CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policy

Head of Safeguarding and EDI

Publication Date: September 2026

Review: July 2027 | Version No. 1

1. Policy Statement

1.1. City of Wolverhampton College is committed to embedding equality and diversity in all of its activities and encourages access to the College, irrespective of background or personal characteristics.

1.2. The College seeks to create an environment in which individual differences are positively valued in an atmosphere free from bullying, discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The College takes its legal and moral obligations to equality seriously. It welcomes engagement and dialogue with groups and individuals to continually enhance its Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy and practice.

1.3. The College will ensure that equality is embedded in all activities, policies and decisions. Ensuring fairness and respect for all students, apprentices, staff, contractors, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the College's work.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all current and potential students or apprentices and staff who work at the College on a paid or voluntary basis, along with visitors or contractors.

2.2. The Equality Act 2010 introduces standard definitions of discrimination. The nine 'protected characteristics' under the Act are: Age, Disability, Sex, Race, Gender reassignment (people undergoing gender reassignment or who are transgender), Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Religion or belief, and sexual orientation (including gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual orientations).

2.3. In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the interpretation affirmed by the Supreme Court, the College recognises that "sex" refers to a person's biological sex, male or female, as recorded at birth, except where a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) has been issued under the Gender Recognition Act 2004. In such cases, the person is legally recognised as their acquired sex.

2.4. The College affirms its commitment to upholding protections for individuals undergoing gender reassignment and those who identify as transgender, as required by the Equality Act 2010.

2.5. While promoting inclusion for all, the College also recognises that, in certain limited circumstances, lawful sex-based distinctions may be permitted under Schedule 3 and Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010. These may include:

- The provision of single-sex spaces or services (e.g. changing facilities or accommodation).
- Occupational requirements in specific roles where being of a particular sex is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- There may be circumstances where there are conflicts between sex-based rights and gender identity rights. The College assesses all individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis, guided by the principles of remaining inclusive, supportive

and fair whilst ensuring learners and staff feel respected and their needs are appropriately met.

2.6. Where such distinctions are made, they will be applied following the law, in a proportionate and justified manner, and subject to a case-by-case assessment.

2.7. The College is committed to balancing the rights and dignity of all individuals, ensuring compliance with equality law while fostering a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for everyone.

2.8. Staff, students and apprentices must be protected from discrimination and harassment on these grounds. The Act also protects against discrimination by association and perception; for example, a partner or carer of someone with a protected characteristic should also be protected from discrimination and harassment.

2.9. The Public Sector Equality Duty is set out in section 149 of the Act. The Equality Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

2.10. The College will have due regard to these duties in the carrying out of its functions. Having due regard means consciously considering the three aims of the general duty as part of the decision-making process.

3. Commitment

3.1. The College will take active steps to fulfil our responsibilities and promote good practice by:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences and contributions of all staff, students and apprentices are recognised and valued.
- Creating a learning environment that promotes dignity and respect to all staff, students, apprentices and service users.
- Not tolerating any form of intimidation, bullying, harassment and unlawful discrimination.
- Encouraging anyone who feels they have been subjected to discrimination to raise their concerns so we can take the appropriate measures.
- Ensuring that existing staff, students and apprentices, as well as applicants to work or study, are treated fairly, and judged solely on merit.
- Making sure reasonable adjustments are made, as appropriate, to enable disabled staff, students and apprentices to overcome barriers in the working, learning and social environment.

- Taking action to redress any gender, racial or other imbalance, including monitoring the recruitment and progress of all staff, students and apprentices, collecting and collating equality information and data and publishing this on an annual basis, and acting on any inequalities revealed by the data.
- Engaging and involving staff, students, apprentices, the local community and stakeholders in the development and delivery of our service.
- Actively using data to review policies and procedures and promote inclusion.
- Making sure our employment policies and practices are fair and transparent.
- Complying with the legal obligations in a transparent manner.
- Promoting awareness and understanding of EDI matters amongst staff, students and apprentices through policies, training, guidance and campaigns.

3.2. The College will ensure it promotes an inclusive institutional culture that values a diverse learning community for staff, students and apprentices and the development of the organisation.

4. Student & Apprentice Recruitment and Admissions

4.1 Under-represented groups will be encouraged to participate in all College courses and activities, also ensuring the provision meets the needs of the people from our city.

