

Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation, Disability.

Responsible Officer: Principal and Chief Executive
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Policy available: Staff and student intranet/website
Version: Final



Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Policy and Principles

a. Principles

Milton Keynes College seeks to provide the opportunity for all to learn and achieve, no matter what their age, personal beliefs, background or circumstances.

It is the policy of Milton Keynes College to recognise and encourage the valuable and enriching contribution which people from a range of backgrounds and experiences can bring to the life and development of the institution.

We aim to provide a range of education and training programmes which encourages everyone to participate in learning. Through our teaching, administration and support services, and our work in the community, we will promote equality of opportunity and access to success.

This policy underpins our duty to promote equality, diversity and inclusion under equality legislation and directives.

Including:

- *Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000*
- *The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005*
- *The Human Rights Act 1998*
- *The Learning and Skills Act 2000*
- *The Special Educational Needs Disability Act 2001*
- *The Equality Act 2006*
- *The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006*
- *The Education Act 2002 (as amended)*
- *The Children Act 2004*
- *The Child Care Act 2006*
- *The Sex Discrimination Act 1975*
- *The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003*
- *The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003*

b. Policy

Our aim at Milton Keynes College is to create an environment and culture where every member of the College is treated fairly on the basis of their abilities and potential without regard to the following (except where legislation makes special provision):

- Gender (including transgender)
- Ethnicity
- Disability or Learning Difficulty
- Sexual Orientation

- Age
- Religion or Beliefs
- Cultural background
- Marital status or family circumstances
- Trade union membership or activity
- or other relevant difference

2. Aims

- a. We will provide a portfolio of programmes that enables us to meet a wide range of individual learners' needs, goals and aspirations
- b. Our procedures for recruiting and selecting staff will be sensitive to, and promote, equality of opportunity
- c. We will ensure that the ethos and environment of the College enables all learners, staff and visitors to feel welcome, supported and valued, with access for all to our facilities and services
- d. We will encourage learners and staff to recognise, understand and value diversity
- e. We will develop our learner induction and tutorial programmes so as to enable learners to understand our policy, its implications, and how they can contribute to achieving greater equality of opportunity
- f. We will provide training for all College staff and governors to enable them to understand our policy, participate in its implementation and promote equality of opportunity
- g. We will promote equality and diversity to suppliers, partners and stakeholders
- h. We will monitor the effectiveness of the College's and other related policies
- i. We will consider equal opportunities issues in all aspects of College life and business and ensure that College policies and procedures are developed to positively support and develop Equality of Opportunity and Diversity both within the College and in the community

3. Scope

The policy applies to all aspects of the College's programmes and services, to all learners and staff and visitors.

4. Rights

Under the College Equal Opportunities Policy learners have the right to:

- learn and achieve
- be treated fairly in all aspects of their learning at the College
- be treated with respect by all other members of the College community
- be valued for their contribution to the life of the College in an environment which:-
 - encourages each and every person to contribute fully, on an equal basis

- is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying
- is supportive of equal opportunities
- takes sensitive and supportive action if discrimination, harassment and/or bullying is suspected

5. Responsibilities

Learners and staff are required to treat all members of this College community with consideration and respect, showing fairness and honesty. They must not bully or harass.

This means they must not:

- use behaviour which is unwanted, inappropriate, causes distress or is unacceptable to others
- threaten to undermine the safety of themselves or of others
- persecute others by intimidation, unfair, sarcastic or malicious behaviour
- illegally or unfairly discriminate against others
- use language which is offensive or disrespectful of others

In all aspects of their behaviour, learners and staff should respect and value the contribution of all members of the College community.

Learners should report to a member of staff any incident which infringes either their own or other people's rights. If learners feel that they are being treated unfairly or without respect, they are encouraged to talk to somebody they trust to help them. They should let someone in authority know about the situation. The Milton Keynes College Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedures describe the action that is taken when misconduct occurs.

If a member of staff feels (s)he is being treated unfairly or without respect, (s)he is encouraged to discuss the matter with her/his line manager, Human Resources team or other manager, as appropriate. Reference should be made to the staff Policies and Procedures for Grievance and Harassment and Bullying, available on the staff intranet and from the Human Resources team.

The College expects partners, employers, contractors and agencies with which it works to have Equal Opportunities Policies based on values similar to those of the College. If College equal opportunities standards are not being met during any form of collaboration, the College will encourage the organisation to raise standards and will not continue with the relationship if this is not done.

6. Monitoring the Policy

We will monitor our policy and procedures through formal and regular reviews of the College's Equality Scheme Action Plan and by:

- monitoring our intake and retention of staff and students based on age, ethnicity, disability and learning difficulties
- monitoring complaints which are equal opportunities related
- monitoring student disciplinary outcomes by group and staff disciplinary grievance, harassment and bullying by group
- monitoring our tutorial and personal and professional development process to see if equal opportunities issues are raised
- seeking student feedback through the student council, the Equal Access Forum and quality processes

- seeking staff feedback via a variety of established channels/mechanisms

7. Responsibility for Implementation

Responsibility for the implementation of Milton Keynes College's Equality of Opportunity Policy lies with the Principal and Chief Executive.

Responsibility for ensuring that the Equal Opportunities Policy is implemented lies with the Corporation.