EQUALISING OPPORTUNITIES – CELEBRATING DIVERSITY POLICY

1. AIMS

1.1 Our vision is to have a College that enables all of its members to fulfil their potential and to have their contributions equally valued and respected. The college believes education is a right for all who can benefit from it.

Therefore the College will not tolerate any form of behaviour or activity which constitutes unlawful discrimination, on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (includes lack of belief), sex, sexual orientation, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

1.2 We seek to employ a workforce, which reflects the diverse community at large, because we value the individual contributions of all people. We will treat all employees with respect and dignity and provide a working environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation. To this end, within the framework of the law and best personnel practice, we are committed, wherever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a work force, which broadly reflects the local community and welcomes individuals for their abilities.

1.3 All participants in the educational process will be made aware that they have a legal and moral duty to play their part in these aims. This is emphasised at recruitment and from induction onwards.

1.4 The Public Duty arising from the Equality Act 2010 requires the College to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (listed at 1.1) and those who do not,
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Active consideration must be given to the effect of College functions on people with protected characteristics, including data analysis and consultation. The College is further required to demonstrate compliance, transparency and accountability by publishing information on the above each year and equality objectives every four years. This information is available on the College external website.

In meeting the Public Duties, the College will take actions, such as measures to anticipate the requirements of disabled people or raise awareness on gender reassignment. These are not detailed in this policy but will form part of the information to be published each year.

2 ACCESS TO, AND PARTICIPATION IN, EDUCATION

2.1 The College will aim to respond to the educational and training needs of the local community, identifying and addressing barriers to participation. The College has an Admissions Policy which outlines the basis upon which course recruitment decisions are made.
2.2 A clear statement of the College’s commitment to equalising opportunities will be given in all appropriate College publications. A strap line “New College is committed to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Excellence” was implemented in August 2008.

3 MARKETING, PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

3.1 College publicity will reflect the College’s commitment to the equalising of opportunity and will be widely available within the community.

3.2 Liaison with local schools, job centres, community groups, voluntary organisations (including trade unions), religious communities and local industry will be developed and maintained.

3.3 Outreach activity will be undertaken to stimulate interest and generate involvement from underrepresented groups.

3.4 The College will work where appropriate with funding bodies, including Swindon Borough Council, to support and develop regional initiatives.

4 CURRICULUM

4.1 The College will promote teaching styles and develop resources to encourage inclusive learning, advance equality of opportunity and recognise diversity.

4.2 Equality and diversity will be embedded in teaching and learning and evidenced in course documentation, learning observations and student opinion.

4.3 Participation and success rate data will be examined in order to inform action planning on achievement gaps.

4.4 The College will seek to offer opportunities to meet the needs of diverse groups, such as English for speakers of other languages, and learning programmes addressing the needs of unemployed and economically disadvantaged groups.

4.5 The College will encourage applications from, and support the integration of, students with disabilities, learning difficulties or difficulties and other specific needs, offering additional support services and reasonable adjustments.

5 THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT AND ATMOSPHERE.

5.1 The College will create an accessible environment in which all members of the College community feel comfortable. The College aims to foster an atmosphere of mutual trust, harmony and respect and College policies reflect this. Students and staff are reminded of College expectations and what to do if they encounter problems. Guidance is given to staff and students on bullying and harassment and disciplinary measures are enforced. Student opinion is regularly canvassed through externally benchmarked surveys and group discussions.

5.2 The College will publicly recognise the diversity of the community through, for example, signposting access arrangements for disabled people and celebrations of diversity such as Diversity Week.

6 STAFF RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

6.1 The College uses recognised equal opportunities procedures in its recruitment and employment practices, which have been agreed by the personnel committee and the College unions. No employee or job applicant should be disadvantaged or treated less favourably because of conditions or requirements which cannot be justified, and the College will seek to make reasonable adjustments to its arrangements and premises with a...
view to avoiding any disadvantages for disabled people. Actions will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, pay, training, promotion, and career management and on the termination of employment are based solely on objective and job related criteria.

