

RUNSHAW COLLEGE

POLICY TITLE: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

APPROVED BY:

Governing Body

AUTHORS:

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POSITION: Assistant Principal –
Student Experience and Support

VERSION:

10.1

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Runshaw College is committed to providing equal opportunities in both employment and study. The college is opposed to all forms of discrimination in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 and as defined by the Equality Act 2010, whether direct, perceived, indirect or by association.
- 1.2 We also recognise that individuals may face other challenges that can amplify barriers and as such we strive for equity through inclusive, contextualised support.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of every member of the College community to uphold this policy, advance equality and eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- 1.3 All job applicants, staff and students will be informed of the College's commitment to equality and valuing diversity. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is available on the College website with copies in alternative formats available on request.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This document describes college policy on equality and diversity in relation to marketing, publicity, school liaison, access and environment, curriculum, teaching and learning, staffing, including recruitment and selection and professional development.
 - 2.2 It applies to all students, staff, governors, visitors, contractors and other service providers and users of the College.
 - 2.3 Other key related policies include the Student Harassment Bullying Policy, Maternity Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Disciplinary Procedure, Harassment and Bullying Policy (staff), SEND Policy, Student Services Statement of Service, Safeguarding Policy, Shared Parental Leave Policy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Staff Code of
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Professional Conduct, Student Positive Behaviour Policy, Supported Admissions Policy, Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Medical Conditions and Temporary Disability Procedure.

3 Purpose

- 3.1 Runshaw College values and celebrates equality and diversity in our society and strives to create a positive and inclusive culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. This policy sets out how we will meet and, where appropriate, exceed the legal requirements set out in The Equality Act 2010.

4 Responsibilities

- (i) **Governors** will be responsible for:
- Ensuring the College meets all its duties under the legislation.
 - Ensuring that The Equality Act 2010 is followed.
 - Receiving and approving monitoring reports on the policy through the Equality and Diversity Annual Report.
- (ii) The **Principal and CEO** is responsible for:
- Giving a consistent and high-profile lead on all equality issues
 - Promoting the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy both internally and externally
 - Making sure this policy and its procedures are followed.
- (iii) The **College Management Team** are responsible for:
- Implementation and monitoring of this policy, with a senior manager taking a lead on equality.
 - Making sure all the staff know their responsibilities and receive support and training to carry these out.
 - Ensure that discrimination, bullying, harassment, or victimisation is effectively tackled.
 - Building equality into their own area of work and consider setting equality targets where appropriate.
 - Ensuring that other organisations working within or for us work according to the requirements of The Equality Act 2010
- (iv) **Contractors and Service Providers** are responsible for:
- Following the Equality Act 2010 and any equality conditions in contracts or agreements
- (v) **Equality and Diversity Champions/Mental Health Champions/Student Union EDI** are responsible for:
- Promoting and championing this policy across the College.
 - Communicating and sharing the views of staff and students on equality, diversity, and inclusion issues across the college.
 - Assist in the communication and embedding of strategies to support this policy.
 - Supporting the College to fulfil its statutory duties and public duty including annual equality information and reports.
- (vi) **Everyone** is responsible for:
- Operating within this policy at all times.
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- Challenging inappropriate language and behaviours.
- Ensuring everyone is treated with respect, courtesy, and dignity.
- Broadening their knowledge, confidence, and inclusive behaviour by attending relevant training and other learning opportunities as appropriate.

5. General Principles

- 5.1 The College's commitment to advancing equality as an employer and education provider goes beyond legislative compliance to ensure that everyone can participate fully, irrespective of their background or personal characteristics. Indeed, 'Respect' is one of the College's core values, that we respect the opinions and inputs of others and show consideration, kindness, empathy, and care for the needs of others.
- 5.2 Everyone has the right to participate in society to their full potential and no person should be treated less favourably or unfavourably on the grounds of any of the Protected Characteristics (Appendix 1).
- 5.3 The College will make adjustments for students and staff in accordance with identified needs wherever possible and reasonable. Our approach to transgender inclusion is outlined in Appendix 2.
- 5.4 The College is committed to eliminating discrimination by challenging inequality, prejudice, and discrimination whether direct, indirect, by association or by perception.
- 5.5 The College will comply with its legal responsibilities in carrying out both the General Equality Duty and Specific Public Sector responsibilities (Appendix 3).
- 5.6 The College will take active steps to try to prevent discrimination by third parties, including sexual harassment.
- 5.7 The College may take lawful positive action to advance equality. This may be in the provision of facilities or services to meet the needs of people from particular under-represented groups or to target job training and/or educational opportunities at particular groups which are under-represented in a particular area of work or study.

