

EEG - EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY			
<b>Current Status:</b>	Operational	<b>Last Review:</b>	Feb 2024
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Group Head Quality Assurance	<b>Next Review:</b>	Feb 2025
<b>Roles Responsible for Review:</b>		<b>Originated:</b>	Nov 2016
<b>Approved by:</b>	SET Curriculum	<b>Committee:</b>	Educational Excellence Committee
<b>Type of Policy:</b>	Staff / Students / Governors / External	<b>Quality Assured by:</b>	

## 1. Principles

- 1.1. This policy applies to all staff and any other personnel associated with Eastern Education Group (EEG) (at each relevant College/School including West Suffolk College, Abbeygate Sixth Form College, and One Sixth Form College, SEND Schools and Exning Primary School).

All members of EEG have a responsibility to seek to ensure that the college/school is free from discrimination of any kind.

- 1.2 The Equality Act 2010 ensures that no person will be unlawfully discriminated against due to any protected characteristics that are detailed in the act. These are:

- Age (Applicable to staff but not applicable to students)
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

### PURPOSES

- To promote actively equal opportunities in all areas of college/school life.
- To ensure that everyone is given the best education regardless of ability, gender, race, culture and disability, religion, or sexual orientation.
- To ensure that members of the college/school community know their rights and respect the rights of others.
- To aim to ensure that prejudice or discrimination in all its forms is actively rejected.

- e) To raise awareness of equal opportunities issues for all members of the college/school community, and through our links with the local community
- f) To establish strategies to enable each individual to fulfil his/her potential to ensure equality of access to the curriculum and in the case of staff, CPD opportunities.
- g) To ensure that all aspects of running the college/school are based on the principles of equality of opportunity.
- h) To aim to make sure that this policy is used consistently by all members of the college/school community.

1.3 There are specific duties to:

- i. publish sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty by 31 January in each year (having commenced by 31 January 2012)
- ii. prepare and publish equality objectives to meet the aims in the Equality Act every four years (having commenced by 6 April 2012).

1.4 Issues of equal opportunity should be an integral part of the education of all and covers all individuals in the organisation. In this way we can work towards mutual respect and understanding in an increasingly interdependent world.

1.5 Our Equality and Diversity Policy is designed to help us positively promote each other's individual rights and our responsibilities towards others.

## 2. Practices

### 2.1. Responsibilities of Equal Opportunities

- a) The EDI Executive Board will co-ordinate the policy.
- b) Each member of staff should be aware of their responsibilities within the policy.
- c) A named member of the Corporation/Trust Board should undertake a monitoring role with respect to the policy.
- d) To create an environment that promotes dignity and respect for all and where individual differences and the contributions of the college/school community are valued and recognised.

### 2.2. Unlawful discrimination

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion, or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g., refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

- **Harassment** is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Students or staff can complain of harassment even if they do not possess the protected characteristic or if the harassment is not directed at them.

Harassment may take many forms. It may be unwanted remarks, inappropriate jokes or ridicule, unwanted physical contact, or segregation. It may be an isolated incident or a series of incidents.

- **Victimisation** occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he or she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he or she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.
- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments** is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

## 2.3. **Communication**

The policy will be communicated through the following mechanisms:

- The website
  - Staff briefing
  - Staff intranet
  - Student intranet
- a) All students, staff and governance members must be familiar with the policy and act in accordance with it.
  - b) The leadership team in each college/school will take the lead on embedding Equality and Diversity.
  - c) Success in all areas of college/school life should be celebrated.
  - d) Staff and student ambassadors will help to raise awareness about equality and diversity themes.

## 2.4. **Ethos**

- a) All students, staff, stakeholders, and all those who communicate with the college/school will be made to feel welcome and included.
- b) Positive links with the community are encouraged.
- c) Displays around the college/school will reflect positive images and the diversity of the community.
- d) Appropriate attitudes, language and behaviour are actively promoted.
- e) Procedures for dealing promptly with incidents of bullying, sexual, racial and disability discrimination are in place.
- f) Opportunities for students to develop a practical understanding of appropriate social relationships and the rights and responsibilities of individuals are implicit in all we do.