4.2 Interviews for courses/places will be sympathetically conducted, with due regard to equality, the diverse experiences and the expressed needs of students and apprentices.

4.3 Through understanding the student profile and their needs, the College will provide the best possible service and learning environment. The College will aim to ensure:

- Monitoring of applications and enrolments will be conducted comprehensively and sensitively.
- Identification of financial barriers preventing access to disadvantaged students and exploration of sources of funding to help overcome such obstacles.
- Assessment of additional support/special educational needs and strategies to meet these.
- Equal access for all students and apprentices to general College facilities and to appropriate social or extracurricular activities offered by the College.
- Entrance qualifications for College courses will relate to standards laid down by the appropriate validating body, or to objective criteria relating to course content and outcomes.

5. Curriculum and Quality of Education

5.1. The College's curriculum and delivery will address the variety of experiences, socio-economic backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, skills and needs which students and apprentices bring to the College, thus ensuring that the offer and support are accessible and relevant. The College will aim to ensure that:

- All students and apprentices will receive an induction so that they are made aware of the College's policies and commitment to EDI.
- EDI will be fully integrated into the learning experience, and will be evident in curriculum planning, developing schemes of work and delivering teaching, learning and assessment.
- Staff will monitor students' and apprentices' performance to narrow any achievement gaps between different groups of students or apprentices.
- Staff will be encouraged to use resources and create activities that are EDI-positive that are free from discriminatory or stereotypical assumptions or images.
- Tutorials will include a variety of EDI topics to raise awareness, celebrate diversity and promote equality.
- Apprentices will be supported to challenge practices and behaviours in the workplace, which they feel contravene College policy concerning EDI.

6. Marketing

6.1. Wolverhampton is a diverse city with a broad range of people from diverse backgrounds. The College will strive to reach the various communities in Wolverhampton by ensuring that our marketing strategy reflects the city's diverse population. The College will aim to:

- Create publicity material which positively reflects the diversity of the City of Wolverhampton, avoiding negative stereotyping.
- Target use of inclusive language in publicity materials.
- Use appropriate media to attract under-represented and disadvantaged groups.
- Implement marketing strategies to support outreach work in the community.
- Encourage joint marketing approaches with organisations that have a specific interest/expertise in supporting disadvantaged groups.
- Make available key documents on request in other formats such as Braille, audio, or large print.

7. Community Links

7.1. The College will widen participation and strengthen links with all sections of the population of Wolverhampton through targeting people who are unemployed, young people at risk of becoming not in education, employment and training (NEET) and build positive links with employers through:

- Analysis of the demographic profile of Wolverhampton to inform planning regarding the needs of all groups in the community and to assess the relevance of current provision.
- Networking with statutory, voluntary and private organisations to secure the provision of education in the community.
- Engaging of community organisations and members in the College's advisory and governance structures

8. College Environment and Facilities

8.1. The College will provide a welcoming, safe environment which encourages access and participation by all sections of our community to high-quality learning and support.

8.2. The College has carried out an access audit of all its premises, made appropriate adjustments and carried out building work to ensure that all visitors have access to services. The College will aim to ensure that:

- The College environment is safe, friendly, and welcoming for all users and free from harassment.
- All practical steps will be taken to provide safe access and working conditions on college premises for staff, students, apprentices and other users.
- The property strategy seeks to develop the best possible learning environments and resources.

8.3. The College will source goods, facilities and services from external suppliers who are accountable to us and abide by our equality ethos.

9. Student/Apprentice Support

9.1. The College will ensure it provides appropriate and relevant support to students and apprentices so they can get the best out of the service and achieve the best learning outcomes. The College will aim to ensure that:

- Students and apprentices have access to tutorial and pastoral support which is relevant to their needs and course of study.
- Students and apprentices have access to relevant information, advice and guidance.
- Counselling and welfare advice is available for students and apprentices who require it.

- Specialist equipment and software is made available for those with special educational needs.

