



ASHTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE EQUALITY SCHEME 2013-2016



Ashton Sixth Form College

EQUALITY SCHEME

2013-2016

INTRODUCTION BY THE PRINCIPAL

I am delighted to introduce the Equality Scheme 2013-2016 for Ashton Sixth Form College.

It has long been my desire to see a world, and an educational world in particular, articulate and live the values of the equality and diversity agenda. Whilst it is a commonplace to say it, we always need to be mindful of the fact that everyone is an individual and must be treated with the respect he or she deserves. We must create and organise our institutions so that this happens. Policies and procedures provide the parameters to ensure the best experience, in which people can work, operate and live on a daily basis.

I hope that this scheme goes a long way to ensure that the students, staff and all associated with Ashton Sixth Form College are treated not only fairly but with the respect and, dare I say it, love which they merit.

VISION FOR EQUALITY

The promotion of equality for all members of our community is central to all aspects of our provision at Ashton Sixth Form College. All members of our diverse community can expect to be treated fairly and with respect irrespective of their background. We are committed to working towards the eradication of any disadvantage that may occur from an individual's background.

ASHTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE CORE VALUES

- A focus on learners
- A determined and rigorous pursuit of excellence
- Respect diversity and inclusivity
- Honesty and integrity
- Collaborative, constructive teamwork and a sense of community
- A caring, healthy and safe environment

Valuing diversity and encouraging inclusivity makes all the other Core Values possible. Every Core Value reflects the outstanding approach of acceptance, tolerance and positive inclusion at Ashton Sixth Form College by all members of the college community and our visitors and partners.

COLLEGE MISSION

- To inspire students, enrich lives and foster a love of learning
- To inspire staff to lead fulfilling professional lives
- To celebrate achievement and success
- To promote wellbeing and nurture a collaborative college-wide community
- To make a positive contribution to the wider community
- To play a key role in educational developments

EQUALITY SCHEME CONTEXT

Ashton Sixth Form College has over 2,000 students aged 16 to 18, most of whom are full-time, and around 800 adults enrolled in full- and part-time provision, including higher education. Educational provision encompasses over forty A level subjects as well as a variety of subjects at levels 2 and 3 vocational (BTEC extended diploma.)

The borough of Tameside has a population of over 200,000 and consists of seven towns. The largest towns are Ashton-under-Lyne and Hyde. The proportion of residents from minority ethnic groups is below the national average of 14% at around 9%. 70% of residents identified with a religion out of which 64% identified as Christian and 4% as Muslim.

Other economic indicators show that Tameside residents have some of the lowest rates of pay in the Greater Manchester sub-region and almost a third of households do not have access to a car. 28% of Tameside residents have no qualifications at all (22% nationally.) The college is ranked in the bottom 25% of the most deprived sixth form colleges nationally when taking into account the student cohort.

COLLEGE PROFILE

In 2012/13 the profile of learners from the 16-19 cohort was 49% male and 51% female. Almost 17% of the population come from a black minority ethnic background with the largest groups from the Bangladeshi and Pakistani community (4.5% each.) There was 14% of the population who declared themselves to have a disability (9%) or learning difficulty (5%) and 46% of the population came from a ward uplift area, (a postcode area of socio economic disadvantage.)

In our cohort of learners over the age of nineteen in our Higher Education and Skills provision 2012/13, the gender profile was 72% female and 28% male. 78% of learners are white and 22% from black minority ethnic backgrounds. This is almost three times as many as in the local community of Tameside. Within the 22%, 7% have a Pakistani background, 5% black African, 3% Indian and 2% Bangladeshi. The remaining 5% consists of learners from other ethnic groups with small numbers. 14 % of learners declared a disability or learning difficulty and 63% came from a ward uplift postcode.

We are proud of our excellent record for academic and personal achievement between all groups. There is rarely an achievement gap greater than 5% and whenever an achievement gap is identified, strategies are implemented in a timely manner resulting in a positive impact in closing the identified gap.

MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 sets out 9 protected characteristics:

- Race and ethnicity
- Gender
- Disability and learning difficulty
- Sexual orientation
- Religion, faith and belief
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

We expect that all members of the college community, and those who visit our premises including our strategic and informal partners, will promote equality, tackle all forms of discrimination and foster good working relationships between diverse groups. Everyone, regardless of their background, will at all times be treated fairly, with respect and will value others equally thus preventing discrimination.