## 2.5. **Access**

With due reference to the resources available: -

- a) The learning environment should not prejudice any individual or group.
- b) The learning environment has been designed that where reasonably possible all students and staff can access the range of provision.
- c) All students and staff will understand and value the importance of equal opportunities for all.

## **2.6. Curriculum**

- a) All students will have access to the full range of the curriculum wherever possible and appropriate and this will be reviewed annually.
- b) Equal opportunities will be taken into account in all curriculum planning and regularly reviewed.
- c) All students will have access to the full range of Careers Education and Guidance (CEAG) wherever possible and appropriate. This will be embedded through the 'Careers Strategy' and associated Careers action plan. All strategies are in line with the current Gatsby Benchmarks.

## **2.7. Resources**

- a) Resources should be fit for purpose and regularly reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate and effective.

## **2.8. Staffing**

- a) The Recruitment and Appraisal Policies and Employment Processes reflect the principles of equal opportunities and recognise the value of a diverse organisation.
- b) Appropriate training and support are provided to ensure;
  - I. staff incorporate the principles of equality and diversity into all aspects of their work.
  - II. all staff understand the issues and are equipped to identify, challenge and deal with incidents if they occur.
- c) EEG will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline, and selection for redundancy.
- d) 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. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.
- e) EEG 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 College/School considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic,

for doing so. EEG will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

- f) EEG will monitor the composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion) in accordance with the protected characteristics and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.
- g) EEG cannot lawfully discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion, but EEG may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under-representation of any group that the College/School identifies as being under-represented in particular types of job.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

Everyone at EEG has a duty to promote the values and principles set out in this policy.

- a) All members of the College/School community (staff, students, and visitors) are expected to adhere to the standards, principles, and duties of this policy.
- b) All staff are required to undertake the training and development needed to help them to do so.
- c) Managers have a duty to act as role models, with regard to this policy and to ensure staff adhere to this policy and are given the opportunity to develop the necessary skills and understanding.
- d) Senior managers have a duty to monitor the general equality duty among students and the workforce and in the application of relevant policies and practices.
- e) Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors, or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.
- f) Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the College/School for any act of unlawful discrimination by such employees. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.
- g) Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under EEG's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

### **4. Grievances**

- a) If you consider that you may have been a victim of unlawful discrimination, you should use the grievance procedure.

- b) EEG 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.
- c) EEG recommends that you use the grievance procedure to highlight issues related to equality, diversity, and inclusion. This will not affect your right to make a complaint to an employment tribunal if, having exhausted the grievance procedure, you are still dissatisfied with the response to your complaint. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months of the last stage of the grievance procedure.

## 5. Complaints

- a) Complaints of harassment should be pursued through the grievance procedure for staff and the complaints procedure for students.
- b) Staff wishing to make a complaint about matters concerning employment are encouraged to speak to their line manager or a member of the HR team.

## 6. Monitoring and Review

- a) The policy will be reviewed every year by the EDI Shared Services Board. Changes will be presented to SET and agreed.
- b) The EDI Shared Services Board will monitor the operation of the policy.
- c) The Corporation/Trust Board will be informed of any changes in policy.

## 7. Other Policies

All college/School policies should be constructed with regard to the issues of equal opportunities.

### Revision History – Policy name

Revision date	Reason for revision	Section number	Changes made
14.03.24	Policy alignment	1.3	Added specific duties from WSC to SAT Policy
14.03.24	Policy alignment	3.2	Added points relating to “unlawful discrimination” from WSC to SAT Policy
14.03.24	Policy alignment	3.8c-g	Added points relating to “unlawful discrimination” within employment from WSC to SAT Policy
14.03.24	Policy alignment	4	Added “roles and responsibilities” for employees from WSC to SAT Policy

## Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

14.03.24	Policy alignment	5	Added "grievances" from WSC to SAT Policy
14.03.24	Policy alignment	6	Added "complaints" from WSC to SAT Policy