10. Employment

10.1. The College is committed to ensuring that staff are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. It is essential that staff work in an inclusive and supportive environment that values the diversity they bring and develops their skills to maximise the impact on student outcomes. The College will aim to ensure that:

- All prospective staff have equal and fair access to employment opportunities.
- Recruitment and selection processes and procedures do not discriminate.
- All staff have a job description that reflects their current role in the organisation.
- All staff have an appraisal every academic year.
- Access to training, promotion and career development opportunities is available to all staff.
- A supportive and accessible working environment is created, based on mutual respect and trust.
- All staff will receive timely EDI training.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to working arrangements and premises to ensure equal access for employees or potential employees who have a disability or a particular health concern.
- Chairs of recruitment and selection panels are trained in EDI.
- Consideration is given to candidates' views of the recruitment process, and feedback is offered.

11. Prevention of Third-Party Harassment

11.1. The College is committed to protecting staff, students, apprentices and volunteers from harassment by third parties, including visitors, contractors, employers, work placement providers, members of the public and partner organisations.

11.2. The College will take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, by third parties and will investigate any concerns raised. Appropriate action may include restricting access to College premises, terminating contractual arrangements, ending work placement arrangements, reporting incidents to external agencies, or implementing other proportionate measures.

11.3. Staff, students and apprentices are encouraged to report incidents of third-party harassment so that appropriate action can be taken.

11.4. Human Resources (HR) will be responsible for the maintenance and reporting of equality data relating to the workforce.

11.5. Quality assurance interventions will review and monitor this data to identify any trends or differences between protected groups and agree on actions.

12. Work Placement Providers, Partners, Contractors, Associated Employers, Visitors and Other Stakeholders.

12.1. It is important that the College has effective relationships with partners in delivering the best service possible for students. It is crucial that students can be placed or work with employers that provide safe and inclusive environments.

12.2. Work placement providers, contractors and partner organisations are expected to provide an environment free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying. The College reserves the right to suspend or terminate arrangements where serious concerns regarding equality, diversity, inclusion or harassment are identified.

12.3. The College will work with all stakeholders to highlight issues of under-represented groups.

13. Responsibilities

13.1. All members of City of Wolverhampton College have a responsibility to promote EDI. Whilst there is a collective responsibility to ensure the policy is implemented, there are also specific responsibilities as set out below:

- Governors have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring EDI policy underpins all aspects of our work, in particular business plans and strategic key performance indicators throughout the organisation.
- The application of the policy rests with Senior Managers, including the Principal and Executive Management Team (EMT).
- Executive and Senior Management Teams are responsible for ensuring that learner-related issues are addressed and for ensuring that staff-related concerns are addressed.
- Managers are responsible for taking proactive steps to prevent discrimination and harassment, including third-party harassment, and for responding promptly and appropriately to concerns raised.
- All staff, students and apprentices, plus others to whom this policy applies, are responsible for ensuring that they have read and understood the policy.
- All staff, students and apprentices, plus those carrying out work or delivering services on behalf of the College and our partners, are required to adhere to this policy.

14. Monitoring and Review

14.1. The College will collect, monitor and analyse diversity data, including information about protected characteristics of staff, students and apprentices, to make sure our process is fair, and that the aim of this policy is being achieved.

15. Training

15.1. All staff will undertake annual EDI refresher training and periodic enhanced training as determined by the College.

16. Complaints

16.1. Concerns regarding discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or third-party harassment may be reported to line managers, HR, the Head of Safeguarding and EDI, or through the College's reporting procedures.

16.2. Staff who believe they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the appropriate grievance procedure.

17. Breaches of the Policy

17.1. Breaches of this policy, including direct and indirect acts of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying and abuse, will be treated as serious disciplinary conduct.

17.2. Serious breaches by contractors, employers, placement providers, visitors or partner organisations may result in termination of agreements, removal from College premises, referral to external agencies or other appropriate action.

17.3. For staff, the College's appropriate grievance procedure will be applied to address conduct of this nature. For students and apprentices, the proper disciplinary procedures will be used.

17.4. The College will make sure that staff, students and apprentices are aware of the relevant procedures for dealing with incidents relating to discrimination. In addition, the College will not work with contractors or service providers who fail to comply.

18. Making the Policy Accessible

18.1. This policy will be published on the College website and internal virtual learning platforms. It will also be made available in alternative formats (e.g. audio, Braille, Large print) and in other languages on request.

19. Advice and Support

19.1. Staff, students and apprentices requiring support/advice or information about related matters can obtain this by contacting the Head of Safeguarding and EDI at sharmaan@wolvcoll.ac.uk.