6 Marketing, Publicity and School Liaison

- 6.1 The College will research the needs of prospective students in our partner schools and wider community and attempt to respond to those needs in terms of course provision and support.
- 6.2 The College will make publicity and marketing information available in a range of accessible formats for current and prospective students. All publicity and information will take into account equal opportunities for staff and students. Publicity materials will offer guidance on how to apply for financial assistance.
- 6.3 The College will liaise with partner schools, other colleges, and local agencies to promote its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and generate interest in its courses from people not currently attending college.
- 6.4 College publicity will reflect our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and advance equality of opportunity between those people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
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7. Access and Environment

- 7.1 College staff will ensure advice is available to prospective and existing students, without bias, on transport, courses, grants, benefits, and careers.
- 7.2 Prospective students will be advised of their eligibility for additional learning support. This support will be provided to students and 'reasonable adjustments' will be made where appropriate to enable them to be successful in their studies.
- 7.3 All signs, regulations, communications, and instructions will be as clear and simple as possible and free from discriminatory language.
- 7.4 The College will consider the diverse needs of its community in its planning and will seek to provide a range of levels of courses and resources and varied modes of delivery to meet the needs of its community.
- 7.5 The College will allocate resources to reflect its commitment to managing equality and diversity.

8 Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

- 8.1 Guidance, assessment, support, and counselling will be available to all students to promote their opportunity to follow courses of their choice.
- 8.2 The College will endeavour to offer opportunities to all students to study at a level appropriate to them.
- 8.3 The College will endeavour to ensure all teaching and curriculum materials will promote and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 8.4 The College will endeavour to maximise progression opportunities including the accreditation of prior learning and experience.
- 8.5 The College embraces widening participation for example, enabling those seeking to return to study after a long period of unemployment, or having been made redundant and/or with caring responsibilities, whose personal circumstances have made it difficult for them to benefit from education.
- 8.6 College curriculum will enable students to understand and embrace College values and the College's commitment to advancing equality of opportunity and valuing diversity.
- 8.7 The curriculum is reviewed at least annually to ensure there is no content bias and equity in representation, and in line with any statutory changes within the Equality Act and other legislative guidance.

9 Staffing

- 9.1 The College will ensure that fair and adequate arrangements exist for both effectively managing and recording all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment and selection.
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- 9.2 Action will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, pay, training, development, promotion, career management and termination of employment are based solely on objective and job-related criteria.

10 Continuing Professional Development

- 10.1 Managers involved in the recruitment and selection process will all be trained in legislative requirements.
- 10.2 All staff are required to take part in mandatory equality and diversity training to ensure everyone that works at the College is aware of their role and responsibilities so far as equality and diversity is concerned.
- 10.3 All relevant staff will be offered training to implement and embed Equality and Diversity in teaching, learning and assessment.

11 Audit, Monitoring and Review

- 11.1 The operation of this policy will be audited, monitored, and reviewed by the Senior Management Team.
- 11.2 The Strategic Plan will address major equal opportunities objectives for the coming year working towards the elimination of discrimination.
- 11.3 The Senior Management Team will review progress against the Strategic Plan through the Strategic Plan Project Plan during the academic year. This will help ensure that the College reviews College procedures and practices and sets specific and measurable equality objectives, takes appropriate action(s) to meet the objectives and evaluates the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan Project Plan. Equality and diversity data will also be monitored in the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR), in school-specific SARs and other quality forums.
- 11.4 There will be an annual report to staff, students, and governors on the operation of equality and diversity across the college underpinned by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.
- 11.5 This policy will be reviewed in line with legislation and / or sector best practice, or within the stated review period.

12 Breaches of Policy and Complaints

- 12.1 Reports of non-adherence to this policy will be taken seriously. It may be appropriate for informal and local resolution of issues or complaints however, it is recognised that in some circumstances, the College reserves the right to use relevant disciplinary procedures.
- 12.2 If any individual feels that they have been treated less favourably and not in accordance with this policy, they may wish to discuss this in the first instance with a college manager before invoking the College's Complaints or Grievance Procedure.
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Equality Act 2010 – Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 applies to the College as both an employer and education provider. The Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics'.

