Chadsgrove Educational Trust Specialist College

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Author: Ciara Porter in consultation with all Directors
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1. Introduction

At Chadsgrove College we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion for all students, staff, directors, parent carer/advocates and stakeholders, including our wider community. We recognise there are times when inequalities amongst the wider population become more apparent e.g., the Black Lives Matter Movement and during the Covid pandemic 2020/21. We acknowledge there is always more to learn and do to ensure we are meeting the needs of all our members with regard to equality, diversity and inclusion and we will continue to listen and act on ways to make continual improvements. As new evidence emerges, we will review this policy, by adopting best practice, listening to our students, their parent carer/advocates and our wider community. This will enable us to meet our statutory and regulatory requirements and the needs of our community.

2. Purpose

The specific duties that Chadsgrove Specialist College must follow are outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and associated regulations. This Equality and Diversity Policy sets out in detail how the college intends to meet its statutory duties and ensure best practice is understood, followed and continually monitored.

3. Aim(s)

- We will provide a learning and working environment which respects the rights and dignity of all who work for and with the college and for our students who are at the centre of all we do.
- We actively promote a culture of inclusion where individual differences are recognised, valued and protected from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- We will provide equality of opportunity, identifying and redressing imbalances where necessary to ensure all our members can work and learn to their potential.
- Our commitment to providing educational opportunities for young people with disabilities is built upon a social model of disability, human rights and the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- All staff and members are responsible for understanding their role in the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion. Behaviour, actions or language that do not adhere to this policy are unacceptable and will be dealt with in line with our Disciplinary Policy.

4. Key Concepts of discrimination legislation

Under the Equality Act 2010 protection from unlawful discrimination is provided to the following nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

5. Public Sector Equality Duty 2010.

5.1 Chadsgrove Specialist College must have due regard to the following duties:

- The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act.
- The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- The need to foster good relationships between persons who share a protected characteristic and person who do share it.

5.2 Compliance with the Public Sector Duty requires understanding the following key terms, taking a pro-active approach to prevent their occurrence or in the case of reasonable adjustments and positive action, ensuring they are in place as required for individuals and groups of people with a protected characteristic

- Direct discrimination-when an individual with a protected characteristic is treated less favourably.
- Indirect discrimination-when a particular provision or practice disadvantages a person or persons with a protected characteristic.
- Harassment-unwanted conduct towards a person with a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates a hostile or offensive environment.
- Victimisation-less favourable treatment given to a person who has made a complaint under the Equality Act 2010.
- Associative discrimination-an individual is dealt with less favourably for being associated with a person/s with a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive discrimination-an individual is dealt with less favourably based on a perception they have a protected characteristic, even when they do not.
- Occupational requirements-where a specific job is restricted to certain groups of people, this has to be demonstrated by employers as necessary.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments-where a physical feature, practice or provision puts a person with disabilities at a substantial disadvantage to a person without disability and no measures have been taken to enable the person with disabilities to overcome the disadvantage.
- Taking positive action-measures or initiatives to address under representation of groups of people who share a protected characteristic.

6. Leadership and Governance

The Board of Directors are responsible for ensuring that the leadership of the college are actively promoting equality, diversity and inclusion amongst students, staff, parent carer/advocates, our wider community and within the curriculum. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion at regular board meetings
- Monitoring and reviewing progress and attainment data with regard to particular groups of students that may be disadvantaged due to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.
- Monitoring actions to improve equality, diversity and inclusion that are identified within the Quality Improvement Programme and the progress towards these that are recorded in the Self-Assessment Report.
- Holding senior leaders to account for how equality, diversity and inclusion is understood by staff and how they are promoted amongst staff, students, in teaching and learning and in our wider community, including parent carer/advocates.
- Ensuring actions that breach this policy or the Equality Act are reported to directors, followed up and rectified appropriately.
- Identifying specific equality issues during quality assurance and improvement activities e.g., during learning walks
- Recruitment and selection of staff follows statutory duties and local authority guidance.
- All staff, students, parent carer/advocates and stakeholders have access to this policy through the college website.
- Staff, students, parent carer/advocates and wider stakeholders are aware of how the college promotes equality, diversity and inclusion and prevents discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Reviewing and updating this policy on a regular basis, at least every year.