6.2 New College has committed to the Positive about Disabled People Two Ticks Scheme, with accessibility highlighted in recruitment information, interview arrangements and in service support

6.3 All staff will be required to undertake training programmes on equality topics. Distance learning methods will be used to provide access for remote employees. Invitations to these training programmes will be extended to governors and members of the student union executive where appropriate.

6.4 Questions relating to Equality of Opportunity are integrated in the staff performance review system.

6.5 The effectiveness of the employment policies and practices of the College will be monitored by quantitative and qualitative analysis. In particular, records of gender, marital status, age, nationality, ethnic origin and disability status of employees and job applicants will be kept. Any monitoring will be in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

6.6 If the monitoring process indicates possible areas where discrimination, harassment, victimisation may be occurring, appropriate action will be taken. If under representation of certain groups occurs then in the first instance an investigation will be undertaken to identify the causes. Where necessary, positive action for under represented groups, such as training employees and managers, encouraging applications, or introducing more flexible working practices may be considered.

7. **RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS**

7.1 Information on the processes of recruitment of ex-offenders is available from the College’s ‘New College Employment of Ex-offenders’ policy, which is available for all job applicants.

8. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

8.1 The Principal has overall responsibility for the operation of this policy, on behalf of the Corporation.

8.2 All employees have personal responsibility for the practical application of the policy, which extends to the treatment of employees, students and visitors, and through our contractual agreements with contractors.

8.3 The Director of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that fair and adequate arrangements exist for both effectively handling and recording all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment and selection.

8.4 The Director of Curriculum is responsible for ensuring that students are dealt with in accordance with this policy, and for promoting awareness of equality and diversity in the curriculum, with delegation to the Equality and Diversity Coordinator.

8.5 All Managers have a responsibility to ensure the policy is carried through effectively, by giving active support to the policy and ensuring employees for whom they are responsible understand and implement the policy. They should encourage employees to inform them of any instances of discrimination and ensure that all allegations are investigated, where necessary seeking assistance from the Human Resources Department. Managers will be responsible to the Principal for these activities.

8.6 It is the responsibility of all leaders and managers to comply with the Equality Act 2010 by demonstrating due regard for the public duties (at 1.4) in planning, decision making, policy making and resource allocation. An Equality Impact process is in place.
8.7 Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee or student who does not comply with these requirements.

9. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

9.1 The College has a cross college Equality and Diversity Working Group.

9.2 Equality and Diversity reporting is embedded within the quality systems of the college, for example, Schemes of Work, Quality Health Checks and throughout the Self Assessment Reporting process. Staff in all functions, particularly teaching, are required to give regard to Equality and Diversity in their work and to set appropriate targets for action.

9.3 A detailed analysis of student and staff data is produced annually by the Equality and Diversity Coordinator. Data used includes achievement data, student and staff opinion surveys, recorded complaints and incidents and employment data. This report is presented to the Senior Management Team to support decision making. An action plan is drawn from this evidence. This data will be used to meet the College’s Public Equality Duties.

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**NEW COLLEGE EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS**

**DATE:** October 2013

**Function:** Equal Opportunities

This policy, plan, procedure, process has been examined for equality impact, i.e., the impact that this function will have on different groups of actual and potential learners, service users and staff taking account of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 (*age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)*.

1. **If Equality Impact Analysis is not relevant to this function, give reasons and proceed to section 5 below.**

2. **In what ways could this function have a negative impact on any of the groups above? What actions have been taken to eliminate these?**

   The CPD and monitoring procedures described in the policy are in place to minimise this possibility.

3. **In what ways could this function have a positive impact on any of the groups above? How will this function be used to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups? Are there plans for the future which will further advance equality?**

   This policy documents the actions to be taken to achieve these ends. A separate policy has been produced to cover Gender Reassignment and a number of policies are in places which cover services for disabled people. The Equality Impact Assessment system was revised and re-launched in April 2013.

4. **What evidence supports your judgment e.g. consultations, observations, expert opinions, quantitative or qualitative surveys? If the evidence is in the form of an additional document, where is it stored?**

   Evidence is in Self Assessment Reports, on the College website and in the Equal Opportunities Reports for leaders and managers. Records of student opinion support our judgments.

5. **Name and job title of manager responsible:** Trudy Murphy, Equality and Diversity Coordinator