- **Age** - The Act protects people of all ages, however different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if it can be justified as a “proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”.
 - **Disability** - Under the Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. HIV, Cancer, and MS are included from the point of diagnosis. There is a duty to make reasonable adjustments to help an individual overcome disadvantage resulting from an impairment. It is discrimination to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability.
 - **Gender Reassignment** - The Act provides protection for transsexual people. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts, or has completed a process to change his or her gender. The Act does not require a person to be under medical supervision to be protected i.e., a woman who decides to live as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered. It is discrimination to treat transsexual people less favourably for being absent from work because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured. This protected characteristic also covers gender fluid and non-binary individuals.
 - **Pregnancy and Maternity** - A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. During this period, pregnancy and maternity discrimination cannot be treated as sex discrimination. Breastfeeding is explicitly protected by the Act.
 - **Race** - Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
 - **Religion or Belief** - Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. A belief should affect an individual's life choices or the way they live for it to be included in the definition.
 - **Sex** - Both men and women are protected under the Act. This includes sexual harassment which is the unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating a hostile, degrading or offensive environment for them. In accordance with the UK Supreme Court ruling (April 2025), the College recognises that the term “sex” under the Equality Act 2010 refers to biological sex. This clarification informs how the College manages single-sex spaces and services.
 - **Sexual Orientation** - Whether an individual's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes, they are protected by the Act.
 - **Marriage and Civil Partnerships** - The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected. Civil
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partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples, except where permitted by the Equality Act.

Transgender Inclusion

We recognise that gender identity is a personal internal perception of oneself and, as such, the gender category with which a person identifies may not match the sex they were registered at birth. In contrast, sex is biologically determined.

We provide a supportive and inclusive environment for staff and students and will support them if they choose to share their gender identity or trans status. It is the individual's decision what they want to share about their gender identity and when.

Students

The college has an obligation to meet the needs of all students, these obligations apply to students who feel that their sex as recorded at birth does not match their gender identity, who do not identify as male or female (non-binary) or who are exploring their gender identity.

- The college will collect sex at birth; gender, preferred name and pronouns at application and enrolment if the student chooses to share that.
- Whilst the college always seeks to work closely with parents, students over the age of 16, who do not have serious learning difficulties, are regarded as being legally competent to make their own decisions in relation to pronouns and names.
- Gender neutral toilet facilities are available on campus for students, staff, and visitors.
- Gender neutral changing facilities are available in Sport. Where gender neutral changing facilities are not available in other areas, an individual risk assessment should be in place to support the use of alternative facilities.
- The college reserves the right to separate students by biological sex at birth for sports, games or other activities which are:
 - Of a competitive nature
 - Gender affected activities – defined by reference to the relative strength, stamina and physique of average men and women and where these would put participants of one sex at a disadvantage to the other.
- Wellbeing support is available to all students and the college has an onsite counselling service in addition to our 24/7 Student Assistance Programme and Wisdom App.
- The college does not seek to promote social transition in any way and recognises that social transition is not seen as a neutral act, equally the college recognises that doing nothing is also not a neutral act (Cass review) (Pending DfE guidance on social transitioning)

Non-cisgender commitment statement

Runshaw is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where difference is celebrated where all students feel safe, and are safe, and therefore able to thrive and succeed.

We recognise that students who identify as non-cisgender (including, but not exclusively, transgender, agender, pangender), face additional challenges and may be more at risk than

students who identify as cisgender, and that any risks can be compounded where these students lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open.

Our commitment is to:

- Provide a safe place for anyone who identifies as non-cisgender.
- Promote inclusion and equality and diversity
- Raise awareness throughout college.
- Give support to the non-cisgender community.
- Promoted opportunities to meet new people and form friendships.
- Signpost to local organisations

This will be by:

- Commitment to gender neutral toilets in all buildings.
- Identifying all non-cisgender students via enrolment.
- All identified students will be allocated to a named trusted person from the Wellbeing Team (who will guarantee an offer of:
 - Safe space – Safeguarding and Wellbeing Hub
 - Chosen name and gender is on membership cards and register.
 - Signposting to external services (as required)
 - Signposting internal services, including (but not exclusively):
 - Wellbeing Services
 - Safeguarding services
 - Study Zone
 - Enrichment
 - Careers
 - Bursary
 - Invite to LGBTQ+ club.
 - Representation at E&D Champions meetings.

Appendix 3

Public Sector Equality Duty 2011

As a public sector organisation, the College has an additional duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty, 2011.

This is made up of a General Equality Duty which is supported by specific duties. The General Equality Duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The Specific Duty requires public sector organisations to show functional transparency by:

- Preparing and publishing one or more equality objectives which can be achieved to do any of the things mentioned in the aims of the General Equality Duty, and at least every four years thereafter.
 - Ensuring that those equality objectives are specific and measurable.
 - Publishing those equality objectives in such a manner that they are accessible to the public.
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