7. Recruitment, Selection and Staff Training

7.1. We are an equal opportunities employer and provider of specialist education to young people with physical disabilities and/or complex medical needs. We will not unlawfully discriminate against individuals or groups of people on the grounds of a particular characteristic, as defined in the Equality Act 2010. We will not permit any individual or group to be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be justified by equality law.

7.2. Recruitment procedures will be fair, equal and in line with statutory duties and local authority guidance. Our promotional material for recruitment will not imply any preferred group, unless an occupational requirement exists limiting a post to individuals with a specific qualification or experience. Person specifications may include 'essential' and 'desirable' criteria that are necessary and justifiable. Each new vacancy will be reviewed to ensure these criteria do not indirectly discriminate against individuals or groups of people with a protected characteristic. Every effort will be made to ensure reasonable adjustments are in place for candidates who require them at the application and interview stages.

7.3. All applicants and new members of staff will be informed of this policy and our commitment to equality of opportunity. New starters will be asked to read this policy as part of their induction.

7.4. All staff have regular supervision and appraisals where continual professional development needs are identified. Staff have equal access to on-going training and development and no one will be disadvantaged in accessing this because of a personal protected characteristic.

7.5. All staff are informed how to raise a complaint or concern regarding discrimination, harassment or victimisation, including following the college's Whistleblowing Policy.

7.6. We are committed to providing a safe working environment to all staff and all reported cases of discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be investigated and action taken according to the Disciplinary Procedure, possibly leading to gross misconduct and dismissal.

7.7. Where there is under representation of specific groups of people with a protected characteristic within the staff team, the Directors may decide to take positive action to recruit staff on that basis. This will be a decision for Directors with discussion from the senior leadership team.

7.8. It is the expectation that all individuals working at Chadsgrove Educational Trust Specialist College from external agencies, for example health professionals, care workers and contractors, adhere to all of the policies and practices that are in place at the school. This includes the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

8. Student Admissions and Exclusions

8.1. College has an Admissions Policy that clearly identifies how students will be assessed and offered places in accordance with their needs and the ability of the college to meet their needs. This follows statutory guidance in the SEND Code of Practice 2014.

8.2. Every effort is made to consider a student's individual context, including any protected characteristics they may have, along with their disability. This supports the college to develop a personalised curriculum for each young person, recognising the importance of individual differences and how they contribute to the young person's education as they move into adulthood. Recognising the importance of social and cultural identity in a young person's life is central to a person-centred approach and to developing independent living skills.

8.3. The college will not discriminate against any young person's parent carer/advocates on the grounds of any protected characteristic by refusing a college placement, as this would constitute associative discrimination.

8.4. Admissions are monitored by the Directors, who will consider if the college's student body is representative of the local area, underrepresented by any specific groups who share a protected characteristic and monitor action by the leadership team to address this.

8.5. At college, no student will be disadvantaged from accessing the curriculum because of their disability or any other protected characteristic. All students have their health needs

assessed during transition into college to ensure they will receive the correct support and interventions for their physical and mental health, including medication and specialist support services such as physiotherapy and speech and language therapy. Students' personalised learning plans provide clear evidence of how the college meets its statutory requirements under the SEND Code of Practice to meet student need.

8.6. The college's approach to supporting positive behaviour is to understand how this is closely linked to communication. If a student is excluded because of behaviour that is putting themselves or others at risk this will be managed in accordance with the college's Behaviour Policy and Deprivation of Liberty Policy. Directors will monitor all exclusions and consider if there are any patterns related to exclusions and a protected characteristic. Where this is found to be the case, this will be investigated and monitored to prevent reoccurrence.

9. The curriculum, teaching, learning, progression and achievement

9.1. The college provides a broad curriculum based on the four preparing for adulthood pathways. Within the personalised curriculum students have an individual learning plan of targets and goals based on their education health and care plan (EHCP) outcomes. These are informed by student aspirations, parent carer/advocate and wider multi-disciplinary teams input. The personalised curriculum is informed by a person-centred approach that takes account of what is important to and for an individual, including social, cultural and religious life. This plan will ensure all students are included in learning activities that enable them to make progress towards their long-term outcomes, without disadvantage because of disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality or national origin, religion or belief, gender reassignment or marital status.

