



Hills Road Sixth Form College Cambridge

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

2010

This Scheme is available in accessible formats. For further information, please contact the PA to the Deputy Principal on 01223 278026 or by email lhawkins@hillsroad.ac.uk

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This **Single Equality Scheme** incorporates our Disability Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme, Race Equality Policy and our work to promote equality in relation to the characteristics of age; gender identity; pregnancy, adoption, maternity and paternity; marriage and civil partnership status; religion or belief; sexual orientation and also includes our commitment in relation to socio-economic status.

1.0 Introduction

This equality scheme is written following the passing in April 2010 of the Single Equality Act for Great Britain which incorporated numerous pieces of previous equality legislation into a single unified and rationalised one.¹ This has provided a framework that is easier to understand and implement. As a result the College has a new public duty to tackle discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to encourage good community relations across an increased number of protected characteristics to include age, gender reassignment, religion and belief, and sexual orientation, alongside our existing disability, gender and race duties. These duties come into legal force on 1 October 2010 with a likely extension to include socio-economic disadvantage, which this College scheme anticipates within its scope.

Equality legislation provides some context and direction for this scheme, but the College has and will continue to develop its equality and diversity scheme and practice beyond the requirements of legislation.

2.0 Our Commitment

This commitment to go beyond the legislation is embodied in the following principles which underpin our Hills Road Sixth Form College *Single Equality Scheme*.

We will:

- treat all members of the College community – governor, employee, student, applicant, contractor or visitor - with respect, with dignity, and as individuals
- provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation, in which all our members can feel valued and fulfil their potential
- promote a social model of disability which recognises that systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion (purposely or inadvertently) are the ultimate factors defining who is disabled and who is not
- strive for excellent practice in equality in all aspects of College life: learning, teaching, employment, environment and services
- make all our members aware that they have a legal and moral duty to play their part in promoting a culture of equality and in celebrating diversity
- refuse to tolerate any form of behaviour or activity which discriminates on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation, socio-economic status, marital status, trade union membership, family responsibilities, health or unrelated criminal convictions and charges.

¹ See Appendix for the legislative background and requirements

3.0 Where are we now?

In drawing up this scheme, we have been focused on our commitment as a College to celebrating and valuing diversity and to the promotion of social justice for all. Through our work on equality, we recognise that we currently face the following challenges.

Current aims for staff

- to maintain an appropriate gender balance
- to maintain an appropriate balance in terms of age range
- to encourage staff with a disability to disclose this
- to encourage applications from ethnic minority job applicants to achieve an appropriate balance that reflects the local community.

Current aims for students

- to encourage students with a disability to disclose this
- to be equally attractive to all qualified students regardless of their partner school
- to be equally attractive to all qualified students regardless of their specific needs
- to maintain an appropriate gender balance
- to seek ways of addressing the relatively less strong attainment outcomes for those students in the lowest GCSE grade boundaries
- to seek ways of addressing the relatively less strong attainment outcomes for those students in receipt of Educational Maintenance Allowance²

Challenges in relation to both students and staff

A lack of monitoring information about the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students and staff, and students and staff with different religious beliefs, those facing socio-economic disadvantage and in relation to pregnancy and maternity, caring and dependency responsibilities

4.0 Where do we plan to be?

The College has agreed the following objectives:

A Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

- Objective 1 to ensure that the College's commitment to all students and staff is embedded in its strategies, policies and procedures scrutinised through a rolling programme of Equality Impact Assessments
- Objective 2 to carry out systematic evaluation of progress towards providing for the needs of all students and staff as an integral part of the

² Educational Maintenance Allowance finishes in July 2011 as announced in the Coalition Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, November, 2010. Alternative proxy measures will need to be sought.

College's planning and review cycle

B Pre-enrolment, Enrolment and Induction

- Objective 1 to ensure that the College's procedures for pre-enrolment, enrolment and induction are fully accessible to all students
- Objective 2 to make specialist information, advice and guidance available to all applicant students and new students
- Objective 3 to record equality information disclosed about a student's needs at the earliest opportunity on the College's Information Systems and to consider the implications of this information for the student's experience at the College
- Objective 4 to provide comprehensive support to **all** applicant students and new students to enable them to access College courses, services and facilities wherever possible

C Teaching and Learning

- Objective 1 to maximise the opportunities for **all** students to achieve their potential in particular through removal of any possible barriers to accessing learning
- Objective 2 to design all teaching and learning materials to be accessible to **all** students wherever possible
- Objective 3 to provide accessible examination and assessment arrangements for **all** students wherever possible

