



Single Equality Scheme

Version No	Purpose/Change	Author	Review Date
<i>Previous versions are available.</i>			
9.1	Reviewed – minor updates	LHR	Dec 2024
10.0	Reviewed and updated in line with legislation changes	LHR	Dec 2025

Introduction

The Corporation, staff and students of Wilberforce Sixth Form College are committed to providing an educational environment that respects and responds to the diversity of the local and wider community. The College is fully committed to the promotion of equality in relation to the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Single Equality Scheme states the College's response to its duties under the Equality Act 2010. It will enable the College to:

- Maximise its contribution to reducing inequalities in education and promote equality of access to educational opportunities for all
- Meet its statutory duty and fully comply with current and future legislation on human rights
- Develop a diversity of staff that is able to understand the needs and culture of its students and local community

Legislative Context

Since the passing in April 2010 of the Equality Act 2010 for Great Britain, which incorporated numerous pieces of previous equality legislation into a single unified and rationalised one, the College has had a public duty to tackle discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to encourage good community relations. The College is legally required to comply with the following three duties.

- 1) **Prohibited conduct:** The College must not directly or indirectly discriminate, harass or victimise learners, staff or service users because of a protected characteristic. This includes race, sex (biological sex), disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy or maternity.
- 2) **Duty to make reasonable adjustments:** The College must anticipate and remove barriers that place pupils with SEND, teachers or other staff at a substantial disadvantage compared with other peers. This applies to teaching, facilities, communication and policies.
- 3) **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):** Publicly funded providers must give due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These duties came into legal force on 1 October 2010, with updates recorded up to November 2025.

Roles and Responsibilities

For Governors:

- To ensure effective equality is embedded across leadership, curriculum, behaviour, governance and staff training.
- To ensure as far as possible that the membership of the Corporation reflects the diversity of the community served by the College
- To assure that the College's strategic and operational planning promotes equality and diversity and is consistent with legislative requirements
- To receive and respond to College monitoring of equality and diversity

- To be aware of their statutory responsibilities as an employer in relation to the equality duties

For Managers:

- To be aware of the College's statutory responsibilities with respect to the equality duties
- To take a lead in creating a positive, inclusive ethos that challenges discriminatory behaviour
- To annually monitor staff and student outcomes with respect to the protected characteristics, and to report and action plan
- To ensure that procedures for the recruitment and promotion of staff reflect best practice in equal opportunities
- To promote equality and diversity through College communications to external audiences
- To promote equality and diversity through the management of teaching schemes and styles of delivery
- To provide appropriate training and development in equality and diversity
- To take account of equality when shaping policy, and when introducing new procedures and policy and/or making a major amendment to existing, the college carries out an equality impact assessment.
- To ensure there are planned activities and opportunities for students to receive age-appropriate and impartial teaching about characteristics.

For Staff:

- To be aware of the College's statutory responsibilities with respect to the equality duties
- To promote a positive, inclusive ethos that challenges discriminatory behaviour
- To ensure students receive age-appropriate and impartial teaching about characteristics.

For Students:

- The induction programme for students will highlight the College's commitment to the Equality Duty, the action to be taken by students who suffer discrimination and the action to be taken against such perpetrators of discrimination.
- Staff will reinforce this information during tutorials or work based monitoring visits.

For Work Placement Providers:

- All work placement providers will receive a summary of their responsibilities under the policy.

Awareness of the Single Equality Scheme

- Our commitment to equality will be highlighted on our website and in annual reporting to Corporation.
- The monitoring, promoting and action planning with respect to our equality commitment will be annually reported to SMT and Corporation.
- All staff will be made aware of our commitment to equality and their respective duties through induction and training.
- Students will be made aware of our commitment through tutorial induction, core values and teaching schemes.

Complaints

Complaints will be dealt with through existing College procedures:

- For students this is the complaints process
- For staff this is the appropriate personnel policy available from the HR department

Reviewing and Updating

The Clerk to the Corporation is responsible for ensuring that the Single Equality Scheme and its component schemes are reviewed on an annual cycle.

The Clerk to the Corporation is additionally responsible for ensuring that the outcomes of monitoring under this Scheme are reported on an annual cycle.

Single Equality Scheme Practice

Equality and Diversity Statement

Wilberforce College is committed to the principles of equality and diversity for all members of the College community. This commitment underpins and impacts on every area of activity and influences how we all live and work together. The College will abide by current legislation and guidance.

This policy applies to actions or behaviours whilst attending functions associated with the College. Visitors to the College are also expected to comply with this policy.

We are opposed to any form of discrimination. We are committed to striving with all staff, students and partners to create an open and inclusive environment where everyone is treated fairly. Diversity is celebrated.

This means the College is a place where ALL staff and students, whatever their circumstances:

- Have been recruited with integrity
- Feel welcomed and respected
- Are treated in a supportive and friendly way
- Wherever possible, have full access to all our services

Creating an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for all is key to our equality and diversity strategy. Every member of our College is responsible for preventing discrimination against others.

As a College we will:

- Work actively towards promoting equality of opportunity for all of our students and staff in respect of:
 - access to and participation in education and training
 - selection, recruitment, promotion and staff training and personal development
 - the curriculum and resources used
 - the College environment
 - provision of support
- Foster a climate within the College community of high self-esteem, respect for others and commitment to maximise personal potential
- Address equal opportunities issues at the individual and institutional level with equal vigour
- Review and modify procedures and priorities as necessary to improve the implementation of the Single Equality Scheme

Equality and Diversity Explained

Equality

This is the means by which disadvantage and discrimination is reduced and eliminated by positive action. Equality ensures that no one receives less favourable treatment because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Diversity

This is the recognition that everyone is an individual. What we do responds to this diversity by adopting an approach that allows for individual differences and promotes opportunities for all. In celebrating diversity, we recognise and reflect the positive contributions of men and women of different social, cultural, and religious backgrounds; we welcome people of all abilities, ages, cultural backgrounds and sexual orientation.

Discrimination

This is where a person is treated differently by others because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Racism

This is when people have views and expectations about different nationalities, religious or ethnic groups and behave in ways that can lead to violence, abuse or lack of respect.

Bullying, harassment and intimidation

Unfortunately bullying and harassment happens to some people at school, in work and at College. The College does not tolerate any of these behaviours which make another person or group of people feel **unhappy, uncomfortable** or **vulnerable** (i.e. not safe).

The list below illustrates activities that we do not tolerate but the list is not exclusive or exhaustive:

- **Physical assault** – For example inappropriate or unwelcome physical contact, throwing things at others, damaging another's clothes or possession.
- **Verbal assault** – Insults, swearing, disrespectful language.
- **Threats** – Verbal or in writing, including using email or text messages.
- **Images that offend** – Offensive pictures displayed publicly or left to intimidate another, images or words that cause offence to others.
- **Racism, sexism or homophobia** – Any attitudes, procedures and patterns whose effect, though not necessarily whose conscious intention, is to create, maintain and extend power, influence and privilege to one group of people over another, or to consciously offend. This includes racist or sexist jokes; offensive gestures; graffiti; or symbols worn or displayed that cause offence to others.

- Sexual Harassment – unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline.

The College expects...

All staff and students should respect the sensitivities of all in the College community and seek not to cause intentional or unintentional offence through their actions.

If you have a concern regarding equality of opportunity:

1. Discuss this with your Teacher, Tutor or Manager
2. If they cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, record it in writing and submit it through the Complaints Procedure

RACE EQUALITY

Our commitment

The College celebrates and values the diversity brought to its students and to its workforce by individuals, and believes that the College will benefit from the participation of students and staff from a variety of racial, ethnic and national backgrounds, thus allowing it to play its part in promoting the value of a multicultural society. The College will treat all employees and students with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from racial discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

The College will seek not only to eliminate discrimination, but also 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 training and support for staff, to consult with staff about their experience of the working environment, and to provide diverse images in any 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 individuals and communities have equal access to learning programmes and facilities.

Definitions and scope

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]

The College recognises that institutional racism can exist, and that no organisation is immune to it.

This guidance is applicable to both College staff and student matters.

Meeting our duties

We will seek to ensure that:

- Governors, staff, students and their sponsors (including work placement providers) are aware of our race equality duty and the action needed for its implementation
- Staff, students and their sponsors are aware of the value placed upon equal opportunity and that action will be taken in the event of any breach of the duty
- Governors and staff have access to information sources, which assists them to plan, implement and monitor actions to carry out their responsibilities under the duty

We will also ensure the College's publicity materials present appropriate and positive messages about minority racial groups.

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.

Complaints

The College will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment.

Acts of racial discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation or abuse will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

Students who feel they are being discriminated against on racial grounds should raise the matter under the College Complaints Procedure, which will, if the accusation is upheld be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

Staff who feel they are being discriminated against on racial grounds by other members of staff should raise the matter under the Grievance Procedure, which will, if the accusation is upheld, be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

If, in the course of their work, College staff suffer racial discrimination from members of the public, the College will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support.

Any racist behaviour directed against staff by students will be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure.

Review and consultation

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with legislative developments and the need for good practice, by the appropriate committee of the Corporation.

As part of the review the College will seek and take into account the views of stakeholders including students; work placement providers, the local consultation/negotiating arrangements within the College, and appropriate equality bodies.

Implementation

The College, working in partnership with the recognised trade unions and employee representatives, will seek to ensure that all staffing policies and procedures (e.g. Recruitment and Selection Procedure) are non-discriminatory, and that monitoring and positive action processes are regularly reviewed and monitored.

General

This policy should not be read in isolation, but cross-referenced with all relevant College employment and student policies.

DISABILITY EQUALITY

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

Definitions

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" (The Equality Act 2010). The post Jan 2024 states: regarding 'working life' "the ability to participate fully and effectively in working life" (Update Jan 24)

The Equality Act 2010 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.

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.
- Indirect Discrimination, (Section 19A) (Update Jan24) The college recognises that the indirect discrimination can arise in more complex scenarios, not just from those with protected characteristics.

Meeting our duty

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.

Reasonable adjustments

- The College will seek to make reasonable adjustments, wherever possible, to accommodate individual needs; including adjustments related to working life, to support the ability to fully participate effectively. 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
 - Modifying a student's course and/or College expectations of a student in the light of diagnosed mental health difficulty
 - Modifying equipment

Disclosure

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.

Recruitment (staff) and admissions (students)

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Teaching and learning

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.

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.

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

Physical accommodation

The College is committed to making its site accessible; where necessary, adaptations to accommodation will be made subject to reasonable resource constraints.

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.

GENDER, GENDER REASSIGNMENT AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION EQUALITY

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.

Meeting our duty

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

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 Single Equality Scheme action plan.

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).

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 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.

The College recognises that same-sex couples have the same rights as married heterosexual couples.

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.

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.

AGE EQUALITY

Our commitment

The College does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of age, other than as legitimately defined within its admissions policies.

Meeting our duty

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.

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.

RELIGION AND BELIEF EQUALITY

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.

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
- 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.

Meeting our duty

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.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY

Our commitment

The college will seek to reduce social and economic inequalities.

Related documents:

[Equality Law and Policy Introduction December 2024.pdf](#)

DfE (2025) 'Equality duties on education inspection' <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-duties-on-education-inspection>