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the subsequent Public Sector Equality Duty April 2011 we make a firm commitment at Ashton Sixth Form College to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

To actively comply with the legislation, Equality Objectives were published in March 2012 and will be reviewed annually. We also continue to carry out Equality Impact Assessment of new plans, proposals, procedures and policies to eradicate potential discrimination. Equality Analysis is also an integral part of our business plans and strategic review practice.

LEGAL PROTECTION OF THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Regulations provide protection against discrimination and harassment.

They do not establish entitlements. The following criteria are unlawful under the Equality Act 2010:

Direct Discrimination – Where someone is treated less favourably than another person on the grounds of their protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination: Applying a “provision, criterion or practice” which disadvantages a person.

Harassment: Is defined as circumstances that violate a person’s dignity, or that create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This includes having regard to all circumstances, in particular the perception of the complainant, “it should be reasonably considered” that the conduct being complained of resulted in harassment.

Liability: This can fall on both the employer and on the employee who is found to have acted in a discriminatory way.

Burden of proof: Employers will need to prove that they did not discriminate or harass, once the complainant has made a prima facie case.

Relationships, which come to an end: it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a former employee after the working relationship between them has ended, if the act is closely linked to the former relationship, e.g. the employer refuses to give a reference because of someone’s religion or sexuality.

For more information on The Equality Act 2010 see
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities or
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Promoting Equality

Prior to application and entry to Ashton Sixth Form College, the prospectus and website are the first points of contact for potential learners. Both the prospectus and website embrace the opportunity to promote equality with images of learners which reflect the diverse community of Ashton Sixth Form College as well as the extensive range of courses on offer.

The website is updated regularly and highlights the college celebration of national equality dates (for example LGBT month, Black History month, Anti-Bullying week) as well as local equality and diversity events and achievements of learners from diverse backgrounds.

At the core of promoting equality is an inclusive curriculum offer for learners. To facilitate this, all staff receive regular professional and EDI training. This is applied

with auditing of planning documents/ learning environments to maximise the opportunities which arise for promotion of equality.

Every opportunity is taken to remove potential barriers to accessing the curriculum. The tutorial system further takes the opportunity to raise awareness with all learners on a variety of current equality issues. The extensive offer of enrichment activities complements the curriculum.

Throughout Ashton Sixth Form College, inclusive displays and events are organised to raise awareness and to foster good learner relationships linking to national celebratory dates.

Opportunities are provided for learners of all backgrounds to contribute to learner voice surveys and focus groups. In addition, learners are invited to participate in a learner led equality group focussed on discussions around various issues and also to lead action research to gather learner views.

Within the college staff teams, we have a firm commitment to ensuring that staff from all backgrounds can fulfil their potential. Where appropriate, we will apply positive action to balance any underrepresented groups. Our aim is to ensure that our staff profile reflects society and the local community as well as the learner population.

Tackling Discrimination

A key element of tackling discrimination is the extensive analysis of data by Protected Characteristics. Where achievement gaps are identified, actions are put into place at college and also course level as evidenced through the annual self assessment reporting cycle.

Incident reporting is continually developed to ensure that learners and staff are confident to report any discrimination they may see or experience through a variety of formal and informal channels. Where discrimination is reported, actions are taken to eradicate this as appropriate and the victim/perpetrator are supported in appropriate ways.

Training for staff in confidence to recognise and challenge discrimination is updated regularly. Please see appendix for reporting procedures and follow up.

Policies, procedures and plans are Equality Impact Assessed to minimise the risk of disadvantage to any group by new developments in any area.

Strategies are in place to actively recruit from under represented protected groups in staff. The objective is for the staff population to represent the learner population as closely as possible.

Fostering Good Relations

To maintain our harmonious college community, building bridges between the different learner groups in Ashton Sixth Form College is a priority.

Staff develop curriculum activities designed to encourage learners to understand different groups in society and how they are disadvantaged as relevant to the subject area. Furthermore a variety of group work features across the curriculum and in tutorials to encourage learners to interact with each other.

The work done within lessons is supported by college wide events and enrichment activities, including an annual college community day. Alongside this event staff also have an annual enrichment day integral to their other staff activities to provide opportunities to build stronger relationships between staff.

Partnership working within the community of Tameside continues to be an important part of building relations between learners and their community. A diverse range of volunteering opportunities are actively promoted and encouraged. The Chaplaincy is pro active in fostering good relations between learners of different faiths as well as building partnerships with community organisations.

