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1. INTRODUCTION

Sussex Coast College, Hastings is the major provider of post-sixteen education in the Hastings and Rother area. It caters for nearly 10,000 students, on a wide range of courses catering for the needs of students with learning difficulties to degrees in Higher Education, and for people of all ages from 14 to 80 years old.

There are few families in the area who do not have contact with the college in some way. This puts us in a unique position to make a difference to the local economy, regeneration and the promotion of learning in the Hastings and Rother area. We regard it as both a privilege and a responsibility that the services we provide will contribute to raising the educational and vocational achievement and the skills of all learners, regardless of their background. We therefore take our duties as set out in the Equality Act extremely seriously.

The College has made promoting and embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in everything we do a strategic priority. EDI also underpins our mission to develop a 'student first' culture, which means outstanding, inclusive provision that inspires and benefits all our students. We recognise that our ability to meet the many social and economic challenges in Hastings and Rother, including higher than average levels of social deprivation, unemployment and under-achievement, depends largely on our responsiveness to the education and training needs of an increasingly diverse group of potential and existing learners.

OUR EQUALITY DUTY

Like other public authorities, the College has a legal duty to

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

To meet this general duty, we are required to set and publish our Equality objectives plus details of the engagements we have undertaken to develop and meet them, and to review these objectives at least once every four years.

The College is also required by law to publish annually sufficient information to show progress on the achievement of our Equality objectives, including:

- Information about the effects of our policies and practices on our employees, students and others who share a 'protected characteristic' (see Section 2)
- Outcomes from our Equality analysis, including details of any information considered when carrying out this analysis

To meet this duty, we publish our Annual Equality Report, Equality Action Plan, Equality Scheme and the results of our Equality Impact Assessments on-line and in other formats if required.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Sussex Coast College, Hastings is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in everything we do. This commitment includes

- ensuring access to our curriculum, academic or vocational, for all who wish to learn
- developing a curriculum that meets the needs and aspirations of our community
- delivering the highest quality education and training to all our students
- employing the best possible staff from a range of different backgrounds
- ensuring that our employment policies and practices comply with Equality legislation and reflect best practice
- promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through our partnerships with other bodies
- embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into our procurement of goods and services
- working with our community to promote the benefits and advantages of a diverse and mixed society
- empowering our students to work and compete in the local, national and international arena

As a learning provider, we believe that our teaching will only be outstanding if it takes full account of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues, thereby preparing our students to work in a culturally and socially diverse society, both in the UK and abroad.

As an employer, we aim to ensure that our recruitment, selection and employment processes are fair, family-friendly and attract the widest pool of talent.

As a community resource, we aim to create a safe and welcoming environment for everyone who comes into the College. For this reason, we have zero tolerance of

- racism, sexism or homophobia
- bullying, discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- any behaviour which may make the college feel an unsafe place to work or learn
- any behaviour which damages or worsens the physical environment for others

Everyone is expected to adhere to our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy and to respect the College Code of Conduct while on College premises.

Protected Characteristics

Our policy applies to all staff, learners, stakeholders and visitors regardless of their

- age
- gender
- race or ethnicity
- disability
- sexual orientation
- religion or belief
- socio-economic status
- marital or civil partnership status
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity

3. OBJECTIVES

Our Equality objectives for the period 2010-2014 (?) are as follows:

- 3.1 To set targets against which to measure our improvement in regard to all nine protected characteristics
- 3.2 To use our Principals Performance Review (PPR) process to monitor our progress on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues and ensure that it delivers increased understanding and improved performance in this area
- 3.3 To develop appropriate Equality and Diversity impact measurements targets in all divisions and departments so that progress can be measured in all areas and functions of the College where improvement is needed
- 3.4 To develop performance indicators and quality measurements that enable us to monitor, improve and report our progress.
- 3.5 To develop our Equality Impact Assessment process to ensure that all new processes, policies and significant changes are fully assessed and that a plan for impact assessing existing services, policies and practises is introduced
- 3.6 To embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within all Teaching and Learning
- 3.7 To ensure all staff and students receive an induction programme which ensures an understanding of the legal requirements
- 3.8 To ensure the student admissions policy and process is audited annually and produce a report for SLT
- 3.9 To ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations are fully introduced in all our procurement of goods and services
- 3.10 To work with our partners and community to advance and promote Equality, Diversity and inclusion
- 3.11 To ensure the development of a curriculum that enables all sections of our community to raise their aspirations and achieve their maximum potential
- 3.12 To support learning programmes at appropriate and accessible levels for all potential learners, enabling progression
- 3.13 To promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the content and delivery of our learning programmes
- 3.14 To provide a learning and working environment which is safe and free of bullying and harassment on grounds of their appearance, background or protected characteristics
- 3.15 To provide a learning environment which is accessible to all

