

Equality and Diversity Policy

Dover College



Owner:	HR	Date: December 2024
Approved By:		Date:
Review Frequency	Bi-Annually	
Last reviewed on:	December 2024	
Next review due by:	September 2026	

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Scope

Dover College is committed to equality and valuing diversity; to build a strong, cohesive College and to promote good community relations through listening and involvement. This is reflected in our mission, aims and objectives.

The overall aim of this policy is to: -

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote equality of access;
- Promote good relations between diverse communities;
- Promote equality within Dover College's employment policies and practices;
- Promote equality in the delivery of education and services in the wider community.

Equal Opportunities

We are an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

The terms equality, inclusion, diversity and equity are at the heart of this policy.

'Equality' means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination.

'Inclusion' means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution.

'Diversity' means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce.

'Equity' means recognising barriers and that some groups are more advantaged than others, and putting measures in place to eliminate these barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

We will actively support diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure that our workforce is valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in our business to reach their potential.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be offered appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

The HR Manager has particular responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Equality and diversity policy and, as part of this process, all HR policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.

All employees, workers or self-employed contractors whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the College.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in our school as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of everyone to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality and equity throughout the College.

Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting HR.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal without notice.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or through our Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy as appropriate.

Our commitment as an employer

The College is committed to:

- creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued
- everyone is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
- providing training, development and progression opportunities to all staff
- understanding equality and inclusion in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense
- reviewing all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness and inclusion for all
- taking steps to ensure equity amongst our workforce such as ensuring that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse range of potential candidates and, where relevant, to particular groups that have been identified as disadvantaged or underrepresented in our school, taking positive action to ensure there are no unlawful barriers to accessing our employment opportunities, training, progression opportunities, benefits and facilities
- diversity in our workforce will be regularly monitored to ensure equal opportunities throughout. Where appropriate, measures will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary obstacles and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups
- monitoring and reviewing this policy bi-annually.

The Equality Act became law in 2010. It replaces previous legislation and ensures consistency in what Dover College needs to do to make the workplace a fair environment and to comply with the law. To this end, we shall regularly review the operation of our policies to ensure that no applicant for employment or member of staff is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

No employee or prospective employee will receive unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic, because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic or because they are associated with someone who has a Protected Characteristic.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff must treat visitors, pupils, parents, suppliers and former members of staff.

Further guidance on discrimination can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights/types-of-discrimination>

Achieving Equality

Dover College encourages equality to be integrated into the spirit of everything our College does. The College with the assistance of the staff aims to:

- Break down any barriers to equality of opportunity, which may prevent staff members realising their full potential or accessing benefit by incorporating an ethos of equality into every policy, procedure plan and strategy from the start;
- Seek to create a workforce profile that reflects our diverse community at all levels by advertising vacancies and by ensuring job selection criteria are appropriate for the job and that people are selected for a job based on their ability to perform that job;
- Challenge all forms of unfair discrimination, whether intentional, unintentional, institutional or otherwise and promptly and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment, taking appropriate action where necessary;
- Work to develop procedures to respond to and address all forms of harassment and victimisation;
- Ensure that all members of staff are fully informed on this policy;
- Monitor the composition of the College and the effects of its recruitment practices by profiling the origin of our pupils, staff and volunteers to inform our policies and priorities;
- Establish clear targets for improvement within service areas and employment through an equalities plan by actively engaging with, involving and listening to the views of our staff, volunteers, pupils and community, to assist in the development of our equality agenda, through rigorous review, self-assessment, audit and reporting mechanisms to further progress on our equalities work;
- To develop the College and its services to be accessible to all;
- Undertake Equality Impact Assessments on major decisions, policies and procedures and take appropriate action;
- Existing procedures are reviewed and examined to ensure they are not discriminatory in their operation;

- Language used in official communication reflects the letter and spirit of the policy.

Disability

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for a position at the College. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made as are required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of their disability. For example, where written tests are used, alternative arrangements will be made for visually impaired applicants.

If you experience difficulties at work because you have a disability or develop one, you may wish to contact your Head of Department to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your Head of Department may wish to consult with you, HR, and your medical adviser about possible adjustments and you may be required to give your consent to a report being produced about your state of health and ability to perform your duties. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason and as far as is practicable. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible. Once an adjustment has been made its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assess its continuing effectiveness.

The College will make such adjustments to work arrangements or College premises as are reasonable to enable a disabled staff member to carry out his or her duties. This will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign, flexible hours.

Where during the course of their employment a disabled member of staff recognises their need for a reasonable adjustment to be made to work arrangements or College premises, he or she is encouraged to discuss this requirement with the HR Manager.

The College would appreciate if a member of staff suffers from a long-term medical condition or disability where medical assistance may be necessary, to inform the medical centre in confidence accordingly.

Dignity at Work (Victimisation and Harassment)

Dover College recognises that staff have the right to work and pupils have a right to study in a supportive, safe and harassment-free environment. You should not engage in any behaviour or conduct which may amount to harassment of another person at work. Harassment of any kind is regarded as a disciplinary offence and in serious instances may lead to instant

dismissal. Dover College is aware that third party harassment can potentially occur and will endeavour to protect our staff and pupils from such behaviour. Our **Anti-Bullying and Harassment (including Sexual Harassment) Policy** outlines this process in more detail.