Globally, Ashton Sixth Form College has established links with the Nile Vocational Institute in Uganda through Ugandaid charity. This raises awareness and provides valuable opportunities for learners and staff to engage with global issues of poverty in the developing world. Links are also being developed for partnership learning within Chinese education establishments, including Chinese teachers visiting college and return visits by students and teachers.

SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS TO ADVANCE EQUALITY FOR PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

RACE

All members of the community at Ashton Sixth Form College can expect to be treated fairly regardless of their ethnic heritage. We pro actively encourage learners and staff from diverse backgrounds to study and work at Ashton Sixth Form College.

Any form of racial discrimination will not be tolerated in our community and if learners or staff are reported as being involved in acts of racism, (physical, verbal or online,) they can expect disciplinary procedures in accordance to college procedures. It is our moral duty to proactively promote equality to foster relationships between persons from diverse backgrounds and take necessary measures to tackle discrimination and to improve inclusivity.

RELIGION

Ashton Sixth Form College has a firm commitment to respecting all religious beliefs and practices and developing understanding. There are learners and staff at Ashton Sixth Form College from all major religions. Facilitating harmony between members of our community from different religious perspectives centres on the provision of a multi faith Chaplaincy including cross college events.

Provision for Christian worship

Prayer meetings are held weekly and calendar dates marked with appropriate celebrations. A Christian union meets weekly and is open to staff and students to discuss issues and reflect the Christian views in our community.

Provision for Muslim worship

Jumma prayers are held weekly and appropriate ablution facilities are in place to enable learners and staff to pray whilst on college premises. Dates of Ramadan and Eid are highlighted and suitable adjustments made to curriculum, assessment, examinations etc. to accommodate these key Muslim dates.

We support young Muslim women in their choice when wishing to wear the Hijab scarf in accordance to their religious practice. Where the full face is covered by the Niqab or Burqa then a discussion will take place with parents/ guardians to establish reasonable means of identification on college records that will not contravene religious expectations of the learner.

Provision for Hindu worship

Ashton Sixth Form College enables a society for Hindu learners to facilitate greater understanding of the Hindu faith. This society has national links with university societies. Diwali is marked with a celebratory event/ display.

Provision for worship of other faiths

The multi-faith Chaplaincy will facilitate worship for learners and staff of other faiths as required through discussion with the Chaplain. The Chaplain maintains strong links with Tameside multi-faith committee and will endeavour to support all faiths. The quiet space offered by the Chaplaincy is open to all the community including those of no faith.

DISABILITY/ LEARNING DIFFICULTY

Ashton Sixth Form College welcomes learners and staff who have a disability/ learning difficulty and will endeavour at all times to ensure reasonable adjustments are made to facilitate access to services, facilities and to learning and working.

Accessibility is central to successful learning and working for disabled people and we will continue to make sure facilities are kept accessible to enable full participation in college life.

Senior tutors and the Inclusive Learning team will provide one to one support for learners with a disability or learning difficulty to meet individual requirements. The Inclusive Learning team will also facilitate further assessment of learning support needs as they arise during a learner's course of study. Examinations are adapted according to any learner's additional needs with the specified additional time plus suitable locations tailored to an individual's needs.

Line managers and Human Resources develop individual plans for disabled staff as part of the performance management review process so adjustments can be made and changing needs met. The aim is to retain staff with a disability or learning difficulty and ensure they can participate fully in continuing professional development to fulfil their career aims without discrimination.

Mental Health

At Ashton Sixth Form College we are aware of the growing need to provide an inclusive service for learners and staff who experience mental health issues, whether temporary or as an ongoing condition. We are committed to providing support through the dedicated counselling provision, links with external agencies and through the pastoral provision. Learners or staff who experience mental health issues can expect to be treated on an individual basis and a support plan developed as appropriate with the Additional Learning Support team/ Human Resources to enable their integration and success.

GENDER

Ashton Sixth Form College is committed to equality between males/females and endeavours to identify and close any gaps between learners in achievement and staff in pay.

All recruitment and promotions are screened for gender bias and learners encouraged and supported to study non traditional gender subjects. Female staff are given the opportunity to develop management careers through association with the Women's Leadership Network. Recruitment aims to balance male representation in departments.

TRANSGENDER

We are committed to fully supporting any learners or workers with their preferred gender identity and to eradicate any victimisation or harassment that may occur. When this involves gender reassignment, consultation will take place and appropriate adjustments made to meet the needs of the staff or learner as required so they continue to feel included in college life. They will be able to use facilities, including toilets, as appropriate to their preferred gender.