Sussex Coast College Equality Scheme
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: Inspiring Futures, Changing Lives

- 3.16 To work with local bodies, statutory or voluntary, to develop and provide a College which is central to the Hastings and Rother community and its regeneration programme
- 3.17 To support bidding for funds which will help us achieve these aims in partnership with others in the community
- 3.18 To actively participate in the moves to promote and regenerate Hastings and Rother as a place which welcomes people from diverse cultures, faiths and beliefs, and ways of living
- 3.19 To celebrate the achievements of individuals and groups who have helped to advance equality of opportunity.
- 3.20 To recruit, retain and develop a workforce that reflects the diverse nature of the locality and employ the very best staff available to enable us to reach our strategic aims
- 3.21 To implement a continuing professional development plan in Equality and diversity for all staff
- 3.22 To use positive action measures where necessary to help meet college targets

In order to achieve these objectives, we have identified a number of strategic and operational priorities, which are set out in more detail our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (see Section 7). They include:

- Ensuring that best practice in EDI underpins all our work
- Promoting EDI in all settings within our remit: through our methodology and our framework for reviewing all aspects of our work
- Improving ways of working and achieving better value
- Ensuring that all our internal processes (including corporate planning and policy development) specifically promote Equality and eliminate discrimination and harassment.
- Ensuring that our student group is reflective of the demography and aspirations of our local community
- Ensuring that our workforce is representative of our student body and local community and provides good role models
- Ensuring that specific groups are represented appropriately, that talent is recognised, that there is no 'ghettoisation' of jobs and roles and that all staff are valued equally
- Better reviewing, teaching and learning and success
- Using Teaching and Learning Coaches to support teachers in identifying and delivering best practice in developing their students' understanding of all aspects of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Piloting an Equality & Diversity Curriculum Audit
- Ensuring that all lesson plans and schemes of work reflect Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Ensuring that all resources and materials used in teaching and learning reflect our Equality objectives and targets
- Promoting better communication and consultation
- Ensuring that our consultations, communications, marketing and promotions are inclusive, accessible and promote EDI
- Promoting positive images of under-represented groups to students and staff in the College
- Disseminating good practice and reporting to key stakeholders, including Governors, Ofsted and the Skills Funding Agency, wherever appropriate, on issues of equality as revealed by our surveys and analysis

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The Corporation** is responsible for ensuring that the college complies with its legal duties, meets its strategic objectives, adheres to its policies and strives towards excellence. To assist them in this task, Governors receive a comprehensive annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Report. They also receive training, briefings and regular updates on the progress of the College's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan and any Equality targets. **A named governor** is responsible for operational scrutiny, which includes attendance of EDI Committee meetings.
- 4.2 The Principal** has overall responsibility for ensuring that the College meets its statutory duties and that Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is mainstreamed into everything we do. The Principal is assisted by various groups and committees, and by all staff of the College, whose responsibilities are set out below.
- 4.3 The Senior Leadership Team** is responsible for leading and managing the College. Its role is to ensure that Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is embedded into policy and practice throughout the college; and to ensure that it becomes a cornerstone in all areas of our work. The SLT receives and approves all new and revised policies, procedures and functions, and ensures that each new policy or proposal undergoes an Equality Impact Assessment.
- 4.4 The Vice Principal -Resources** acts as a co-ordinator of EDI issues and ensures that there is effective co-ordination of EDI initiatives throughout the College. This includes responsibility for
- dealing with complaints concerning Equality and Diversity
 - working with the Head of MIS collating the College's targets, objectives and Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) into a college-wide Action Plan
 - working with the Head of Quality in advising areas on their EDIMs, targets and priorities
 - assisting with the construction and delivery of a continuous programme of EDI staff development
 - through the Deputy Principal monitoring lesson plans and schemes of work to ensure that issues of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are embedded in the teaching and learning of our students.
- 4.5 Head of Human Resources (HR)** has responsibility for advancing EDI in all aspects of recruitment, selection and employment, including:
- ensuring that College vacancies are advertised in ways that attract candidates from a broad range of backgrounds
 - ensuring there is no inherent bias in our selection process
 - growing expertise from within our workforce by means of our rigorous appraisal system, whose purpose is to recognise and improve the achievements and skills of all staff
 - monitoring enquiries, applications, employment and staff who leave
 - monitoring the take up of staff training opportunities
 - collecting & analysing this employment data on a regular basis (see Section 5)
 - creating a culture of trust where staff feel sufficiently secure and confident to release personal information

