

LINK19 COLLEGE



Equality & Diversity Policy

Reviewed Date: Summer 2024

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Equality & Diversity Policy

1. Policy statement

LINK19 College is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity for all, it embraces diversity and will seek to promote the benefits of diversity in all its activities. LINK19 College values the differences, needs and contributions that the diverse college community represents and strives to be an all-inclusive environment where individual differences are respected and encouraged.

LINK19 College takes positive steps to ensure that all learners, parents and carers, current and prospective employees are not discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

LINK19 College is committed to the principle and practice of equal opportunities and celebrates the diversity of people. LINK19 College understands that these two concepts are not the same but are complementary. Without recognising and, most importantly, valuing differences between people, there cannot be true equality of opportunity. Moreover, LINK19 College promotes individual life-enhancing opportunities that respect all people and seeks to build and improve schemes to help challenge and bring down barriers for all learners. This includes broadening the range and depth of positive experiences of life both inside and outside LINK19 College and embedding ourselves within our wider communities, including at local, county, national and international levels.

This policy also relates to our responsibility to promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and our duty to deliver an effective, spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum.

LINK19 College seeks to develop a culture that reflects these beliefs to ensure that everyone within the LINK19 College community, regardless of protected characteristics are treated equally.

LINK19 College:

- places an obligation upon its entire staff to respect and act in accordance with this policy
- extends this positive attitude in respect of equality and diversity to its contractors, learners and the community.

Our aim is to ensure that there are equal opportunities for all learners, staff, their families and the wider community, regardless of protected characteristic and this forms an integral part of the LINK19 College quality improvement plan.

This document sets out the Equality and Diversity Policy of LINK19 College. It explains why equality and diversity are important to it, the basic principles it will follow and how it intends to monitor and achieve its progress. It brings together all aspects of equality and diversity, reflecting the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 and our responsibilities as a public body to deliver the Public Sector Equality Duty.

2. Introduction

It is the responsibility of every learner, member of staff, director, contractor and visitor to make sure they do not unlawfully discriminate and/or harass in any way. Each has a duty for owning and implementing this Equality & Diversity Policy.

All job applicants, staff and learners will be informed of LINK19 College's commitment to equality and valuing diversity and the Equality & Diversity Policy will be made available on request.

We aim to encourage our learners to respect individual differences. Through LINK19 College's approach to PSHE, life skills and SMSC related linked learning activities, we try to foster attitudes and ways of behaving which respect individuals regardless of protected characteristics or social circumstances. LINK19 College is opposed to any form of discrimination and seeks to build partnerships with learners, staff, directors and parents and carers to fight prejudice both in college and in the community. Staff ensure that all aspects of diverse cultures and religions are viewed positively and seek opportunities to make use of materials that will support this. We are committed to include all learners in all college activities where this may be managed without risk to health and safety.

LINK19 College policies are developed to ensure that there is no negative or adverse impact on any individual or group in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. All opportunities for potential positive impact on individuals, groups and the community are embedded within the ethos, vision and values of LINK19 College.

3. LINK19 College aims and values

AIMS

- to ensure outstanding and supportive learning and work environments
- to provide welcoming, attractive, stimulating, and inclusive learning environment
- to deliver a flexible level of support to meet assessed needs, with a highly personalised and inclusive approach to learning
- to empower learners to succeed with high self-esteem and mutual respect & to enable confidence, pride, and success in all aspects of learners' lives.

We aim to achieve this by:

- sustaining a warm, welcoming community of learners, parents, staff and directors which offers its members support and every opportunity for personal growth
- helping our learners to develop into confident, independent young people
- providing a curriculum which enables learners to enjoy their learning and achieve their best
- teaching learners to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of LINK19 College and to society more widely
- responding to individual needs, recognising individual achievement and offering equal opportunities
- offering learners a secure and stimulating environment which positively encourages the development of self-esteem and self-confidence
- working in partnership with our parents and carers and employers, providing an environment where learners, parents and carers feel that staff are approachable and that they will always make time to listen
- continue to be well-managed and value the contribution that each member of our community makes.

VALUES

RESPECTED – SUPPORTED – CHALLENGED - SUCCESSFUL

We believe every individual is unique and special

This means that we:

- will respect the rights and needs of all
- will foster a sense of self-esteem and self-worth
- want all learners to succeed
- want our learners to be happy, confident and who will contribute to their community.

RESPECTED

We believe that regardless of faith, belief or disability, everyone should be accepted and not be the subject of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour

This means that we will:

- encourage mutual respect and tolerance of everyone including those with different religion or beliefs, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability
- challenge opinions or behaviours in our provision that are contrary to fundamental British values
- enable learners to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for democracy, public institutions and services in England
- promote an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety.

SUPPORTED

We believe that a good learning environment stems from a committed staff who work as a team to support all learners

This means that we will:

- provide a happy, secure and stable environment
- give appropriate support to all individuals, and promote independence
- work in partnership with parents and carers
- help our learners to develop communication, social and self-help skills.

