



## DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 East Berkshire College values the rich diversity of not only its local community but also the wider area from which people are recruited to the College.
- 1.2 It is committed to providing high quality services fairly and equitably to the whole community. The contribution of the College's staff is critical to achieving this and the College recognises the importance of having a diverse and representative workforce able to meet the needs of all communities.
- 1.3 The College is determined to maintain equality and fairness of treatment in all its dealings with staff, students and the public.
- 1.4 The College believes valuing diversity means recognising the strengths, talents and needs of every individual, nurturing potential, maximising opportunities and positively promoting tolerance and respect for all individuals.
- 1.5 The College recognises that diversity policies are not alternatives to ensuring equal opportunities but rather the two concepts mutually support each other. They are aimed at preventing unfair and institutional discrimination and addressing the main barriers faced by groups who are at a disadvantage.
- 1.6 The College has in place a series of action plans to implement this Diversity and Equality Policy. These will be driven by auditing the College's performance against equality schemes of race, gender and disability.

### 2.0 STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The College works within a statutory framework and has a statutory responsibility to prevent discrimination and unfair treatment which is clarified through case law.
- 2.2 The College expects all its staff, irrespective of whether directly employed or through agencies or sub-contractors, to abide by this legislation and to ensure fairness and equality as part of a commitment to excellent service and employment practice.

### 3.0 POLICY AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of this Diversity & Equality Policy is to:-
  - Help the College meet its obligations under the law
  - Implement college-wide policies and objectives using best practice
  - Encourage the development of anti-discrimination practice
  - Provide a basis for preventing forms of institutionalised discrimination

3.2 Successful implementation of the policy will depend on a partnership between the College, the students and the community, and will involve:

**3.2.1 Governors:**

- to provide strategic direction and support
- to oversee resource allocation and performance
- to engage with and represent the local community
- to scrutinise and challenge the work of the College

**3.2.2 Managers, Staff and Trades Unions**

- to work towards speedy implementation
- to organise and participate in training
- to challenge existing cultures and traditions
- to engage with the community

**4.0 Employment and Recruitment of Staff**

4.1 The College aims to:

4.1.1 Build a diverse workforce that at all levels broadly represents the community it seeks to service. A diverse workforce is a potential source of accurate and unbiased information about existing and potential customers. It can help the College to plan successful strategies and is key to providing and continually improving services through responsive and sympathetic staff.

4.1.2 Treat all employees and applicants for employment fairly and ensure they are not discriminated against because of their race, gender, disability, age, religion, nationality, social background or sexual orientation.

4.1.3 Regularly review its recruitment and selection procedures to ensure fair access to all jobs. People will be selected on merit, based on their skills, abilities, experience and qualifications to carry out the job to the required standard as defined in the job description.

4.1.4 Regularly review how and where posts are advertised so that no sector of the community is excluded from finding out about the jobs available.

4.1.5 Support and maintain the “positive about disabled people” √√ symbol initiative. This includes a guarantee to interview any disabled applicant who based on their application form and supporting information appears to meet the minimum requirements of the post. The College will, wherever reasonable and practicable, retain and/or provide equipment and facilities to retain an existing employee who becomes disabled whether or not the employee is covered by the DDA.

4.1.6 Ensure that all employees are valued and treated with dignity and respect. Where harassment, victimisation or bullying are found in the workplace this will be confronted and dealt with under the College

Disciplinary policy. Every employee has a responsibility to challenge and report inappropriate behaviour.

- 4.1.7 Provide fair access to training and development opportunities that provides individuals with the opportunity to advance in their careers and meet the business objectives of their department.
- 4.1.8 Support employees who wish to use a mode of dress dictated by cultural and religious beliefs. However, where uniforms are provided or where the wearing of any apparel may conflict with health and safety regulations, the relevant manager may impose restrictions.
- 4.1.9 Consider adapting College requirements or practices where they are contrary to employees cultural and religious needs e.g. allowing employees to have the time and location to pray where this is a requirement of their religion.

