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Equality & Diversity Strategy

1. The National Legislative Framework

The Equality Act 2010 aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises previous legislation to provide a new discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatments and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The Act consolidates the General Equality Duty and establishes a new Public Sector Equality Duty for public authorities covering nine protected characteristics: disability, age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, and marriage and civil partnerships.

2. Policy Statement on Equality and Diversity

We are fully committed to eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity for our staff and students. We believe that where equality of opportunity exists, all staff and students work in a more rewarding and less stressful environment, one where prejudice and harassment are not accepted, and one more likely to enhance performance and achievement.

We will seek to promote and maintain an inclusive and supportive environment that respects the dignity of staff and students and assists all members of our College community to achieve their full potential.

3. Aims of the strategy

- To ensure that all staff and students whether existing or potential receive fair and equal treatment in all aspects of college life.
- To work towards the elimination of physical, social and economic barriers to access for all staff, students and visitors.
- To ensure that the College environment is welcoming and supportive, where all staff, students and visitors accept their responsibility to uphold equality and show respect to others.
- To allow all who work and visit the College in whatever capacity to participate fully and achieve their potential.

4. Objectives of the strategy

- To monitor College policies, procedures and practices to ensure that they are free from discrimination across all protected characteristics through an ongoing programme of impact assessments.
- To maintain a safe, secure environment for staff and students.

- To investigate any allegations of discrimination sensitively and appraise necessary actions accordingly.
- To provide as wide a range as possible of facilities and support services in order to meet the educational needs of students.
- To ensure that curriculum design and content meets the needs of all learners by ensuring that both programme planning and teaching and learning methods and approaches are appropriate and reflect individual differences.
- To encourage feedback from staff and students covering their experiences and suggestions for continuous service improvement.
- To monitor the admission, achievement and progression of students to help them to fulfil their potential, regardless of their background.
- To monitor the recruitment profile of all applications for employment to ensure that appointments are made on merit and from the best possible field of applicants.
- To promote awareness of diversity and tolerance for difference amongst students and staff through training and celebratory events.
- To provide staff with training to raise awareness of equality issues and equip them with the knowledge and skills required to meet our students' educational needs.
- To monitor staff development activity and the recruitment and progression of staff to prevent discrimination from occurring and to take positive action to address shortfalls should they be found.
- To measure and report on the impact of the strategy.

5. Committee Framework

The Equality & Diversity Committee at Southport College comprises the College Principal, College Management Team members, college staff and student representation by Student Focus Groups/Student Council.

It is supported by a subgroup committee structure comprising an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Group and a Promotions Group.

The Committee reports to the College Executive Team and Governors and publishes any findings of the Committee as appropriate.

Minutes and reports are stored on the College Intranet and made available in the College Library.

6. Remit and review

In order to carry out its responsibilities and commitment to Equality and Diversity, the College has in place an overarching Equality & Diversity Strategy which is supported by a range of policies and through monitored annual action plans. The College's Equality & Diversity Committee is well established with a remit to oversee and generate actions relating to the implementation of the College's Equality & Diversity Strategy. This role incorporates both monitoring the College's compliance with current legislative requirements; and appraising the progress and effectiveness of action plans, SARs and Equality & Diversity Strategy documents. It ensures these practices are also duly carried out by subcontractors of College learning provision.

Equality data are gathered as part of recruitment, enrolment, appointment, retention, achievement, and staff development and promotion. Summary reports are presented to the Committee for review. Staff and students are surveyed in relation to equality of treatment and opportunity and responses analysed. Departmental EDIM reports are monitored for their impact on the continuous development of an inclusive curriculum offer. Strategy and policy documentation and procedures are equality impact assessed to look for any adverse effect they may have on staff, students or the wider community.

7. Policy Framework

Southport College's Equality & Diversity Strategy is an integral part of the College's Mission to provide high quality education and training for individuals and employers. It is supported and enhanced by the following policy documents and procedures:

- The College Charter
- Learner Involvement Strategy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure
- The Disability Statement
- Recruitment and HR policies and strategies
- Student Services policies and strategies
- Learning Provision Subcontracts

8. Future Developments

Future review of this strategy will involve due regard being paid to outcomes from the work undertaken as part of the monitoring process.

This strategy is also intended to be reactive to legislative changes and will be amended accordingly.

It is intended for the Strategy to be reviewed within a two year cycle.