

Equalities Policy

Background

The Equalities Act of 2010 assigns to organisations within the Public Sector (including schools and colleges) a 'Public Sector Equalities Duty' which broadly encompasses (with some changes) the requirements of various previous pieces of legislation, these being:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Equality Act 2006
- Gender Equality Act 2007
- Race Relations Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act (amended) 2006

Objectives

Generally the objective of the Equalities Act is to eliminate discrimination against and to promote equality of opportunity of all Students and Employees irrespective of their:

- Age (in relation to employment)
- Disability (defined as a long term condition adversely affecting the way in which someone can carry out normal day to day activities)
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality)
- Religion or Belief (including political beliefs and trade union membership)
- Sex (including issues relating to pregnancy or maternity)
- Sexual Orientation

'Protected Characteristic'

This is a term found in the act. A 'protected characteristic' is a characteristic related to one of the nine strands which may render an individual vulnerable to discrimination. A person having a 'protected characteristic' may be (for example) gay, disabled, a member of an ethnic minority or someone having learning disabilities.

Proactive Approach

Whereas earlier pieces of legislation only obliged organisations to take a reactive approach to discrimination, organisations are now required to have a proactive approach, so that an ethos of anti-discrimination and promotion of equality of opportunity is embedded in the culture and policies of the organisation, promoting understanding across the equality strands.

Types of Discrimination

Discrimination can be 'direct' or 'indirect'. Direct discrimination is where an individual is disadvantaged by the specific action of another (possibly manager or colleague). Indirect discrimination occurs where a policy or rule unintentionally or otherwise places an individual or specific group of individuals at a disadvantage compared to the norm.

It is quite acceptable under the act to positively discriminate in favour of certain people, in order that they are able to access the same opportunities as their peers. Examples of this could be where people with certain disabilities are given access to a reserved parking space or special toilet facilities.

Bodmin College Policy

The Governing Body of Bodmin College is committed to full compliance with the Equalities Act, specifically:

- Eliminating all discrimination against and harassment (verbal or physical) of, employees or students at Bodmin College. This also applies to any volunteer or contractor legitimately working on the College site or in association with the College.
- Promoting equality of opportunity for all employees, students and others working in association with the College. This would include the placing of contracts with external sources where the choice of supplier will be based solely on sound business reasons.
- Promoting good relations and positive attitudes towards all people, particularly those having protected characteristics
- Ensuring that equality duties are followed in recruitment of staff and that candidates are judged on ability and experience and not on a particular characteristic
- Understanding that there is a legal requirement to ensure that we comply with access arrangements for students with a statement of SEN, e.g. with the provision of assistive technology
- Encouraging participation in public life

Our commitment covers equality on grounds of age, disability, gender (including trans gender), race, religion/belief and sexual orientation.

Operational Considerations and Action Plan

Maintenance of the Bodmin College Equality Duty in Compliance with the requirements of the Equalities Act is the responsibility of the Governing Body Monitoring College Policy Group.

This group meets annually and will review and if necessary implement changes with regards to the following:

- Access to the curriculum
- Physical access to relevant site areas
- Specific facilities for individuals with protected characteristics
- Inclusivity of communications
- Transport considerations, etc

This list is not exhaustive but suggests the main issues. It is not intended that this group deals with specific individual non compliances to the Act as these will be managed through the relevant College policies.

Physical non compliances (e.g. wheelchair access) are managed through the existing maintenance request system by the site team. However, such issues will be brought to this group if a non-compliance is not addressed or is repeated several times.

The primary objective of the group is to agree an action plan scheduling issues to be addressed to ensure compliance.

Action Plan 2016 – 2020

Review disability access to main buildings on the site
Where access is prohibitive plan for future upgrades

Terminal Illness

Some forms of life limiting illness are classed as a disability. In such cases 'time off' for treatment would not be considered as absence for illness under our absence policies.

Equality/Diversity Training & Education

- Bodmin College is committed to equality/diversity training as required and appropriate
- Equality/Diversity education is an entitlement for all students at Bodmin College and delivered through the PSHE curriculum.
- Student Council Meetings enable students to raise any issues with Senior Managers

Link with Governing Body and Policy review

The College Policy Review Group will report to the Governing Body not less than once per year.

OFSTED

It is understood that compliance with the equalities act is subject to audit within the OFSTED framework.

Record Keeping

It is understood that the Governors of the College must be able to demonstrate compliance with the Equalities Act in respect of decisions made that may have an equalities implication.

These might, for example, involve staff recruitment and promotion, student opportunities or site planning issues. The College will keep appropriate records in respect of such decisions.