D Curriculum Development

- Objective 1 to build mutual respect and understanding between different groups, faiths and cultures, including through the promotion and development of the College's status as an 'International School'
- Objective 2 to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed for life in a global society by embedding a strong global dimension within the curriculum
- Objective 3 to seek to provide opportunities for students to learn foreign languages and inter-cultural skills

E Student Support and Guidance

- Objective 1 to ensure accessibility for **all** students to the full range of Student Services, including Study Skills Support

F Staff Recruitment, Employment and Development

1 Staff Recruitment

Objective 1.1 actively to promote the College as an equality aware employer

Objective 1.2 to ensure that **all** applicants receive full and fair treatment and are considered solely on their ability to do the job

2 Staff Employment Policies and Procedures

Objective 2.1 to review and develop further the College's employment policies and procedures in order to provide a barrier-free environment for **all** staff

Objective 2.2 to ensure that the work environment and working practices do not constitute unnecessary barriers which may prevent employees participating fully in the life of the College

Objective 2.3 to retain staff who become disabled in their current role wherever possible or to find a suitable alternative role if available (and to provide retraining where reasonable)

3 Staff Development

Objective 3.1 to provide staff development and resources to raise staff awareness of issues relating to equality

Objective 3.2 to support the development of the skills and potential of **all** staff through staff development and promotion opportunities

Objective 3.3 to ensure that all staff teaching students with disabilities have access to relevant information and are supported in their work

Objective 3.4 to integrate appropriate forms of on-going training on equality issues into the College's staff development programme

G Accessible Documentation

Objective 1 to ensure that, where practicable, relevant College documentation and publications are provided in an accessible format for any staff, student, governor and the wider community

H Accessible Site

Objective 1 to ensure that where practicable, all new and existing College buildings are accessible

Objective 2 to ensure that access issues are built into new policies and procedures as these are developed and into new projects whether new build or refurbishment

This revised Single Equality Scheme sets out the framework within which the College intends to promote equality for and prevent discrimination against our students, staff, applicants, volunteers and visitors to the College, to those who hire the College's facilities and to contractors working on the College site.

5.0 How are we going to get there?

- 5.1 The importance of involving staff, students and representatives of other groups in all aspects of the development, implementation and evaluation of the SES in order to achieve equality of outcome for all, is paramount.
- 5.2 The drafting phases of this Single Equality Scheme and the attendant action plan upon which this scheme depends, have been drawn up in consultation with all the representative groups listed under 5.5 below
- 5.2 This involvement includes helping to prioritise policies for impact assessment, identifying monitoring processes and setting priorities in the action plan.
- 5.3 In addition, staff and students are invited to join the Equality Forum (staff and students) or Community Forum (students); both groups meet regularly to monitor, update and improve policies, procedures and materials, ensuring that they satisfy best practice guidelines in relation to equality and diversity.
- 5.4 Questionnaire surveys are used to seek feedback on equality issues from all members of the College community and to encourage greater involvement.
- 5.5 In 2010, staff, students and other groups have been involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of the SES, and in the production of the action plan in the following ways:
 - Student Council
 - Student LGBT society
 - Staff Equality Forum
 - Study Skills Department
 - HR Department
 - Marketing and Publicity department
 - Curriculum Leaders
 - Sports and Tennis Centre

6.0 Responsibilities under the Single Equality Scheme (SES)

- 6.1 The Principal and governors have overall responsibility for meeting the legal requirements of the Single Equality Scheme (SES) and for seeking to ensure that the Corporation reflects the diversity of the communities served by the College
- 6.2 The College Strategy Team, in consultation with the Equality Forum, has responsibility for managing the implementation of the Scheme, seeking to ensure that the College community reflects the diversity of the communities served by the College and for monitoring the effectiveness of the Scheme.

- 6.3 All members of the College community are expected to be aware of the SES and to treat all people, whether students, staff or members of the public, in accordance with its provisions. They should report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices and discourage others from practising any form of discrimination. It is also their responsibility not to victimise anyone as a result of their having reported evidence of discrimination, and not to harass, abuse or intimidate others on any grounds.