AGE

Our provision caters in the majority for learners between the ages of 16-19. There is, however, a significant number of learners in the Higher Education and Skills provision (800) who span all ages up to seventy plus. No member of our community should experience any discrimination based on their age, including staff, and we welcome the diversity that different ages bring to the college community.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Learners and staff of all sexual orientations are welcome to learn and work at Ashton Sixth Form College. For both learners and staff, any form of discrimination based on sexual orientation will not be tolerated and appropriate disciplinary actions according to college procedures will be implemented for any perpetrators of discrimination.

There is support available within college through the counselling service and tutorial system plus the learner led equality group includes support for LGB learners. Links with outside agencies to provide additional channels of support are publicised and groups invited in.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

Discrimination towards learners or staff on the grounds of pregnancy is seen to be of equal weighting and every commitment is made to ensure support and legal requirements are met.

Support for learners is available specifically through the pastoral system, including any potential child protection issues, and counselling service. It is seen as essential to ensure learners are able to fulfil their achievement and cases will be treated on an individual basis with appropriate adaptations made.

Maternity provision for staff, including parental leave for adoption, follows all legal requirements and is also treated on an individual basis with support, including flexible working, in place to ensure re-integration into the workplace.

MARRIAGE

There will be no discrimination based on marital status whereby those staff who are in a civil partnership can expect the same rights and benefits as married employees. This includes the right to flexible working, training, paternity/ maternity/parental pay and leave, and pensions.

SOCIO ECONOMIC

Although there is no requirement under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality and tackle discrimination related to economic background, when we have a consistent percentage of learners at Ashton Sixth Form College of about 50% who come from ward uplift areas, this is essential in our strategic planning and delivery.

We make a firm commitment to support learners who may be disadvantaged due to their economic circumstances with wrap-around learning support and facilities. We

prioritise our own bursary scheme to help those who are most in need of financial support.

Another key aspect for socio-economically disadvantaged learners is in raising aspirations. To develop this area, we have a dedicated officer whose role is to widen the learners' outlook and aims to include the Russell group universities. We have also formed a partnership with Pembroke College, Oxford to specifically encourage learners to aspire to Oxbridge and remove some of the barriers that they may perceive.

ACTION PLAN TO ADVANCE EQUALITY

The actions resulting from self assessment to continue improving equality for all at Ashton Sixth Form College are embedded into the following:

- Equality Objectives (due for revision March 2016)
- Cross College Self Assessment Report – clearly identified as equality & diversity in relevant sections (updated annually.)
- Subject areas Self Assessment Reports – identified by EDI (updated annually.)
- Equality & Diversity report to governors– thorough review of all data and resulting actions annually. A summarised version of the headline data is in the public domain through the website.

Other relevant College documents that relate to advancing equality include:

- Safeguarding Strategy and Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy

RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal & Deputy Principal

- To ensure that the Ashton Sixth Form College Equality Scheme 2013-2016 is accurate, thus enabling Ashton Sixth Form College to fulfil its legislative duties through the Scheme.
- To ensure that actions to promote equality, tackle discrimination and foster good relations are embedded into strategic planning and documentation including the cross college self assessment report.

Governing Body

- To ratify the Equality Scheme as a legal document and monitor the progress of advancing equality, tackling discrimination and fostering good relations through the annual Equality & Diversity report.
- To stretch and challenge staff and managers to deliver on the equality objectives and to ensure that they progress the college equality policy

Senior Leadership Team:

- Equality & Diversity Line Manager to supervise Equality & Diversity Co-ordinator with preparing data, Equality & Diversity Report to Governors, developing reporting and cross college equality and diversity activities.
- It is the role of the Assistant Principals to review subject Self Assessment Reports and ensure that they reflect the Equality Scheme and deliver on the college equality objectives with appropriate actions to advance equality.
- Assistant Principal Student Services to monitor the embedding of equality and diversity into the pastoral programme
- Ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on new and revised policies, proposals, procedures and plans. Ensure that Equality Analysis is integral to all decision, policies and procedures in line with equality legislation.

Head of Subject

- To proactively monitor success rates and value added; by national origin, nationality and ethnic origin, gender, disability/ability and other Protected Characteristics within their courses.
- To implement appropriate actions to redress any imbalance highlighted by equality/academic data.
- To ensure that course materials are proactively audited for bias, sensitivity towards disadvantaged groups and opportunities to promote equality, diversity and inclusion are utilised to full effect.