## **5.0 SERVICE DELIVERY**

5.1 The College aims to:

- 5.1.1 Ensure equal access, fair treatment and appropriate provision to the whole community regardless of race, gender, disability, age, religion/belief, nationality, social background or sexual orientation and any other reason not connected to entitlement and availability.
- 5.1.2 Provide high quality services designed to meet a wide range of different needs in the community and regularly review them by seeking the views of the existing and potential customers so as to ensure that we do not disadvantage customers either now or in the future.
- 5.1.3 Provide appropriate services, adapting these to meet the needs of the whole community promoting equal access to services, including producing clear information about how to access services (e.g. in different languages and large print).
- 5.1.4 Provide and publicise clear information about how dissatisfied customers can complain about the services they have received, and how the College will respond to any complaints received.
- 5.1.5 Consult with and actively listen to our customers by seeking regular feedback through a variety of means including meeting with members of the various communities.
- 5.1.6 Ensure that, wherever feasible, all services and buildings are accessible.

## **6.0 MONITORING**

- 6.1. The College will plan, monitor and evaluate the success of its work towards promoting diversity and equality within employment and service delivery.

6.2 This will be aided by:

6.2.1 Monitoring staff information via recruitment & selection, training, disciplinaries, grievances statistics and other HR procedures, and measuring changes in the composition of the workforce. Information collected will be analysed and used to check that the College's employment policies and practice are fair and prevent discrimination.

6.2.2 Monitoring student information by the use of Equality and Diversity Information Management Systems within the curriculum areas

## 7.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

7.1 The College takes its responsibilities for equality of opportunity seriously and recognises that any discrimination that exists can only be eliminated in partnership with staff.

7.2 **The Principal** has overall responsibility for carrying out this policy and ensuring action is taken to ensure it is implemented.

7.3 **Directors / Assistant Principals** are responsible for implementing and effectively monitoring the policy in their departments / schools, supported by line managers.

7.4 **All employees** share the responsibility to carry out their tasks following this policy and the law. It is a condition of employment that all employees adhere to this policy. They must familiarise themselves with the policy, any related procedures and codes of practice. They must adopt appropriate behaviour towards students, members of the public and other employees in a manner that promotes good practice in equal opportunities. They must reflect policy requirements in their written communication and publications both within and outside the College. Finally they must challenge discriminatory practices and any behaviour that is likely to conflict with the requirements of this policy.

To assist employees in meeting and undertaking their responsibilities in accordance with this policy the College will provide the following support: -

- Appropriate information and induction for new employees regarding this policy
- Ensure access to all equality policies on the Intranet.
- Appropriate training and development to increase employees' awareness of Diversity and Equalities issues.



**East Berkshire College**

# DIVERSITY STATEMENT

## 1.0 What is diversity?

- i. Diversity is about difference – difference across the six strands of diversity - race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, faith and age.
- ii. It is about recognising that all of us are different and that each of us has equally valuable skills, experience and knowledge to offer.

## 2.0 What is East Berkshire College doing about diversity?

- i. We focus on the six strands of diversity: race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion.
- ii. We believe that valuing diversity means recognising the strengths; talents and needs of every individual, nurturing potential, maximising opportunities and positively promoting tolerance and respect for all individuals.
- iii. We value the different cultures, environments and communities around us and we take a positive, pro-active approach to appreciating these differences and integrating them into the life and activities of the college.
- iv. We work together with staff; students and the local community in consulting on our Equality Schemes.
- v. We are committed to providing high quality services fairly and equitably to the whole community.
- vi. Our Diversity and Equality Steering Group which is chaired by the Principal is one way in which we monitor progress and drive through our actions on diversity.
- vii. We have a dedicated team of staff to support students with disabilities and learning difficulties. Our Disability Officer supports both staff and students.
- viii. We will, through our leadership, teaching and learning, demonstrate equitable and fair treatment in dealing with staff, students and the public, actively working towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination.