

Procedures Manual

01.26.01 POLICY ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION OF LEARNERS

PURPOSE To ensure learners are not discriminated against or harassed because of their sexual orientation

SCOPE All learners enrolled at West Suffolk College

RESPONSIBILITY Student Welfare Team, All Staff

PROCEDURE

Sexual Orientation Policy

1 Statement of Intent

This policy is intended to support West Suffolk College in its public duty to have due regard (i) to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation against learners because of their sexual orientation (ii) advancing equality of opportunity between learners who share a particular sexual orientation and with people who do not and (iii) fostering good relations between learners who share a particular sexual orientation and people who do not.

The College's Commitment

The College encourages, celebrates and values lawful diversity brought to the College by individual learners. The College is committed to equality of treatment for all learners. This will apply to the operation and implementation of all policies relating to learners. The College will treat all learners with dignity and respect, and seek to provide a positive learning environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation in relation to the learner's sexual orientation.

The aim is to produce a positive inclusive ethos with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination, to respecting diversity and difference and to encourage good relations between people within the College regardless of their sexual orientation.

The College will work towards the elimination of prejudice and discrimination, whether overt or covert, and will seek to foster good relations between learners who share and/or have differing sexual orientations

The College will ensure that all learners have equal access to the full range of College facilities.

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Where personal information is divulged in confidence, every attempt will be made to respect this.

2 Meeting our Commitment

The College will not discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in the way it recruits and selects learners and arranges progression.

The College will ensure that all learners regardless of their sexual orientation shall have equal rights to the use of facilities, benefits and services.

The College will ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in relation to the exclusion of learners.

Harassment or victimisation on the grounds of sexual orientation is viewed by the College as a very serious offence and in such cases the [04.26.01 Student Disciplinary Procedure](#) will be followed. If it is proved that a learner is harassed by another learner it may lead to the expulsion of the harasser.

The College will ensure that any references provided to enquirers are not influenced in any way by the sexual orientation of the learners.

3 Ensuring Equality and Diversity

Homophobic or other sexually orientated abuse, harassment or bullying (for example name-calling, derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour and intrusive questions) are serious disciplinary offences, and should be dealt with under the appropriate procedure.

Homophobic or other negative sexually orientated propaganda, in the forms of written materials, graffiti, music or speeches will not be tolerated. The College undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on the premises.

The College values all its learners equally, and will endeavour to create an environment in which all learners, whatever their sexual orientation, feel equally valued and welcomed.

The College aims to eliminate sexual orientation discrimination in its structures and practices as well as to encourage change in individual behaviour and attitudes, and ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all learners, regardless of their sexual orientation.

The holding of beliefs religious or otherwise which regard any lawful sexual orientation as morally wrong will not be a justification for harassment, abuse, propaganda or insults directed against learners regardless of their sexual orientation.

The College environment, in terms of its pictures, images, publicity materials and literature should reflect the diversity of its learners including diverse sexualities.

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The College will provide a supportive environment for learners who wish it to be known that they are of a particular sexual orientation. However, it is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their sexual orientation in the College. Revealing the sexual orientation of a learner without his or her permission is a form of harassment.

The College recognises that learners of different sexual orientations come from diverse backgrounds, and will strive to ensure that they do not face discrimination either on the grounds of their sexual orientation or with regard to other aspects of their identity (for example race, gender, age, religion or disability).

4 Division of Responsibility

Governors are responsible for ensuring that:

- the College's strategic plan includes a commitment to sexual orientation equality

Equalities training is a part of the College's strategic plan Managers are responsible for ensuring that the senior management team have responsibility for taking the lead in challenging discriminatory behaviour relating to sexual orientation on the part of managers and learners and creating a positive, inclusive ethos

- they are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to sexual orientation legislation
- all aspects of College policy and activity are sensitive to issues in relation to learners of different sexual orientations
- the procedures for the recruitment, selection and progression of learners enshrines best practice in equal opportunities
- the College's publicity materials present appropriate positive and non-stereotypical messages about people of diverse sexual orientations appropriate training and development is provided to support the appreciation and understanding of diversity

Staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- they are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to equality and diversity legislation
- they challenge all discriminatory behaviour relating to sexual orientation, whether deliberate or otherwise, by learners

5 Publicising our Policy and Progress

This should go to:

- The Public:

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The College's commitment to equality, including sexual orientation equality will be included in the College publicity material

- Learners:

All learners will have access to or receive a full copy of the policy.

The learners' induction programme should highlight the College's commitment to sexual orientation equality, the action that can be taken by learners who suffer discrimination harassment or victimisation and the action to be taken as to any perpetrators of such discrimination, harassment or victimisation

6 Complaints

The College will aim to provide a supportive environment for learners who make claims of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or abuse on the grounds of sexual orientation will be treated as a serious matter.

Learners who feel they are being discriminated against on the grounds of their sexual orientation by other learners or members of staff should raise the matter with their Personal tutor or student services, which will, if the accusation is upheld, be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

If, in the course of work placements, learners suffer sexual orientation discrimination, the College will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support.

7 General

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

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