

Introduction

Since the Equality Act 2010 came into effect in April 2011 there has no longer been a requirement that college's should draw up and publish equality schemes or policies. It is still good practice, however, for a college to make a statement about the principles according to which it reviews the impact on equalities of its policies and practices, and according to which it fulfils the specific duties to publish information and evidence, and to decide on specific and measurable objectives.

Legal framework

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age, disability, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, pregnancy & maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage & civil partnerships.

We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Guiding Principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their sex and gender identity
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual orientation.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- sex, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- sexual orientation.

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Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development.

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whatever their age
- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their sex and sexual orientation, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely.

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, and both girls and boys.
- gay people as well as straight.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit.

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds

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- both women and men, and both girls and boys
- gay people as well as straight.

Principle 8: We base our policies and practices on sound evidence.

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information which shows our compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and on the basis of which we decide on specific and measurable objectives.

Principle 9: Measurable objectives

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives within our annual equalities report.

The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.

Our equality objectives are integrated into Safe & Equal Action Plan.

We keep our equality objectives under review and report termly on progress towards achieving them.

The curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the principles set out above.

Assessments and Admissions

Following receipt of an application, individuals are invited to the college for an assessment to look at specific education goals and aspirations. Members of a multi-disciplinary team, consisting of Education, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Nursing and Care compile their individual reports to establish whether the College is able to meet their specific needs. Where appropriate and if needs dictate assessments may be carried out externally, such as in school or in the individual's home. For arrangements regarding examinations please refer to Annex A, (*Portland College Examinations Accessibility Statement*)

Ethos and organisation

We ensure the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- assessments, admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The College is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling its legal duties:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs

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- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

There is guidance in the Dignity at College Policy on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

We keep a record of prejudice-related incidents and, if requested, provide a report to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our college and how they are dealt with.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the College complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The College Principal is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The Vice Principal has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos throughout the college
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver activities and sessions that reflect the college's equality objectives
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all learners, citizens and their parents and carers.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and inclusion in appropriate detail.

Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

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Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Breaches of the policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other college policies are dealt with, as determined by the principal and governing body.

Monitoring and review

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

In particular, we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to each of the nine protected characteristics.

Melanie Arrowsmith-Kemp

Vice Principal (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead)

Annex A - Portland College Examinations Accessibility Statement

Introduction

This statement aims to ensure that every learner who has additional needs will be supported through every examination series, this ensures that there is equality of opportunity.

Overview

The Equality Act 2010 extends the application of the Equality Act to general qualifications. All examination centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

Process

All exam rooms are accessible, chairs are available when queuing outside if required. There is an appropriate toilet near or in all of these areas.

Emergency evacuation procedures are appropriate for all candidates and risk assessments are carried out as appropriate prior to the examination series.

All areas have had internal risk assessments carried out.

If any candidate needs to take regular medication, invigilators will make this possible. The Exams and Quality Assistant should be notified if there are any exceptional health issues.

Any specialised equipment will be provided and an appropriate examination area selected.

Invigilators will be briefed of any exceptional issues concerning communication or other factors which may affect the candidate.

Recruitment of invigilators will follow normal school policy with regards to disabled applicants.

All invigilators will either receive group training including disability issues or will work alongside an experienced invigilator.

The Exams and Quality Assistant will inform the Exams Administrator of any issues concerning individuals in the main exam rooms.

The Exams and Quality Assistant will take the lead in making access applications based on their knowledge of the needs of students and share this with the Head of Quality, Learning and Teaching for their signature.

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The Equality Act 2010

The College is fully accessible to any disabled candidate:

There is a level main entry and ramps/lifts throughout the College.

All examination rooms are on the ground level.

There are toilets suitable for disabled people.

The Emergency evacuation route has a level exit.

The Exams and Quality Assistant and Exams Administrator are responsible for providing chairs for queuing disabled candidates.

The Exams and Quality Assistant and Exams Administrator are responsible for providing suitable seating arrangements for disabled candidates.

The Exams and Quality Assistant, Exams Administrator and Head of Quality, Teaching and Learning will provide evidence to support an application for access arrangements and ensure that appropriate arrangements and facilities are made available which meet the requirements of any candidate with a disability. They include:

- Modified test papers (enlarged print, Braille, transcripts for hearing impaired candidates, etc)
- Up to 25% extra time
- A reader or scribe
- Supervised rest breaks
- Different coloured scripts
- Use of bilingual dictionary
- Prompter
- Use of a computer or other technology
- Use of an individual room

Any invigilator who would have to supervise a disabled candidate would be made aware of sensitive issues of learning support needs of the candidate, issues of language and communication.