7.0 Communicating our commitment

- 7.1 The College ensures awareness of and support for the contents of the SES through regular consultation and communication. Examples of communications include:
- induction programmes for new staff
 - staff meetings
 - staff development/training sessions
 - various publications including: College prospectuses, Student Planner, College Charter, Parents' Handbook, College Handbook, publicity materials, the annual report and financial statement
 - the College website and intranet
 - departmental schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources
 - meetings and minutes of the Equality Forum, the Community Forum and the Student Council
 - meetings and minutes of the Corporation and governor committees
 - job advertisements and recruitment documentation.

8.0 Monitoring and reporting

- 8.1 The effectiveness of the SES is monitored and evaluated annually in accordance with legislative developments and the need for good practice
- 8.2 If examples of possible or actual discrimination, victimisation or harassment are identified, appropriate action is taken
- 8.3 Annual reviews include consultation with the College Equality Forum, the College Strategy Team and the Corporation
- 8.4 As part of the reviews the Equality Forum seeks and takes into account the views of stakeholders including students, staff, parents, regular visitors to the College and appropriate equality bodies.
- 8.5 An annual report and action plan is presented to the Corporation

9.0 Equality impact assessment (EIA)

- 9.1 Equality impact assessment will be the process we go through over the coming academic cycles to ensure that our key policies, procedures, plans and paperwork are actively reviewed. This will include training a core team of assessors to scrutinise these documents in relation to meeting *Our*

Commitment as set down here in the Single Equality Scheme (2.0). This process will include screening and prioritising those policies and procedures where we feel the need is greatest in terms of advancing equality of opportunity for our College community members and prospective members.

9.2 The purpose of impact assessment is both to ensure that decisions and activities do not disadvantage individuals and also to identify opportunities to promote equality, including consideration of where the different parts of the equality laws can be actively built into College policies, procedures and practices.

9.3 Information arising from impact assessments may be accessed via the College's Freedom of Information Scheme.

10.0 Further guidance

Further help and guidance in relation to the Single Equality Scheme is available as detailed below:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Telephone Number</i>	<i>E-mail address</i>	<i>For matters relating to:</i>
Ms Jo Trump	Deputy Principal	01223 247251 Extension 1228	jtrump@hillsroad.ac.uk	Responsibility for the implementation of the Single Equality Scheme
Mrs Louise Hawkins	PA to the Deputy Principal	01223 247251 Extension 1228	lhawkins@hillsroad.ac.uk	General enquiries
Miss Anna Heathfield	Personnel Administrator	01223 247251 Extension 1248	aheathfield@hillsroad.ac.uk	Enquiries relating to staff recruitment and personnel issues
Mrs Joelle McKenzie	Adult Education Manager	01223 247251 Extension 1465	jmckenzie@hillsroad.ac.uk	Enquiries relating to Adult Education students
Mrs Ros Mitchell	Admissions Administrator	01223 247251 Extension 1262	rmitchell@hillsroad.ac.uk	Enquiries relating to admissions of sixth form students
Ms Natalie Moss	Sports and Tennis Centre Manager	01223 278039 Extension 404	nmoss@hillsroad.ac.uk	Enquiries relating to membership of the sports and tennis centre
Ms Linda Pike	Student Guidance Officer	01223 247251 Extension 1268	lpike@hillsroad.ac.uk	Enquiries relating to sixth form students
Mr Nigel Standbridge	Estates Bursar	01223 247251 Extension 1267	nstandbridge@hillsroad.ac.uk	Enquiries relating to buildings, accommodation and facilities
Mr Glen Taylor	Head of Study Skills	01223 247251 Extension 1488	gtaylor@hillsroad.ac.uk	Enquiries about learning disabilities

11.0 Linked Policies and Procedures

- Admissions
- Complaints
- Confidentiality
- Data Protection
- Disclosure
- Equality Impact Assessment

- Grievance
- Harassment and Bullying
- Health and Safety
- Pay
- Recruitment
- Risk Management
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Misconduct

12.0 Useful contacts

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission (incorporating the former Commission for Racial Equality, Equal Opportunities Commission and Disability Rights Commission) www.equalityhumanrights.com
- Multifaithnet: www.multifaithnet.org - cultural differences and customs of different religions
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk - works to achieve legal equality and social justice for lesbians, gay men and bisexual people
- DisabledGo: www.disabledgo.com - provides detailed information on access to all kinds of places; this information has been collected in person by a team of DisabledGo surveyors.

