contents and effectiveness
- assess the impact of its policies on students and staff of different racial groups
- review, by reference to those racial groups, the admission and progress of students and the recruitment and career progress of staff
- include in the statement how the process will be publicized
- publish annually the results of its review

3. Meeting our duties

We will seek to ensure that:

- Governors, staff, learners, partners and all stakeholders (including work placement providers) are aware of our race equality policy and the action needed for its implementation
- Governors, staff, learners, partners and all stakeholders (including work placement providers) are aware of the value placed upon equal opportunity and that action will be taken in the event of any breach of the policy
- Governors and staff have access to comprehensive information which will assist them to carry out their responsibilities under the policy
- The College's publicity materials present appropriate and positive messages about ethnic minority groups

- Schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity
- Ethnic minority learners have access to appropriate support and facilities
- Applicants for employment are drawn from a wide pool with positive action to encourage applications from under-represented groups
- Recruitment and promotion procedures are designed to eliminate cultural bias
- Staff development is designed to meet particular needs of under-represented groups

4. Monitoring our progress

To inform the setting of action points and the measurement of our progress in achieving them, we will collect and analyse the following information where reasonably practicable:

For learners:

- Enrolments by course area
- Retention
- Achievement

For employees:

- Ethnic profiles of employees
- Job application rates
- Selection success rates
- Type of contract

5. How we will use this information

The analyses will help the College to:

- Monitor representation of staff and students from different racial groups
- Review any areas of under-representation and develop action plans to address issues as appropriate
- Review good practice in other colleges to continually monitor our policy and action plan

6. Division of responsibilities

Governors are responsible for ensuring that:

- Every effort is made to ensure that the membership of the Corporation reflects the diversity of the communities served by the College
- The College's strategic plan includes a commitment to race equality
- They are aware of their statutory responsibilities in relation to race and ethnicity legislation
- They receive ethnic monitoring information on learners and staff

Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- The College Principal and Senior Management Team are responsible for taking the lead in creating a positive, inclusive ethos that challenges racist or inappropriate behaviour on the part of managers, staff or learners.
- They are aware of this policy and the duties in relation to race and ethnicity legislation
- The College's strategic plan includes a commitment to race equality
- All aspects of College policy and activity are sensitive to race and ethnicity issues
- Ethnic monitoring information is collected and analysed, and appropriate action is taken if necessary to target under-represented groups for both learners and staff
- Teaching observation reports ensure issues around race and ethnicity are addressed
- Internal verification procedures include scrutiny of race and ethnicity issues
- Curriculum areas assess performance in relation to race and ethnicity and take action as appropriate
- The procedures for the recruitment and promotion of staff promote best practice in equal opportunities
- The College's publicity materials present appropriate and positive messages about minority ethnic groups
- Induction programmes and tutorial programmes reflect the College's commitment to promote equality of opportunity

Staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- They are aware of this policy and the College's duties in relation to race and ethnicity legislation
- Their schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity
- They challenge inappropriate behaviour by either learners, work placement providers or other members of staff

7. Publicising our policy and progress

To the public:

- We will highlight our commitment to racial equality in our prospectus, strategic plan and annual report.
- We will include a summary of the results of our monitoring information in our annual report.

To learners:

- We will make all learners aware of the policy through induction materials. Copies of the policy will be on display in the resources centre, student services and reception.
- We will highlight in the learners' induction programme the College's commitment to racial equality, action to be taken by learners who suffer discrimination and the action to be taken against any perpetrators of discrimination.
- Tutors will reinforce this information during tutorials or work based monitoring visits.

To work placement providers, partners and franchisees:

- We will give a copy of this policy to all work placement providers, partners and franchisees.

To staff:

- We will make all staff aware of the policy as part of the Staff Handbook.
- The induction programme will highlight the college's commitment to racial equality, action to be taken by staff and learners who suffer discrimination and the action to be taken against any perpetrators of discrimination.
- We will include the results of staff monitoring in the annual equal opportunities report to the Corporation.

8. Complaints

The College will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment. Acts of racial discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation or abuse will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

Staff who feel they are being discriminated against on racial grounds by other members of staff should raise the matter under the grievance / harassment procedure. If, in the course of their work, College staff suffer racial discrimination from members of the public, the College will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support.

Any racist behaviour directed against staff by students will be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure.

9. Review and Consultation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Finance & General Purposes Committee and Academic Committees in respect of employee and teaching/student issues respectively. As part of the review the Committees will seek and take into account the views of stakeholders including learners, work placement providers, trade union representatives, partners and franchisees.

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