Support Area Managers:

- To embed relevant actions to advance equality, tackle discrimination and foster good relations into their Self Assessment Reports.
- To understand how important their role is in ensuring that Ashton Sixth Form College is fully inclusive for staff, learners and potential learners from all backgrounds. Monitoring publicity, resources and accommodation is central to the well being of all groups.

All Staff

- To be aware of the Equality Scheme and its importance in improving the experience of learners from all groups attending college.
- To be proactive in valuing, accepting and understanding different groups within curriculum design, planning and delivery. To challenge discriminatory behaviour, including intolerant views, actions and language at all times, firmly embedding equality and diversity into all policies, practice and procedures.
- Support staff to proactively challenge any discriminatory behaviour and promote tolerance as relevant to their role.

APPENDIX

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE APRIL 2012-16	EQUALITY OBJECTIVE MEASURE
Maintain low level of equality and diversity incidents reported and encourage further understanding by learners of how to report incidents.	Measured through the number of incidents reported and resolved.
Develop a learner involvement strategy to increase the participation of learners in celebrating equality & diversity.	Measured through the number of events, including displays and online, that learners are involved in organising.
Encourage integration in college of learners from different protected characteristics outside their scheduled lesson time.	Measured through bi annual survey. Outcomes included in the Equality & Diversity report to Governors.
Monitor retention of learners on level 3 courses and develop appropriate strategies at course level to close any retention gaps between groups from different ethnic backgrounds.	Measured through annual equality & diversity data from subject outcomes. Data analysis included in the Equality & Diversity report to Governors.
Monitor retention and achievement of learners by ward uplift to minimise disadvantage through socio economic background.	Measured through annual equality & diversity data from subject outcomes. In addition, measurement through retention on the college bursary scheme.
Work towards the staff population reflecting the learner population by continued strategies to attract and appoint suitable candidates.	Measured through increased percentages of staff from black minority ethnic backgrounds and with a disability/ learning difficulty.
Develop strategies to encourage staff and learner disclosure of protected characteristics.	Measured by an increased percentage of staff who disclose information (above 43%) and disclosure of further protected characteristics where data is not currently collected.

STAFF GUIDE TO REPORTING OF EQUALITY & DIVERSITY INCIDENTS

STUDENT RELATED

If the incident involves language then the first step is to challenge it within the learning environment as you see appropriate, which may be that the learner needs to be spoken to in a one to one situation. Reinforce the college expectations of appropriate use of language and explain that their comments contravene our policies of tolerance and inclusion for all regardless of their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, any disability or learning difficulty or age.

If the student then repeats their inappropriate use of language, then it needs to be reported through pro monitor using the following steps:

- Go to the students profile
- Learner actions and comments
- Add new comment
- Comment type
- Scroll down to 90: Report and Equality & Diversity incident
- Make sure it is sent through to Cathy Mathias as well as the tutor so I can be alerted.

If the incident involves physical contact, an element of bullying or harassment then it needs to be reported immediately at the first occasion.

College disciplinary procedures will then be put in place as appropriate to the level of the incident.

Please remember that there needs to be an element of racism, sexism, anti disability attitude, religious prejudice, ageism or homophobia for the incident to come through to the Equality & Diversity Co-ordinator. All other incidents need to be reported to tutors/ senior tutors in the usual way.

SITE RELATED

If the incident is not directly related to a student, eg. racist/ homophobic graffiti then please use the 'report a job to site staff' section of the staff intranet. This will then be referred to the Equality & Diversity Co-ordinator.

STAFF RELATED

If you observe a member of staff contravening our Equality & Diversity policies and the expectation of acceptance and inclusion at Ashton Sixth Form College towards all members of its community, then please communicate this to the Equality & Diversity Co-ordinator. You may choose how this information is communicated, face to face, through a letter or electronically. All information will be treated confidentially and then, if applicable, appropriate human resource policies will be referred to and suitable measures taken to rectify the situation.



At ASFC
we pride ourselves
in our diverse
and harmonious
community.

We want our college to be free from bullying and discrimination.

If you experience Bullying or Discrimination, we want to know so we can help.

Talk to

Your tutor/ teacher
Peer Mentor

The Chaplain, Jean Hurlston
jmh@asfc.ac.uk

Equality Co-ordinator, Cathy Mathias
cm@asfc.ac.uk

Find us

Tutor base/ classroom
Costa coffee base room

Chaplaincy

Art office A2.1



Unsure? Still talk to us. We will support you.