APPENDIX TO THE HILLS ROAD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

Appendix 1

1.0 The Equality Act 2010

- 1.1 Equalities legislation has been developed over several years and has been set out in many different Acts of Parliament, regulations and orders. The government has recently acknowledged that everyone who needs to understand discrimination law would benefit from having it in a Single Equality Act which simplifies the law as far as this can be done.
- 1.2 In October 2007 a number of equality commissions (Disability Rights Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality) were brought together into a single commission, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC); and in April 2010, the Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent, thereby bringing together over 100 separate equality strands in one harmonised and simplified piece of legislation.
- 1.3 The Equality Act makes reference to “protected characteristics” which covers all the existing grounds on which discrimination is prohibited (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation). Under this Act the following types of behaviour are prohibited by law:
- *Direct discrimination.* It is unlawful to treat an individual less favourably because of a protected characteristic (eg on the grounds of gender or race)
 - *Indirect discrimination.* It is unlawful to apply a criterion or practice which is discriminatory in relation to one of the protected characteristics (eg setting a written test (in English) during an interview where one of the candidates does not have English as a first language)
 - *Harassment.* It is unlawful to engage in unwanted behaviour relating to one of the protected characteristics which has the effect of violating dignity or creating distress (eg sending emails containing racist comments)
 - *Victimisation.* It is unlawful to subject someone to a detriment because they have brought proceedings under the Equality Act or given evidence or information in connection with the Equality Act.
 - *Combined discrimination.* It is unlawful to discriminate against someone because of a combination of two protected characteristics (excluding pregnancy/maternity, or marriage/civil partnerships).
- 1.4 The Equality Act also introduces a new public sector duty to consider reducing socio-economic inequalities.
- 1.5 In specific circumstances, the Act allows positive action as a way of overcoming inequality. For example, positive action allows organisations to:
- provide facilities or services (in training, education or welfare) to meet the special needs of people from particular racial groups (for example, English language classes)

- target job training at particular groups that are under-represented in a particular area of work
- encourage applications from groups that are under-represented in the College
- favour a candidate from an under-represented or disadvantaged group (where candidates being considered for a role are otherwise equally qualified).

Positive action strategies are intended to be temporary measures only. They must be kept under regular review and cannot be used once the special needs have been met or if the under-representation no longer exists. The College will ensure that when using positive action as a strategy, it falls within the law.

2.0 Race equality

2.1 Our commitment

The College seeks to create a working and learning environment based on positive relations between members of different racial groups. To this end, the College undertakes:

- to provide governors, staff and students with comprehensive information, which assists them to carry out their responsibilities under the Scheme
- to consult with staff and students about their experience of the College environment
- where appropriate, to provide diverse images in material which it produces for students and staff.

The aim is to create a positive, inclusive ethos where issues of racism, stereotyping and discrimination can be discussed openly, with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing racism and discrimination, to respecting diversity and difference, and to encouraging good relations between people of different groups. The College will work towards the elimination of racism whether overt or covert, and will seek to ensure that all individuals and communities have equal access to learning/working opportunities and facilities.

2.2 Definitions

Both institutional and individual racism 'can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantages ethnic minority people.' (Macpherson)

2.3 Positive action

The College undertakes, once the results of monitoring are available, to consider targets to reduce any disadvantage suffered by ethnic minority employees and students. If monitoring reveals that specific racial minority groups are disadvantaged, some targets may relate to those specific groups.

3.0 Disability equality

3.1 Our commitment

The College seeks to create an environment that is open and accessible, thus enabling all of its members to participate fully in College life. In particular, the College seeks to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and disability-related harassment
- take all reasonable steps to meet disabled people's needs
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

3.2 Definitions

3.2.1 A person has a disability if he or she has a "physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities." (Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Part 4). The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 broadened the definition to include unseen disabilities, for example HIV infection, multiple sclerosis and cancer. Disability therefore covers a wide range of mental and physical impairments including those affecting mobility, hearing and sight, learning difficulties including dyslexia, and medical conditions including mental health problems

3.2.2 Discrimination may occur in the following ways:

- By treating a disabled person less favourably, for a reason related to the person's disability
- By failing to make a reasonable adjustment, resulting in a disabled person being placed at a substantial disadvantage
- By treating employees in a detrimental way because of something that is a consequence of their disability. An example would be dismissing an employee with a poor attendance record when their absences were caused by disability. This would be unlawful unless dismissal could be justified as a "proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim" or the employer could not reasonably have been expected to know of the disability.