CHALLENGED

We believe that learners succeed best when teachers have high expectations

This means that we will:

- set challenging individual targets to develop determination and courage
- expect consistent high standards of behaviour
- provide inclusive opportunities for our learners to join with their peers within the local community.

SUCCESSFUL

We believe that success is important to every individual and to have that success recognised encourages further achievement

This means that we will:

- measure success in many ways across the range of social and academic achievements
- ensure areas of success for everyone
- recognise every achievement however small the step
- praise and reward success.

Scope

This document describes LINK19 College's policy on equality and diversity in relation to marketing, publicity and college liaison, access and environment, curriculum, teaching and learning, staffing, including recruitment, selection and professional development.

The categories of individuals covered by this policy are:

- a) prospective learners and staff (in relation to admissions and recruitment arrangements)
- b) current learners and staff
- c) former learners and staff (if there is a continuing relationship based on them having been a learner or member of staff of LINK19 College)
- d) visitors, contractors and service providers (while they are on college premises carrying out college business)

LINK19 College recognises that many individuals and protected groups experience unlawful discrimination and disadvantage on the grounds of their:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender
- Sex and sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Age
- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Caring responsibilities
- Offending background
- Socio-economic group

LINK19 College believes that equality for all is a basic human right and actively opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. It values and celebrates the diversity in society and is striving to promote and reflect that diversity within LINK19 College. This policy sets out how LINK19 College will meet, and in some cases, exceed the legal requirements shared in the Equality Act 2010.

All employment applications made are exempt from section 4 (2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) Order 1975.

4. Definitions

Discrimination

There are several types of discrimination as defined by the Equality and Human Right Commission [‘Understanding legal definitions of discrimination and unlawful behaviour in the Equality Act’](#):

Direct discrimination

“This means treating someone less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic.”

Direct discrimination by perception

“This means treating one person less favourably than someone else, because you incorrectly think they have a protected characteristic.”

Discrimination arising from disability

“This means treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when this cannot be objectively justified.”

Direct discrimination by association

“This means treating someone less favourably than another person because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic.”

Failing to make reasonable adjustments

“To do this for disabled people is also a form of discrimination.”

LINK19 College will not accept behaviour towards people with a protected characteristic which results in them being treated unfairly or less favourably than others are being treated.

Harassment

“Harassment is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone’s dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.”

LINK19 College will not accept behaviour towards people which is offensive; might threaten their security; creates an intimidating or hostile environment which could hinder their performance and/or affect their personal well-being.

Victimisation

“Victimisation is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act, e.g. made a complaint under the Act or supported somebody who is doing so, such as appearing as a witness.”

LINK19 College will not accept one person treating another badly because they have in good faith taken or supported any action under the Equality Act 2010.

Protected Characteristics

The following characteristics are “protected characteristics” under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy & maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnerships (for employment purposes)

LINK19 College will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour against members of the LINK19 College community.

All alleged incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation will be dealt with according to the Fairness at Work Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure and Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy.

5. Responsibilities

Directors

Directors will be responsible for:

- ensuring LINK19 College meets all its duties under the legislation
- ensuring that the Equality Act 2010 is followed
- receiving periodic reports.

The LINK19 College Lead

The LINK19 College Lead is responsible for:

- giving consistent and high-profile lead on all equality issues
- promoting the Equality & Diversity policy both internally and externally
- making sure that the Equality & Diversity policy and its procedures are followed.

The LINK19 College Lead and LINK19 College Assistant Lead

The LINK19 College Lead and LINK19 College Assistant Lead are responsible for:

- implementing the policy

- making sure all the staff know their responsibilities and receive support and training to carry these out
- taking action regarding staff or learners who discriminate, harass or victimise others for reasons of race; disability; sex; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; and/or marriage or civil partnership
- building equality into their own area of work and consider setting equality targets where appropriate.

All Staff

All members of staff are responsible for:

- advancing equality of opportunity
- always operating within this policy
- challenging inappropriate language and behaviours
- completing mandatory equality and diversity training.

Teaching Staff

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- promoting equality and diversity through their teaching programmes and through relations with learners, staff and the wider community
- ensuring that the curriculum covers the knowledge, skills and values which learners need to tackle discrimination when they meet it and help them to understand and value diversity
- ensuring that course materials are accessible to a range of learners and adjusted to meet specific needs.

Learners

Learners are responsible for:

- always following the Equality & Diversity Policy
- behaving in a manner that advances equality of opportunity and fosters good relations with the LINK19 College community and beyond with those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

Contractors and Service Providers

All contractors and service providers are responsible for:

- following the Equality Act 2010 and any equality conditions in contracts and/or agreements

All staff and learners have a duty to observe this policy and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Any reported breaches will be investigated through the relevant staff or learner procedure and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

6. Marketing, publicity and external liaison

LINK19 College will research the needs of prospective learners in the local area and wider community and attempt to respond to those needs in terms of curriculum, provision and support. LINK19 College publicity will be designed to encourage interest from all sections of the community.