9.2. The college will provide an environment where students can achieve their ambitions and prepare them for adult life, feeling safe, valued and respected for their individual abilities and skills. This includes a pro-active approach to understanding how disadvantage, discrimination or harassment may have impacted or continues to impact upon an individual due to a protected characteristic.

9.3. The college leadership team have a key role in ensuring staff understand how a protected characteristic may impact upon a student's life and take measures to address this, for example, by making reasonable adjustments, in the case of a disability. All students at the college have a disability and may have one or more other protected characteristics that intersects with disability to compound the challenges of everyday life.

9.4. The student voice is central to the college's person-centred approach. Providing accessible and diverse ways to listen to student's choices and opinions requires a total communication approach. The college is committed to providing this approach to ensure everyone's voice is heard and listened to, making changes to an individual student's personalised curriculum as necessary. This approach supports students' inclusion in college life and develops their abilities to be self-advocates and to advocate for others.

9.5. The broad curriculum will include opportunities to promote diversity and teach students about life in modern Britain, through age-appropriate learning activities. Every effort will be made to represent the lives of people from diverse social and cultural groups and foster positive community relations. This will happen regardless of the actual diversity of the student group attending the college and not be limited to any one group sharing a particular protected characteristic e.g., if all students attending college were part of one faith group this would not prevent learning about other religions and faith groups within the UK and the wider world. This will promote the British values of mutual respect and tolerance.

9.6. It is recognised that unconscious bias towards individuals or groups of people is a normal human characteristic. Anyone can be subject to unconscious bias in some form. If staff are unaware of how to mitigate unconscious bias in their practice it can lead to discrimination against individuals and groups. The college is committed to providing staff training to enable a culture of awareness of unconscious bias, openness in discussing how this may be affecting teaching and learning and subsequently the achievement of all students.

9.7. The senior leadership team will identify any patterns or discrepancies in student progress and achievement due to a protected characteristic and directors will monitor and review progression data against these criteria, requesting action to redress any imbalances.
9.8. The college will fulfil its public sector equality duty to foster good relations between different communities by celebrating diversity of its students and in the wider community, the UK and the world. Opportunities to celebrate diversity and raise awareness of difference will be embedded into the four preparing for adulthood curriculum pathways of independent living, health, friends, relationships and community and employment.

10. Working in partnership with parent carer/advocates and the wider community

10.1. The college values working in close partnership with parent carer/advocates to ensure the needs of students are met. Parent carer/advocate input is crucial to the success of students as they make progress towards their outcomes and prepare for adult life. Every opportunity will be taken to ensure information and communication is accessible and relevant for parent carer/advocates and families
10.2. The college welcomes parent and carer input in a variety of ways including but not limited to parent carer/advocate reviews, surveys and feedback forms. This information enables the college to meet the needs of its diverse student population and their wider families and carers.
10.3. Where parent carer/advocates may choose to not engage with college staff every effort will be made to explore the reasons for this and to understand if this is due to any intentional or non-intentional acts of discrimination or unconscious bias. Where this is discovered, the senior leadership team will investigate and put measures in place to provide support so that communication can be monitored and improved.
10.4. The college works within a wider multi-disciplinary team of health, education and social care staff. All college staff are expected to demonstrate a professional approach in their partnerships with external agencies, always following college policies, valuing the opinions of other professionals and respecting their different roles in a young person's life.
10.5. The college is co-located with Chadsgrove School. At all times staff will demonstrate their understanding of this policy in their interactions with school staff and pupils, being role models for younger members of the wider community. Opportunities to share and promote good practice in equality, diversity and inclusion across both school and college will further enhance our commitment to these core values.
10.6. The college curriculum has an emphasis on learning in the local community, including for work experience and independent living skills. College staff have a responsibility to promote diversity, encourage positive relationships and challenge discrimination and inequality when in the local community with students. Sometimes, the public may lack understanding or awareness which leads to comments or actions that could be interpreted as discrimination or harassment. Staff should make a reasoned judgement when it is in the interests of students to challenge these comments or actions and always report any discrimination that they, or students experience when in the community to the college leadership team. No student or staff member is expected to tolerate abuse by members of the public.

11. Linked policies

Admissions
Restriction of Liberty
Safeguarding
Recruitment and Selection
Grievance policy
Disciplinary policy
Behaviour, Exclusions and PPI
Attendance and Absence
Maternity Policy
Staff Code of Conduct

Whistleblowing