3.3 Meeting our duty

3.3.1 The College will not discriminate against any person because of a disability unless this can be justified: in exceptional circumstances, the College may genuinely and reasonably believe that less favourable treatment is necessary, for example, where the health and safety of the disabled person or someone else would be placed at risk or excessive and unreasonable adjustments would be needed to accommodate the disability.

3.3.2 Reasonable adjustments

- The College will seek to make reasonable adjustments, wherever possible, to accommodate individual needs; furthermore, it will seek to anticipate the requirements of disabled people so that it is in a position to comply with its duty as and when required. The costs of any reasonable adjustments will be borne by the College.
- Examples of reasonable adjustments:
 - Providing publicity materials and information in alternative formats
 - Allowing absences for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment

- Making special arrangements for parking and access to buildings
- Modification of a student's course and/or College expectations of a student in the light of diagnosed mental health difficulty
- Modification of equipment.

3.4 Disclosure

3.4.1 All existing and prospective members of the College community are encouraged to disclose their disabilities so that appropriate support can be made available to them. All information relating to such a disclosure will be treated sensitively, in accordance with normal College procedures and with the Data Protection Act. Once a disability is disclosed then the College is deemed to know and has a duty to make any reasonable adjustments that are necessary; staff are therefore expected to familiarise themselves with the College's procedures relating to disclosure and passing on information.

3.5 Recruitment (staff) and admissions (students)

3.5.1 The College welcomes applications from all people, disabled or otherwise, who are suitably qualified for the course or job advertised.

3.5.2 Applicants who are aware they have specific needs at the time of application to the College are encouraged to outline them in confidence so that appropriate arrangements can be made before and during the interview.

3.5.3 Where adjustments to the College environment are required, the College will make every effort to respond, provided this may be achieved within reasonable resource constraints; for example, the College will assist students and staff with the acquisition, use and storage of special equipment.

3.5.4 Where a disability has been declared, interviews with potential students and staff will include an assessment of the applicant's expectations and needs; together with an assessment of whether the College's facilities and resources are sufficient to meet those needs.

3.5.5 Applications will be assessed on the basis of suitability for the job or course in question. The assessment will be independent of, and will not be influenced by, any considerations relating to the support requirements of the applicant.

3.6 Teaching and learning

3.6.1 Departments will employ teaching and learning strategies which make the course(s) as inclusive as is reasonably possible; and, where appropriate and reasonable, make adjustments to accommodate disabled students' individual needs. Course specifications will not include unnecessary barriers to access by disabled students.

3.6.2 Assessment and examination policies, practices and procedures will be adjusted, where possible, to provide disabled students with the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes; this may involve alternative assessment and examination arrangements.

- 3.6.3 Where appropriate, specialist training will be provided for teachers of disabled students to ensure they have the knowledge and expertise to provide adequate support.

3.7 Study Skills Department

- 3.7.1 The Head of Study Skills will ensure learning support staff have the necessary qualifications and/or expertise to provide support to students with special needs; where these are not available within College, the College will seek to recruit specialists externally.
- 3.7.2 All students will have access to advice and support from the Study Skills Department; they will be given the opportunity to review their learning needs and negotiate support to help them meet those needs.
- 3.7.3 Information relating to needs, and the support plan negotiated to deal with them, will be shared with subject teachers, tutor, student and parents, as appropriate.
- 3.7.4 The Department will make arrangements for students to take advantage of appropriate concessions in examinations as recommended by an educational psychologist or another qualified professional. Concessions may include extra time, the use of computers, readers, amanuenses and relocation to a separate room.
- 3.7.5 Where appropriate, the Study Skills Department will seek professional help, for example from an educational psychologist, in deciding the level of disability and the level of help and support required.

3.8 Career development (staff)

- 3.8.1 All employees have equal rights to training, promotion and other aspects of career development. Special employment needs will not be used to justify a failure to promote or train any employee.
- 3.8.2 The College undertakes that all the training and staff development it provides will be fully accessible to all, including venues and materials.
- 3.8.3 All staff will be asked at least once a year, during their appraisal, if their needs have changed, and if any steps need to be taken to ensure that their development needs are met.

3.9 Physical accommodation

- 3.9.1 The College is committed to making its site accessible; where necessary, adaptations to accommodation will be made subject to reasonable resource constraints.
- 3.9.2 Where appropriate, the College will carry out a risk assessment to ensure that accessibility for particular disabilities complies with the College's health and safety policy.