- explaining why the information is needed and ensuring its confidentiality
- providing employment monitoring data to SLT
- leading on employment relations
- providing a framework of advice and support for individual members of staff
- developing a CPD programme that improves the chances of promotion or career advancement
- working in partnership with other colleges, including higher education institutions, to provide training and facilitate the sharing of expertise
- working with recognised trade unions on matters of employment and conditions of service, and as our partners in tackling discrimination and championing Equality and Diversity
- working with our partners and local organisations to improve the skill sets of our employees
- working with our funding bodies on a local and regional level to provide opportunities for all our staff

The Head of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that our Equality objectives are followed and embedded in all our employment policies and practice. This includes responsibility for

- the revision and writing of HR policies and procedures and ensuring these comply with the requirements outlined in our Equality Scheme
- ensuring that the College is compliant with the Equalities Act 2010 and other relevant legislation
- the collection and analysis of employment data
- reporting to governors on the success of College recruitment and selection processes in attracting candidates from a range of different backgrounds
- reporting to governors on the impact of college employment policies on staff with protected characteristics

- 4.6 The **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC)** has cross-college responsibility for driving the Equality agenda and scrutinising our Equality outcomes. Its role is to advise, support and assist the College in its efforts to become an outstanding place to work and learn and a beacon of good EDI practice. The Committee is chaired by the Principal, and reports to the SLT and governors.

Membership of the EDIC includes identified 'EDI Champions' who represent all areas of College life, including

- Estate management
- Human Resources
- International Studies
- Marketing and Communications
- MIS
- Staff Trade Unions
- Student Council
- Student Services
- Teaching faculties
- A Governor representative
- An external community representative or 'critical friend'

The Terms of Reference of the EDIC are:

- To monitor the effectiveness, and assist with the practical implementation and review of the College's EDI policies, procedures, codes and objectives
- To contribute to the interpretation and analysis of relevant staff and student data by ethnicity, gender, disability, age and other protected characteristics
- To challenge, scrutinise and verify our Equality impact assessments
- To assist with the design and evaluation of EDI staff development programmes and departmental/ cross-college events that celebrate diversity and promote positive role models
- To support the development of an inclusive and representative curriculum
- To help the college communicate its Equality and Diversity messages to governors, managers, staff, partners and learners
- To advise on the development and use of EDI guidelines and resources
- To maintain relevant networks and links with appropriate external agencies
- To meet a minimum of once a term, or more frequently as necessary

- 4.7 **The College Management Team (CMT)**, which consists of the SLT, Heads of Faculty and Heads of Department, is responsible for leading their teams and ensuring that their staff deliver the College's strategic aims and Equality objectives by putting them into practice. Their role includes
- ensuring that teaching, learning and support functions operate according to best EDI practice
 - ensuring EDI is given a strong focus in all strategic, self-assessment and quality review activities
 - the supervision and review of any Equality and Diversity Impact Measures for their area
- 4.8 **Staff** have responsibility for promoting and advancing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace and with our learners and partners. Our staff are expected to adhere to the College Code of Conduct, and to take full advantage of the many opportunities to increase their knowledge of EDI through staff training days, seminars, on-line guidance and bespoke training in their areas. Our Staff Development programme aims to empower staff to fulfil the College's legal duties and meet our Equality objectives.
- 4.9 **Students** are expected to behave in accordance with this Equality Scheme and the College Code of Conduct. This includes
- not using racist, sexist, homophobic or other abuse language
 - behaving in a way that respects people's right to be different and does not exclude, ridicule or intimidate others because of their background, physical appearance, lifestyle, culture, social status, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability or beliefs

5. ANALYSIS & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Our aim is to fully embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into the **strategic planning and monitoring** frameworks of the College. As well as helping us to meet our legal duties, we believe this helps to demonstrate that our approach is inclusive, comprehensive and led from the highest level.

To monitor the effectiveness of our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy, the College collects data on the **age, gender, ethnic origin and disability** of both staff and students. We are working towards 100% disclosure in these areas.

To ensure that our policies, services and provision meet diverse needs and advance equality for all groups, we also invite staff and learners to provide information about other protected characteristics, including their **religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status or pregnancy**.

We recognise that some people may find these questions intrusive or choose not to disclose this information unless confidentiality is assured. We take the safe storage and confidentiality of any sensitive personal data we hold very seriously, and make every effort to ensure that our practices are in line with the Data Protection Act.

Our published data currently relates to age, gender, ethnic origin and disability and includes:

Students	Employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our learner diversity profile • Enrolments • Attendance • Success and achievement • Additional Learning Support • Learner Satisfaction • Complaints & disciplinaries • Progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our staff diversity profile • Applications • Recruitment • Employment by grade • Training • Promotion • Grievances & disciplinaries • Exit interviews

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT MEASURES

Each Service and curriculum area is expected to use this data and other available research to identify ways to meet any **Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs)** for their area and, if appropriate, for the College as a whole. This is an integral part of the annual SAR and SSAR process, helping teams to identify the practical steps needed to meet the college's legal duties and strategic aims in their own area of responsibility.

