



Equal Opportunities Objectives and Public Sector Equalities Duty (Including annual priorities)

Reviewed by: Full Governing Body
Ratified on: March 2024
Next review: 2026 (annual update 2025)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R. Karn", written over a horizontal line.

Signed Richard Karn, Chair of Governors

Context

Heathfield Community College serves a large rural catchment area comprising Heathfield and its surrounding villages. Students come to school from a wide variety of home backgrounds although the balance is socio-economically above average. The school serves students who will receive additional support throughout their time with us, as well as students who are likely to complete their education in a leading university department.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Equality Act 2010 provides a modern, single legal framework with three broad duties:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

For the purpose of this policy, the Equality Act 2010 will be referred to as ‘the Act’.

The College fully understands the principles of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities.

Protected characteristics, under the Act, are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality or ethnicity
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student:

- In the way it provides education for students.
- In the way it provides students access to any benefit, facility or service.
- By excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The responsible body for the College is the governing board or the LA.

The College’s liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a student has left the College, but will apply to subsequent actions connected to the previous relationship between College and student.

Principles and aims:

- We believe that all members of our college community are of equal value. This means that high but realistic academic expectations should be applied to each student. This aim is supported by our target setting and tracking processes, as well as our Teaching & Learning policy.
- We monitor and support equality of access to the curriculum intervening proactively when inequalities are considered possible to ensure full understanding and opportunity has been afforded.
- We seek to ensure that students with modest means are not disadvantaged in the academic opportunities available to them. The College has developed a strategy called Closing the Gap to support this objective along with the targeted work and monitoring of engagement in and out of the classroom by the Pupil premium Champion.
- We believe that members of the school should treat each other with care and respect. We seek to encourage positive role modelling from all members of the community. This aim is supported by our Behaviour for Learning Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy and information report, Communication Policy, Accessibility Policy statement, the Accessibility Plan and the Pupil Premium Statement.
- We believe that equal opportunities issues should be addressed through a variety of learning mechanisms including the study of literature, both historic and contemporary and that which evidences diversity. There is promotion of multi-cultural understanding through the offering of trips and experiences for the full ability range of students and ensuring students have opportunity to work with a wide range of people. The College believes this is an on-going responsibility as we all continue to learn and grow.
- We challenge stereotyping through an inclusive culture and ethos and explicitly through the PHSEe and tutorial curriculum and the monitoring of differences in academic performance.
- We promote religious understanding through the celebration of major festivals and related use of assemblies and through Religious Education and PSHEe.
- We encourage the involvement of all members of our local community to make use of our education and recreational resources.
- We monitor equal opportunities issues and perceptions of issues using parent, student and staff surveys. Any incidences involving prejudice of any kind are logged and appropriate action is taken. This is monitored and reported through leadership structures.
- We are also committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all applicants for teaching and non-teaching posts at Heathfield Community College in accordance with the HR and pay policies. The College will promote equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants and will work in line with the Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy.
- We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

We recognise and accept our duties and responsibilities to eliminate discrimination and promote equality, including the requirement to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all.

Consulting and involving those affected by inequality in the decisions the College takes to promote equality and eliminate discrimination (affected people could include parents, pupils, staff and members of the local community) is important and happens through:

- Student Leadership groups and School council, student survey data
- Parent feedback and survey data, including follow up focus groups where appropriate
- Staff survey and feedback data

Our statutory duties are contained within:

- The Equalities Act 2010 (including the DFE 2014 updated guidance related to pregnancy status and gender reassignment)
- Equality Act 2006 (which introduced the gender equality duty)
- Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education and Inspection Act 2006 (which introduced the Community Cohesion duty)

Objectives 2023-24:

All outcomes and opportunities for students are audited through our assessment and examination analysis, through line management and annual review. This is reviewed by gender, PP, SEND and ethnic identity. Where data suggests underperformance, action is taken through the College Improvement Plan and Department Improvement plans as appropriate.

Objective	Actions
1. Ensure practises and procedures to support disadvantaged students engage and succeed as fully as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ongoing training for staff on how disadvantage impacts students learning and broader experiences (POL/LYN). b) Ensure clarity on school wide priorities for the disadvantaged (Attendance, Enrichment, Prior Learning, Independent Learning skills & Oracy). c) Clarity on strategy around High Expectations for all (Ambition) and pro-actively ensuring opportunity (careers, enrichment, intervention). d) Ensure early intervention (Wave 1 T&L) implemented effectively. e) Ensure Wave 2 intervention effected swiftly as needed and co-ordinated coherently (POL). f) Implement Closing the Gap strategy to include all leaders relevant to ensure successful progress is made (curriculum, pastoral & admin).
2. To continue to further challenge gender stereotypes and promote diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to address diversity, inclusion and representation in the curriculum and across the college through ongoing staff training. b) Promoted content for the Cultural calendar, tutor time programme and assembly themes. c) Specific focus on gender biases and sexualised or racialised language which could lead to bullying. d) Leadership and Student Leaders to continue to create material and discussion on gender Equality and Protected Characteristics. e) Ensure speakers are recruited to add additional voices to address issues of equality
3. Embed practises and procedures to support students with complex medical conditions and accessibility needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Individual Health Care plans reviewed and quality assured b) Individual Risk Assessments in place for students whose medical needs dictate an adjustment to the curriculum activities that are planned. Adopt the features of best practice in consulting with parents, students and staff in the writing and implementing of these plans. c) Continued training for Curriculum Leaders in using IHP and RAs to adapt the planned learning in their subject. Reflection on adoption and implementation. d) College Site accessibility to be reviewed for new students in transition. e) College practice for dealing with emergencies reviewed with SLT to consider the specific needs in an emergency situation.