4.0 Gender, gender reassignment and sexual orientation equality

4.1 Our commitment

The College welcomes students and staff regardless of gender or sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual, bi-sexual or other), re-assignment (undergone surgery) or preference (individual's choice to live as a specific gender). Everyone is valued as an individual and the College encourages the contributions made by all. The College seeks to promote positive images, role models and perceptions of different genders and different sexual orientations.

4.2 Meeting our duty

4.2.1 The College will fulfil its *general duty* to:

- eliminate discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act, and discrimination that is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

4.2.2 In order to deliver the general duty, the College will fulfil the following *specific duties*:

- Consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
- Gather and use information on how the College's policies and practices affect gender equality (Currently, the College does not gather information on staff or students regarding their sexual orientation or gender reassignment; though opportunities are provided for people to contribute their views should they wish to do so)
- Consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender and sexual orientation equality objectives
- Assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender and sexual orientation equality
- Implement the actions set out in its annual SES action plan.

4.2.3 The College will not discriminate on grounds of gender or marital status. It is also unlawful to discriminate against individuals who:

- intend to undergo gender reassignment
- are currently undergoing gender reassignment
- have already undergone gender reassignment.

The law covers recruitment, terms and conditions, pay and benefits, status, training, promotion and transfer opportunities, right through to redundancy and dismissal. However, in some cases, a job can be offered to someone of a particular sex, because of what is called a 'genuine occupational qualification' (for example, some jobs in single-sex schools).

4.2.4 The College will not discriminate between men and women in terms of their pay and conditions where they are doing the same or similar work; work rated as equivalent in a job evaluation study by the employer; or work of equal value. The Equality Act 2010 requires employers with more than 250 employees to publish information relating to the pay of employees for the purpose of showing whether there are differences in the pay of male and female employees.

- 4.2.5 The College will not discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is defined as an orientation to the same sex, the opposite sex, or the same and opposite sex. The law also covers discrimination against someone because of a perception about their sexual orientation, even if that perception is not correct.
- 4.2.6 The College recognises that same-sex couples have the same rights as married heterosexual couples.
- 4.2.7 Legislation recognises both direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. A person who is a civil partner in a registered civil partnership of a same-sex couple will not be treated less favourably than a married person in similar circumstances.
- 4.2.8 In very limited circumstances it is lawful for an employer to treat people differently if it is a genuine occupational requirement that the job holder must be of a particular sexual orientation. For example, an organisation advising on and promoting gay rights may be able to show that it is essential to the credibility of its chief executive who will be the public face of the organisation that s/he should be gay. The sexual orientation of the holder of that post may therefore be a genuine occupational requirement.

5.0 Age equality

5.1 Our commitment

The College does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of age, other than as legitimately defined within its admissions policies (for sixth form students (16-18) and Adult Education students (19+)).

5.2 Meeting our duty

- 5.2.1 In the employment of staff, selection criteria include job-related qualifications, experience and skills but make no reference to age; there is no question about age on the application form.
- 5.2.2 The College does not enforce a retirement age of 65. Staff are entitled to request to work beyond their normal retirement date and this request will be considered on an individual basis.

6.0 Religion and belief equality

6.1 Our commitment

The College seeks to recognise the needs of students and staff of diverse religious groups, and to respond sensitively and appropriately to their needs. It will not discriminate on the grounds of a person's perceived or actual religion/belief or of the religion/belief of someone with whom the person associates.

6.2 Definitions

Religion or belief is defined as being “any religion, religious belief, or philosophical belief”. In general, three criteria are used to determine a religion:

- a belief in a supreme being
- worship of that supreme being; and
- a group or following of people who observe the beliefs, values, customs and traditions as set down by that supreme being.

However, philosophical beliefs are much less well defined and political beliefs are explicitly excluded from the legislation.

6.3 Meeting our duty

- 6.3.1 In very limited circumstances it is lawful for an employer to treat people differently if it is a genuine occupational requirement that the job holder must be of a particular religion or belief. For example, some organisations, such as faith schools, have an ethos based on a religion or belief. They may be able to apply a genuine occupational requirement to some of their posts but each case would need to be justified.

7.0 Social and economic equality

7.1 Our commitment

The college will seek to reduce social and economic inequalities in its decision making; for example by using a student welfare fund to seek to ensure all students are able to access opportunities such as educational visits and trips.

7.2 Legislative context

The Equality Act (2010) introduces a new public sector duty to consider reducing socio-economic inequalities.