EDIMs - sometimes referred to as targets - identify measurable criteria such as a desired percentage increase or decrease in a particular area. They are agreed by senior managers, in consultation with members of the EDI Committee. Reviewing our EDIMs forms a part of the College's annual review of its Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan. Our current EDIMs can be viewed on the College web-site.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Our **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)** procedure ensures that the impact of new and existing policies, procedures and any proposed initiatives on groups with protected characteristics is given full consideration.

Where adverse impact is identified or where our data suggest that a particular group is experiencing less favourable treatment or indirect discrimination, we will take all necessary steps to reverse this.

The purpose of conducting Equality Impact Assessments is to

- clarify the main aims of the policy, procedure or proposal and who it affects
- consider any data and other research available to assess its likely impact on equality, with reference to all nine protected characteristics
- complete the initial screening stage and decide whether a more detailed assessment is necessary to establish whether the policy or procedure or proposal is unlawful, discriminatory or justifiable in law
- consider alternative ways of delivering the policy or procedure in order to minimise any negative impact and eliminate any unlawful discrimination
- decide whether further research or consultation is needed to investigate the full impact of the policy, procedure or proposal on diverse groups and if necessary, consult relevant stakeholders
- make arrangements to monitor and review its impact

At the end of the assessment, a copy of the EIA report is sent to the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee for scrutiny and validation. If no issues or concerns are apparent, the policy and the report are forwarded to the Senior Leadership Team for approval. In addition, all key policies and procedures are passed to the Corporation for information and comment.

The College is committed to transparency in our efforts to monitor progress and review the outcomes of relevant policies. Equality Impact Assessment reports, diversity data, and other key documents referred to in this Equality Scheme can be viewed on the College website. As well as publishing this information on-line, copies are available in other formats on request.

6. ENGAGEMENT

Our learners have access to a range of **support services** including:

- Additional learning support
- Advice and Guidance
- Childcare support
- Financial support
- Individual counselling
- Support for learners with disabilities
- Support for learners with learning difficulties
- Welfare support

Students are actively encouraged to make use of these services, and **college displays** help to highlight EDI issues and concerns that they may need help with. Students are also encouraged to take part in our **engagement programme** of extra-curricular activities and events, many of which are designed to raise awareness of EDI and Safeguarding issues. They include events that celebrate International Women's Day, Black History Month, GLTB (Gay, Lesbian, Transgender and Bisexual) History Month, Adult Learners Week, Fair Trade and relevant community-based initiatives.

All our staff have opportunities to increase their knowledge of EDI issues through **staff training** days, seminars and bespoke training in their areas. Staff Development days are held three times a year, as well as short EDI briefing sessions held a various times of the day to encourage maximum attendance.

All staff, including those responsible for student support and estate management, have received **mandatory EDI training and induction**. In addition, all senior managers have completed an accredited Equality course at level 2. Teacher Education courses include input on Equality and Diversity and how to embed this within the curriculum.

Consultations with the Director of Quality have been conducted with all curriculum and support teams, focusing on the role that their area can play in ensuring that we are a beacon in terms of equality and diversity. **Teaching and Learning Coaches** have been established to promote and support best EDI practice lessons. **Identified EDI champions** play a key role in supporting their teams and driving the cross-college agenda to become a beacon of good EDI practice in everything we do.

We regularly review all our policies and procedures, including those that affect students, the recruitment and employment of staff, and our internal/external marketing and communications. Each policy/procedure has an author/owner who is responsible for undertaking regular policy reviews and checking their impact on different groups with protected characteristics, using our published **Equality Impact Assessment** toolkit.

We recognise the challenges we face in meeting the commitments in this Equality Scheme and achieving our Equality objectives. To this end, we have held **consultations with external agencies** and bodies and drawn on the experience of several areas of the college including the School of English and our International section. We also consult with our staff and learners, using **focus groups, Learner Voice forums, surveys and evaluations** to identify any EDI issues or concerns they may have.

7. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan

- provides an overview of our objectives and identified priorities
- links them to the relevant requirement of the Equality Duty
- lists the key actions required to achieve them
- identifies who is responsible
- suggests a timeframe for completion
- highlights the criteria that will tell us whether we've succeeded
- highlights the progress made and what else needs to be done

The plan is reviewed annually.

Progress is monitored by the SLT and the EDI Committee, who are also responsible for identifying and agreeing any new objectives.

(see attached)