LINK19 College will make publicity and marketing information available in a range of accessible formats for current and prospective learners. All publicity and information will consider equal opportunities for staff and learners.

LINK19 College publicity will aim to reflect its Equality & Diversity Policy and advance equality of opportunity between those people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

7. Access and environment

LINK19 College staff will ensure advice is available to prospective and existing learners, without bias, on transport, curriculum, benefits, social care and careers.

Prospective learners will be advised of their eligibility for additional learning support. This support will be provided to learners and reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate to enable them to be successful in their learning.

LINK19 College is committed to develop its facilities and accommodation to improve access for learners and staff with disabilities. All signs, regulations, communications and instructions will be as clear, as simple as possible and free from discriminatory language.

LINK19 College will consider the diverse needs of its community in its planning and will seek to provide a range of levels of courses and resources and varied modes of delivery to meet the needs of its community.

LINK19 College will allocate resources to reflect its commitment to managing equality and diversity.

8. Curriculum, teaching and learning

LINK19 College will endeavour to ensure all teaching and curriculum materials will advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between individuals who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by:

- ensuring materials are free from bias or stereotypical assumptions or images
- promoting and celebrating differences.

The LINK19 College curriculum will enable learners to understand and embrace LINK19 College's commitment to advancing equality of opportunity and valuing diversity.

Throughout all areas of teaching and learning, LINK19 College will seek to:

- Develop confidence and self-awareness in all learners, and by providing equality of opportunity, enable them to become independent learners who co-operate well with each other.
- Recognise and value the unique nature of each learner within LINK19 College and harness diversity in an environment of respect and high expectation.
- Create an organisational culture that promotes respect, fairness and dignity for all who attend, work at, volunteer at, and visit LINK19 College.
- Take opportunities to teach and actively promote British values through tutorials and the curriculum, including electing and running the LINK19 College 'Business Committee' (Student Voice). Actively promoting British values also means challenging learners, staff or parents and carers expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British values, including 'extremist' views.

British values are defined as:

- Democracy
- Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual Respect
- Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

This will be achieved by:

- Providing a learning environment that is appropriately adapted to the needs of all learners both as individuals and ensuring equality of access for all learners to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation and learning as necessary
- Using a range of teaching strategies to ensure that the delivery of the curriculum reflects and considers equality and diversity issues and meets the needs of all learners
- Collecting data and monitoring progress and outcomes of different groups of learners to support college improvement
- Addressing inequality and discrimination that may occur within LINK19 College, the workforce and other stakeholders.
- Celebrating and embracing the diversity that exists in LINK19 College and its wider community, providing opportunities for learners to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures through the curriculum, whole college events, for example open days and enrichment activities
- Creating opportunities for the involvement of staff, learners, parents, carers and the wider community through consultation, participation and partnership working.
- Taking all opportunities to teach and actively promote British values through whole college culture tutorials, through spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, and by developing a whole college culture that promotes respect, fairness and dignity for all, including electing and running the 'Business Committee'.

LINK19 College will endeavour to maximise progression opportunities including the accreditation of prior learning and experience.

LINK19 College accessibility policies outline LINK19 College's commitment and practice for ensuring that all learners have the best opportunity to access all areas of the curriculum, through:

- the provision of a workforce trained to understand a variety of special educational needs of learners
- an adapted environment to provide optimum working conditions for all learners
- reasonable adjustments or technical aids for individuals with additional needs.

9. Staffing

LINK19 College will ensure that fair and adequate arrangements exist for both effectively managing and recording all aspects of the employment relationship including recruitment and selection.

Action will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, pay, training, development, promotion, career management and termination of employment are based solely on objective and job-related criteria.

10. Professional development and training

The staff continuing professional development policy will reflect the LINK19 College Equality & Diversity Policy.

11. How to report a breach of equality and diversity

If any individual feels that they have been treated less favourably, and not in accordance with this policy, they should report this via the LINK19 College Complaints Procedure. In the first instance matters may be discussed informally with either the LINK19 College Assistant Lead, LINK19 College Lead, or Chair of the board of directors of LINK19 College LTD. LINK19 College will treat seriously all

complaints of unlawful (or potentially unlawful) discrimination. Any complaints will be investigated in accordance with the grievance policy, the Complaints Policy, or the Whistleblowing Policy, whichever is appropriate.

Single Equalities Scheme Impact Assessment (Equalities Act 2010)

This policy has been developed to ensure that there is no negative or adverse impact on any individual or group in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. All opportunities for potential positive impact on individuals, groups and the community are embedded within the ethos, vision and values of LINK19 College.

LINK19 College is committed to achieving Best Value in all decisions made. We use the principles of Best Value as they apply to securing continuous improvement.

Date: Summer 2024

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Signed by Chair of board of directors of LINK19 College LTD:.....

Signed by LINK19 College Lead: