

Here for you.

## **Equality Scheme**

January 2026 - July 2027

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# Welcome from the Principal and Chair

Halesowen College is a diverse and inclusive community - a cornerstone of our community. We place learners at the centre of all that we do. We have ambition to be exceptional; inspiring our learners of all ages, backgrounds and levels of ability to flourish personally and professionally. We celebrate the diversity of our community and are proud that at Halesowen College everyone can be themselves. We continually strive to celebrate, support and embrace the differences that a diverse community can bring for the benefit of our students, staff, employers and the wider communities that we serve.

We serve many different communities, and this includes some deprived postcode areas. In Dudley more than 30% of children live in poverty. At Halesowen College we are committed to supporting our students to progress to further study and sustainable employment through excellent education and skills training, so that no one is left behind. We strive tirelessly to ensure that all of our students have the opportunity to succeed, be inspired to achieve their potential and go on to live happy and purposeful lives.

We will continue our relentless focus on sustaining an inclusive community where everyone is treated with respect.

We will continue to work hard to remove barriers to education, ensuring everyone achieves and ultimately exceeds their potential.

We have made a firm commitment to the key principles embodied by FREDIE+ and we will continue to do this. These principles correlate to the college values.

**Fairness** – Being reasonable, right and just.

**Respect** – Having due regard for feelings, wishes and rights of others.

**Equality** – Where every person has equal rights, and every person has a fair chance.

**Diversity** – Diverse means different. We are all different, so diversity includes us all. The concept of diversity encompasses understanding, acceptance and respect.

**Inclusion** – Where every person feels respected, valued and that they fit in with the organisational culture.

**Engagement** – Two-way commitment and communication between an organisation and its employees.

At Halesowen College we understand that to advance equality of opportunity we must consider each individual's needs and capabilities. We must ensure that our disadvantaged students receive the support and motivation to thrive.

Our College values are:

• **Inclusivity** • **Care** • **Ambition** • **Respect** • **Empowerment**

creating an environment for everyone to learn, flourish and succeed.



**Jacquie Carman**

Principal and Chief Executive



**Jo Chilton**

Chair of Governors

# Our Context

Halesowen College offers academic, technical and vocational qualifications, from entry to foundation degree level, for around 5,800 young people and more than 1,500 adults. Our students gain skills and receive support to secure not only the qualifications they need but the personal development and encouragement they need to advance into apprenticeships, employment or the next level course at college or university.

Through work placement and apprenticeships, we work with more than 1,500 employers. Our training solutions enable employers to address skills gaps, accelerate business performance and boost competitiveness and growth. Moreover, they shape our curriculum to ensure we equip our learners with the skills and abilities they need to succeed.

The College's excellent engagement with employers and other relevant stakeholders is both extensive and effective, and ensures we meet local, regional and national skills needs. The College is very mindful of its obligations and responsibilities to the communities it serves ensuring that it is developing and delivering learning programmes to enable people to gain the knowledge and skills required by employers and society both now and in the future.

We are proud to say that our 'student centric' ethos underpins everything we do and is the driving force behind the College. Leaders ensure that the College provides equality of opportunity through a broad and accessible curriculum with a particular focus on government and local priority sectors. Our goal is to provide a career pathway for each student that assesses where they are and supports them to achieve their personal goals and career aspirations.

The proportion of students who progress onto positive next steps, either into further study, apprenticeships, higher education, or paid employment is outstanding. This reinforces that our curriculum offer, and the support for students are outstanding.

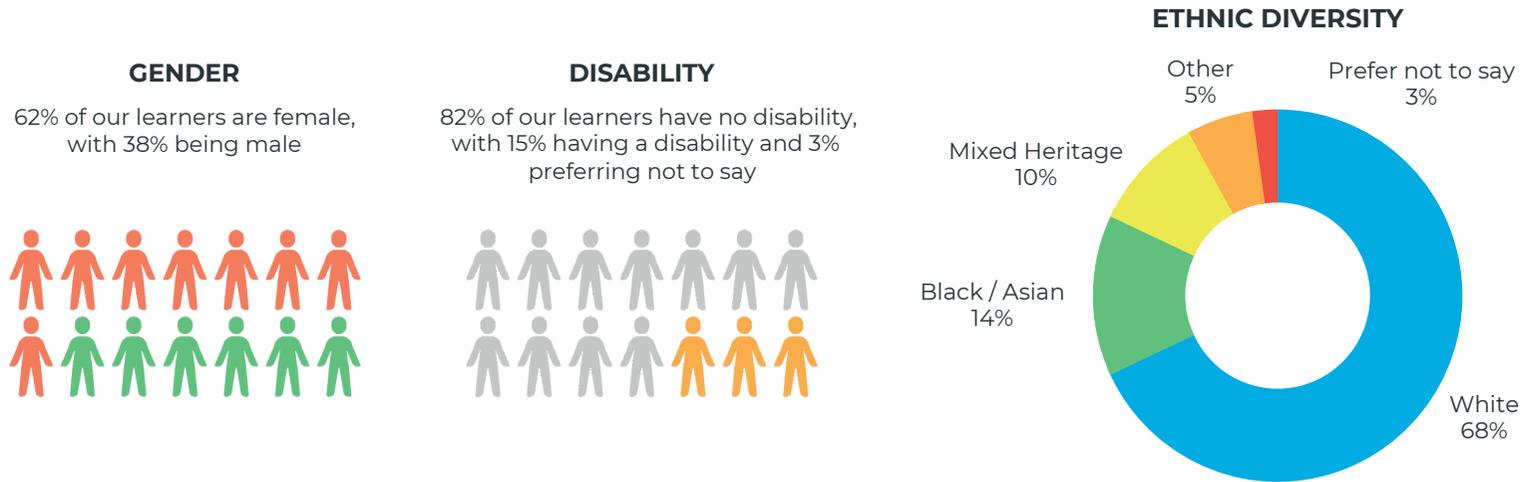
In line with our vision – for Halesowen College to be exceptional - leaders have high aspirations for all of our students to succeed, supporting them to meet and overcome the challenges that many of our students face and thus positively transforming lives through learning.

We have four main sites located in Halesowen and are soon to open new campuses for trades. Leaders are relentless in their commitment to driving improvements to our estate to ensure that our students and apprentices can learn in industry-level facilities and prepare for their future workplace.

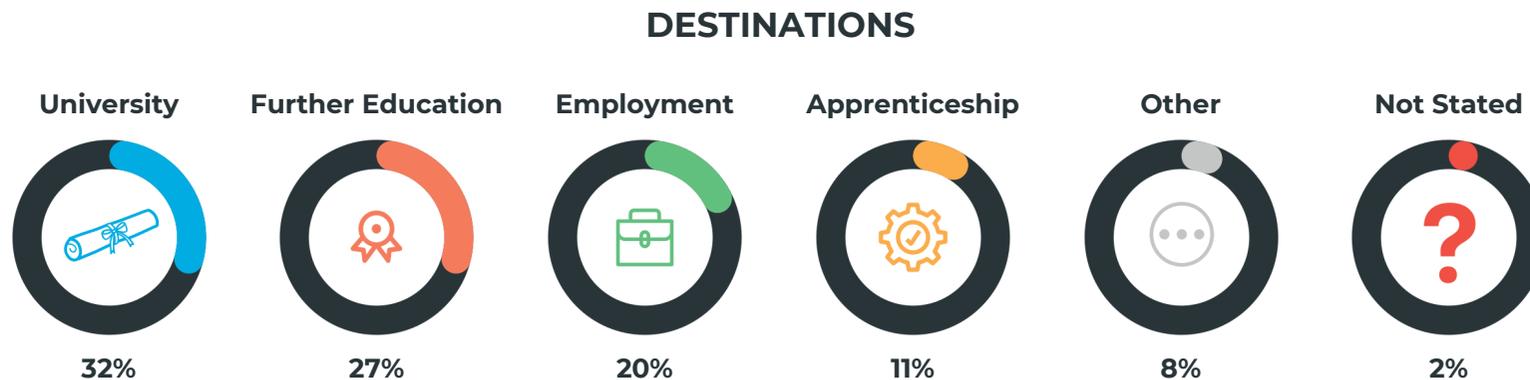


# Our College Community - Students

Currently Halesowen College has c. 4800 full time 16-18 learners. This cohort has the following characteristics:



On entry to the College 14% of learners did not have GCSE Maths and English at grade 4 or above. We draw from 128 first level postcodes and work with young people from some of the most deprived areas such as Lye, Netherton and Smethwick. Despite these challenges, destinations are very positive as shown below.



We support learners financially through our Learner Support Fund (LSF), removing financial barriers to engagement. We work with more than 1500 adult learners and 150 apprentices. The characteristics of our adult community reflects the 16-18 cohort in terms of socio-economic factors. The diverse and vibrant community creates a rich cultural base and has enabled Halesowen College to be re-accredited as a College of Sanctuary and a holder of the Rainbow Flag Award.

# Our College Community - Staff

### GENDER

62.5% of our staff are female, with 37.5% being male

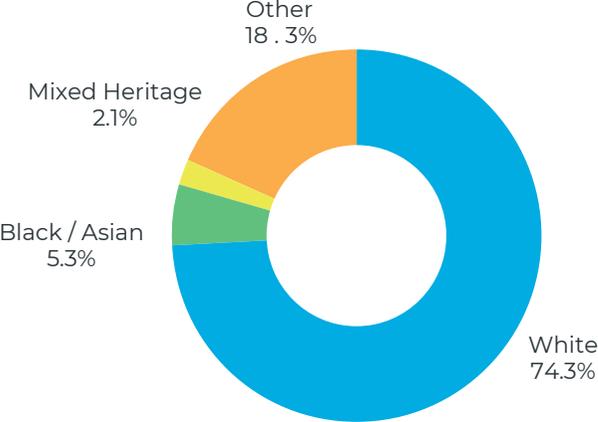


### DISABILITY

81.9% of our staff have no disability, with 7.6% having a disability and 10.5% preferring not to say



### ETHNIC DIVERSITY



# Partnership Working

## College of Sanctuary

The College has gained official recognition as a College of Sanctuary and this was re-accredited in 2023. The College has been welcoming and working with refugees and asylum seekers for over thirty years. Working alongside the City of Sanctuary and a variety of refugee and community organisations across our region, the College is a significant provider of English as a Second Language Courses and is seen as a new starting point for many learners.

The College is committed to building and continuing this work both within the region and nationally, acting as an adviser and ambassador for organisations across the country.

## Mindful Employer

Mindful Employer is a national initiative supporting employers to take a positive approach towards mental health at work. By signing the Mindful Employer charter Halesowen College makes a public declaration of our ambition to support the mental wellbeing of their staff.

## Disability Confident Employer

Disability Confident is creating a movement of change, encouraging employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how we recruit, retain and develop disabled people.

## Autism Education Trust

The Trust helps organisations develop good autism practice and has aided the shaping of the College neurodiverse strategy.

## The Rainbow Flag Award

This has reflected our commitment to positive LGBTQ+ inclusion and visibility and encourages the whole organisation to effectively challenge and combat LGBTQ+ phobic bullying.



# Our Vision and Aims

## Our Vision

To be exceptional,

We will do this through delivery of high-quality education and the development of skills to positively transform lives.

## Our Aims

In our Strategic Plan, we have strategic aims regarding Learning, People, Partnerships and Sustainability. However the purpose of this Equality Scheme (ES) is:

- To ensure potential, current and future staff, students and visitors do not experience discrimination, but know how to report it and feel confident to do so should it occur.
- To create a positive and inclusive work and study environment for all staff, students and apprentices where everyone feels valued and respected.
- To raise awareness of discrimination and ensure that all students, apprentices, staff, stakeholders and service users are aware of their responsibilities under the current equality legislation.
- To ensure that staff and students can confidently share information about their whole self so that we can support their needs and celebrate their differences.
- To support the personal and professional development of all our staff, students, and apprentices.



# Our Values:

As a college, we share a common set of values across everything we do. These help to define who we are and how we behave.

Our values are;

- Inclusion
- Care
- Ambition
- Respect
- Empowerment

We ensure that these values are the golden thread through our culture so that they truly define who we are and how we behave.

Through innovative practice, we want to improve the quality of education so that our staff and students can challenge the 'usual' and believe in positive impact that diversity brings.



# Halesowen College EDI Public Statement of Commitment and Objectives

## Public Statement of Commitment: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

We want everyone to be themselves - supporting our culture of respect, inclusion, ambition and care. If something matters to you, it matters to us and we will support you.

**Our culture will be defined by our Values.**

### We recognise that:

- It is a social, moral and economic responsibility to prepare all of our students and Apprentices for life and work in a world that is diverse
- EDI is non-negotiable and we have work to do

### We commit to:

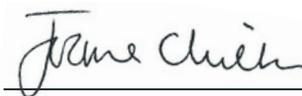
- Creating an inclusive college
- Ensuring all of our students are given the opportunities to belong, learn and thrive
- Demonstrating leadership in EDI
- Valuing diversity in our College, culture, structures and people
- Listening to all voices in the communities we serve
- Ensuring a broad, inclusive and accessible curriculum
- Putting EDI at the heart of our people strategy
- Encouraging and educating those with whom we contract and interact to uphold our commitments and values

### We will track our progress by:

- Setting quantifiable objectives
- Monitoring progress regularly and reporting to the Leadership Team and Corporation
- Judging performance against the objectives - taking prompt and impactful action
- Celebrating the progress we make



Chief Executive



Chair of Governors



# Current EDI Objectives

Our EDI objectives are grouped around our:

- Students
- People
- Employers and Stakeholders
- Estate and Environment
- Performance against the objectives
- Celebrating the progress we make

## Students

Our educational opportunities ensure that:

- No student or apprentice is left behind.
- Students and apprentices develop an understanding of how to be active citizens in their communities and go onto live happy and fulfilled lives.
- Students and apprentices develop their knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity.
- There is a curriculum offer for all students, irrespective of age, background or level of ability.
- All students are valued with barriers to inclusion challenged and removed.

## People

- Our inclusive culture and career opportunities attract and retain people who are valued and supported, inclusive and welcoming, innovative and motivational, passionate about learning and student success, from a range of our communities and backgrounds.
- Our training and CPD opportunities ensure that:
  - Staff are equipped to recognise, support and drive the EDI values of the College.
  - No colleagues are left behind in their understanding of their EDI duty.
  - All staff live the values of inclusion, care, ambition, respect and empowerment.

## Partnerships

- The College is recognised as an anchor institution in our community.
- Our culture and reputation encourage people from a diverse range of communities to join the College community.
- We translate our ethos and values into the local community.
- We are a beacon of the inclusivity.

## Sustainability / Estate

- Our values inform our strategic decision making ensuring a culture of EDI best practice which can be seen in the investment in our estate, facilities, people and partnerships.
- Our values inform our procurement strategy.

# Our Commitment

Halesowen College is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, where all members of our community are treated with respect and dignity and are afforded opportunities to belong, learn and thrive.

We will continue to further develop a culture of diversity within our community, providing a positive working and learning environment, where everyone is valued for their contribution and individuality.

Halesowen College works in an inclusive way with all stakeholders, and we will continue to undertake activity to promote community cohesion and inclusion within the communities we serve. We remain committed to developing a workforce and an educational community that reflects this.

We will promote equality and prevent discrimination through our roles as:

- an education provider
- an employer
- a community partner
- a business partner
- an anchor institution

We will:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- eliminate bullying and harassment
- remove barriers, enabling all students to reach their full potential
- foster good relations by celebrating and capitalising on our diversity
- recognise, take account of and celebrate people's differences

We recognise that equality and equity issues are complex and cover more than just those strands that protect groups in equalities legislation (race, age, disability, faith, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment). Many members of the college community have multiple protected characteristics which overlap and combine to create unique challenges. We aim to develop understanding of intersectionality and support those who may face multiple and intersecting forms of structural discrimination.

Life circumstances and opportunities affect us all too. So, when making decisions, we will take account of issues such as cultural and economic background, access to education, physical and social environment, and health. We are committed to ensuring that poverty is not a barrier to accessing education and wish to adopt poverty/socio-economic challenge and Looked After Children as our tenth and eleventh protected characteristics.

We publish our Equality and Diversity report on our website annually. The report includes our agreed Equality Objectives.

# Meeting our Commitment

To ensure we meet our commitments and specific duties (eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations) we will work with our students, staff, communities and governors to:

- Consider equality, diversity, inclusion and intersectionality
- Active role in promoting and embedding equality and diversity
- Carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA), as appropriate, to assess new and existing strategies, policies, procedures, and guidelines so that we are alerted to any unfairness
- Learn from compliments, complaints, and other feedback
- Encourage and support the development of innovative projects that promote inclusion and equality of opportunity
- Work with our communities to ensure that their needs are considered in our planning activities
- Share good practice and joined up thinking internally and with other agencies
- Foster greater understanding and trust with the different equality groups and communities
- Treat everyone fairly and with respect
- Recruit, train, develop and support staff fairly
- Foster a culture of learning and of sharing good practice
- Welcome different perspectives, skills, and backgrounds

The Equality Scheme is made public on the College's website. It is communicated to staff throughout the College via training and team meetings so that there is transparency and clarity regarding the College's equality and diversity ambitions.

# Valuing our Students and Apprentices

Halesowen College will provide an enabling learning and teaching environment for all our students and apprentices, whatever their background. To do this, we will:

- Ensure our student policies are fit-for-purpose and review them regularly, ensuring that Equality Impact Assessments are completed as appropriate
- Act firmly to challenge and prejudice and eliminate bullying, discrimination, or harassment
- Support 'Student and Apprentice Voice' as an empowering tool for change
- Regularly review our student and apprentice data and take action where appropriate
- Use a variety of different methods to attract and retain students from all backgrounds
- Comply with, or go above and beyond the requirements of all equalities-related legislation
- Make reasonable adjustments for students with needs
- Encourage open, honest discussion about issues that support students' educational attainment and a learning culture
- Continue to develop a learning community that is reflective of the diverse demographics of the area and beyond

# Valuing our Workforce

Halesowen College will deliver an innovative, effective, and good value service. This is not possible without investment in our staff. To recruit and retain a motivated and professional workforce which reflects the local diversity and beyond, we will:

- be compliant with all equalities-related employment legislation
- ensure our policies are relevant, fit-for-purpose and up to date
- act firmly and quickly to challenge prejudice and eliminate bullying, discrimination, or harassment
- make reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities, maintaining our Disability Confident status
- consult with recognised trade unions and staff forums on EDI matters - engage with EDI Champions to ensure all voices are heard
- train staff in equality and diversity issues to enable them to carry out their jobs in a way that reflects the ethos of the College
- continue to develop a workforce that is reflective of the diversity mix of the area by using a variety of different methods to attract and retain staff from all backgrounds

## The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Duty Aims to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Specific Equality Duties relevant to Equality Analysis are to provide:

- sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the general duties; including effects that policies have on people
- evidence that analysis of this information has been undertaken
- details of information considered during analysis
- details of engagement (consultation) that has taken place

The **Protected Characteristics** are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment (Identity)
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity leave
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- looked after children
- poverty/socio-economic challenge

# Our Equality Commitments: Age

## Our Commitment

Halesowen College is committed to equality of opportunity for our students and our staff regardless of their age. Our aim is to enable all students to access learning and to improve their personal and professional development, their employability and their chances of success.

Our recruitment methods and employee support will reflect best practice. We will create opportunities for staff to have a voice and will work to ensure staff receive excellent professional development and progression opportunities to evolve their careers, irrespective of their age. We will act firmly to eliminate discrimination arising from differences in age.

## Our Context

Halesowen College welcomes students, apprentices and staff of all ages legally eligible for work or study in Further Education. Of note, government priorities and funding agendas clearly differentiate between the needs of young people and mature students, and this does lead to different levels of provision and support for different age groups. Barriers to accessing education have been minimised as much as possible through effective usage of hardship funding, and we have a commitment to supporting all students, regardless of their age, in their learning and career progression.

Recruitment processes ensure that the College encourages applications from people of all ages. It was noted in the Annual Report that the number of employees under 30 has reduced and that the 30-49 age group remains the largest group.

## Our Intended Impact

Within the context of legislation and government funding and priorities, we aim to break down barriers associated with age both as a provider of education and as an employer.

### We aim to ensure that:

- our curriculum offer, facilities and support services cater for the needs of our diverse student community
- achievement gaps between different age groups on similar provision are addressed and closed
- all students and apprentices are given the support they need to progress into work and flourish at work
- employees do not face discrimination because of their age
- our HR People policies support staff to balance work with family requirements and are mindful of age-related conditions, such as menopause

# Our Equality Commitments: Disability

## Our Commitment

Halesowen College promotes the right of people with disabilities to belong, to be valued, to choose and to make their own decisions. In doing this we understand that we must strive to remove disabling barriers created by attitudes, systems and practices that prevent participation by people with disabilities. We remain committed to the development of new and better opportunities for people with disabilities.

We promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and continue to take steps to remove any barriers, even if that involves treating people with disabilities more favourably than others.

## Our Context

The College supports about 260 students with EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) and/or High Needs each year. Students with learning difficulties/disabilities and special educational needs are well supported at Halesowen College. The College sensitively collects relevant data regarding the disabilities of students and staff through enrolment and recruitment processes. Therefore, the College responds appropriately to individual needs.

Learning support helps students with a disability and/or learning difficulty to have a positive experience and achieve good results, and this has improved over the last year. Usually, they do as well or better than students without any disability or learning difficulty. We are ambitious for all learners - including those with SEN.

Although opportunities are available for staff to declare disabilities, some choose not to declare. We will continue to encourage staff to disclose their disability status by increasing the opportunities they have to do so, by promoting positive role models and by offering specific focus groups for staff and students with a disability/learning difficulty.

## Our Intended Impact

### We will:

- support staff and students to feel confident to declare any disability or learning difficulty, particularly hidden disability issues, such as mental health and developmental disorders, through training and awareness raising campaigns
- continue to celebrate the success of those students who have overcome disadvantages to succeed
- monitor the progress and achievement of staff and students with disabilities within the College
- reducing all attainment gaps
- where possible, enhance students' ability to live and work independently by reducing their dependency on additional learning support
- provide reasonable adjustments for both staff and students as appropriate
- maintain our Disability Confident status

# Our Equality Commitments: Gender Reassignment (Identity)

## Our Commitment

Halesowen College is committed to promoting an inclusive culture of respect in relation to gender identity.

We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation related to gender identity and we remove any participation barriers by promoting gender identity equality widely and actively across job roles, levels and curriculum and business areas.

Halesowen College is a place where people are encouraged to follow their chosen career or learning pathway regardless of gender status and identity as we seek to build an environment where all value respect.

Our Student Voice strategy will enable us to consult widely with students and staff ensuring the removal of any gender identity barriers that may occur.

## Our Context

Our students report feeling safe at Halesowen College, however, we will continue to do more to promote the interests of transgender students and staff and to raise awareness about transgender issues at organisational level.

Halesowen College will collect robust data for our students and staff regarding gender reassignment going forward and gathering this data systematically remains one of our key priorities. We routinely analyse EDI data on a quarterly basis to ascertain the impact of our actions to date. We will use this data to take steps to address any gender identity issues within the College.

## Our Intended Impact

### We will:

- develop student recruitment processes that actively encourage transgender students to access careers of their choice, regardless of traditional gender identity underrepresentation
- ensure a well-developed curriculum and Personal Development programme that positively promotes understanding of and equality for transgender students
- further develop processes that respect and value the wishes of the person undergoing gender reassignment in all cases, staff or student, and entitle individuals to use the most appropriate facilities for individual circumstances
- ensure a robust approach to gender reassignment discrimination and harassment that tackles unwanted attention, unfair behaviours and promotes a culture of respect
- develop effective working relationships with other institutions, local communities and other stakeholders to train and support staff and students to tackle gender discrimination and to encourage and promote good practice
- further develop our approach to transgender issues to promote understanding and welcome for those involved in any kind of change to their gender
- a culture where all gender identities, including non-binary, third gender or transgender, are respected and accepted by all members of our community

# Our Equality Commitments: Marriage and Civil Partnership

## Our commitment

At Halesowen College, we are committed to treating civil partners in the same way as married people in employment and training.

Any benefits given to married couples will also be offered to civil partners, including flexible working, statutory paternity pay, paternity and adoption leave, health insurance and survivor pensions.

## Our Context

Halesowen College already has well-established processes to support the partners of all our employees, regardless of whether they are married or in a civil partnership, through the range of benefits available. We do not currently gather information on marriage or civil partnerships for students, but we do so for staff.

## Our Intended Impact

### We will:

- create and foster a culture of understanding and mutual respect across all our students and employees in relation to marriage and civil partnerships
- ensure that there is no discrimination arising from differences in marriage and civil partnership

# Our Equality Commitments: Pregnancy and Maternity

## Our Commitment

At Halesowen College, we are committed to advancing equality of opportunity for women who are pregnant, have given birth in the last 26 weeks or are breastfeeding. We will foster good relations and eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to pregnancy and maternity.

## Our Context

The College has excellent and well-embedded processes to support employees and students who are pregnant or have recently given birth. For instance, we allow time for antenatal appointments and care, carry out risk assessments to ensure the environment is safe in relation to new and expectant mothers and provide suitable facilities for nursing mothers to express and store milk.

Flexible learning and working arrangements are available for new and expectant mothers in consultation with the relevant Head of Division/Head of Student Support, in the case of students, and with line managers in the case of staff. We work with local agencies to support young and/or vulnerable expectant and new mothers.

## Our Intended Impact

### We will:

- continue to foster an environment and culture that promotes an understanding of the issues that expectant and new parents face
- retain a supportive policy framework for staff that are pregnant or on maternity leave, through periodic review
- adopt a robust approach to pregnancy and maternity discrimination and harassment that tackles unwanted attention and unfair behaviours and promotes a culture of respect
- encourage an effective working relationship with local agencies and institutions that will allow us to train and support staff and students
- ensure a fully developed approach to equality in employment and career progression that takes into consideration the needs of new and expectant mothers
- family friendly policies and flexible working arrangements are central to our People strategy

# Our Equality Commitments: Race

## Our Commitment

Halesowen College is committed to being a place where students and staff feel valued, respected, and enabled to develop. We will promote best practice in race equality, and we identify and combat racism and associated disadvantage swiftly and effectively. Racial harassment is not tolerated within the College.

We continue to take positive action to encourage the recruitment of Minority Ethnic groups of students on all courses and to close any gaps in achievement. Our curriculum and extracurricular activities enable students to gain self-esteem and confidence, preparing them to live respectfully in a racially diverse society.

We continue to seek to ensure representation of staff from Minority Ethnic groups and encourage links with supportive professional bodies such as the Network for Black Professionals and Colleges West Midlands. We will continue to work closely with the National Centre for Diversity and update our Equality and Diversity action plan annually, which will support this commitment. We work to develop role models through our body of students, our community and our employer network and recognise the contribution they can make to students' aspirations.

We will work to secure the fullest participation of Minority Ethnic students and staff in our planning and decision-making processes. Our Student Voice, Staff and Employer Engagement Strategies and policies, such as our complaints policy, will help us to hear what students, staff, parents and employers from different racial groups and backgrounds tell us and we will act upon these views to further improve our College.

## Our Context

Our student population is increasingly diverse and multi-cultural. Halesowen College provides an inclusive environment for students from different racial backgrounds.

There were some gaps in achievement in 2024/2025 which are being addressed.

Our provision for English for Speakers of Other Languages has continued to grow over recent years as we continue to create an environment that challenges racial discrimination and promotes race equality. The College recognises this essential work and understands how it supports social mobility and social cohesion however our ability to continue to grow this provision maybe affected by future adult funding allocations.

There is still work to do to improve apprenticeship outcomes for minority ethnic groups.

Eighteen percent of our workforce is from a Minority Ethnic background in 2024/2025, which is representative of the Dudley Borough but not Sandwell and Birmingham which we also serve. For our staff profile to be representative of the community we must ensure that the College is an attractive place for people of all backgrounds to work and ensure that people feel confident to apply. We appreciate the value of having a varied staff base and the talent and skills that employees of different races bring to the College. We remain fully committed to promoting this and to having positive role models for Minority Ethnic staff and students in all of our staff teams and our governing body.

## Our Intended Impact

We aim to further develop and strengthen our work around race and equality to maximise the positive impact we have on students and staff from different racial groups.

### By doing that, we will:

- continue to close remaining achievement rates for Minority Ethnic apprentices
- increase the proportion and profile of Minority Ethnic staff and Governors to achieve a workforce and a Governing Body that is more representative of the local community at every level of the College
- promote good relations between different groups and communities
- ensure a reward and remuneration structure that prevents pay gaps between different ethnic groups and to continue to close any pay gaps

# Our Equality Commitments: Religion and Belief

## Our Commitment

Halesowen College welcomes people of all faiths and those with no faith. We promote learning and understanding between religions. We act firmly to eliminate any discriminatory behaviour arising from differences in belief. We work to secure respect for beliefs, faiths and religions and welcome all of them equally, providing opportunities for the faithful to celebrate their beliefs. As a learning organisation, we will place firm emphasis on the primacy of education, and we will develop and deliver our curriculum to strengthen moral and social awareness wherever it is appropriate.

## Our Context

Halesowen College has a diverse community with many different value systems and religions. The College offers a quiet room for meditation or prayer on each of its main campuses.

Our data in relation to religion and belief will be improved. We plan for students at enrolment and staff as part of their recruitment process to routinely collect data on religion and beliefs. This will enable us to support curriculum effectively, provide tailored enrichment activity, and create an environment where people can openly discuss faith, religion or belief.

## Our Intended Impact

### We will:

- develop a climate of understanding in which religious discrimination is addressed promptly
- promote events and communications that celebrate a range of faiths
- ensure a clear and equal message of welcome for people of all faiths
- further develop a respectful and value-based curriculum that promotes social and moral development
- collect and analyse data on the profile of religious belief by students and staff to help us further develop our educational and celebratory activities
- help to support improved community cohesion within our communities

# Our Equality Commitments: Sex

## Our Commitment

Halesowen College welcomes people of each sex at all levels of the organisation, in all departments. We promote an inclusive culture of mutual respect in relation to sex. We do not tolerate harassment based on sex. We continue to remove barriers and actively encourage inclusive participation in job roles and job levels, within the parameters of the law. Halesowen College is a place where people are encouraged to follow their chosen career or learning pathway regardless of their sex as we seek to build a respectful environment for all.

## Our Context

Overall, participation rates between male and female students within Halesowen College remain broadly the same. However, efforts to promote balance in some areas of the curriculum will continue.

We collect data concerning the sex of our staff and will continue to analyse it on a yearly basis to ascertain the impact of our actions to date. This data is accessible within the College, and we will continue to take steps to address any issues, related to sex, in our workforce. We will continue to revisit our current practices considering any new legislation and ensure that we address any remaining issues and promote a culture of equality in all areas and levels of the workforce.

## Our Intended Impact

### We will further develop:

- recruitment strategies that actively encourage students to access careers of their choice, regardless of their sex
- a curriculum that positively reflects different contributions by different sexes in the workplace and promotes them equally and effectively
- a staffing base in which students can see role models of their own sex, irrespective of the curriculum area and the traditional stereotypes
- a Governing Body with a similar mix to that of the College
- facilities that enhance and support the experience of people equally in using our services or as employees
- a robust approach to sex-based discrimination and harassment that tackles unwanted attention and unfair behaviours directly and decisively at all levels and promotes a culture of respect
- to continue to work towards closing the gender pay gap where men earn more than women.

# Our Equality Commitments: Sexual Orientation

## Our Commitment

Halesowen College celebrates the diversity of its staff and students and welcomes people of any sexual orientation.

We will actively challenge homophobia when it arises.

We will ensure that Halesowen College continues to be a place where the lesbian, gay and bisexual community is visible, valued and the community's contribution to the College and wider world is recognised.

We will support and encourage staff and student LGBTQ+ groups and will sensitively ask our students and staff about their sexuality so that we are able to celebrate the diversity they bring to our community.

We will consult our students, staff and partners to ensure that the services and support we provide meet the needs of all our service users.

## Our Context

We have facilitated students in developing their own LGBTQ+ groups and forums and these groups will continue to be proactive in raising awareness within the College.

We have achieved the Rainbow Flag accreditation and provide links to information and support groups. However, with ever-changing student population there is always more to do.

## Our Intended Impact

### We will:

- ensure a welcoming place for all and an environment where all students and staff feel confident and free to be open about their sexuality, if they choose to be
- promote a culture at Halesowen College where everyone's rights are valued and acknowledged, regardless of sexual orientation
- provide a learning community where all students have a voice
- build a staff community that is self-assured and skilled in meeting the needs of all colleagues and students, regardless of their sexual orientation
- develop a workforce that is trained and confident to challenge homophobia when it arises

# Further Equality Commitment: Socio-economic

## Our Commitment

There is currently no legislative duty in relation to socio-economic factors. However, Halesowen College engages with a high proportion of students and apprentices who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and is committed to meeting the needs of the communities it serves.

We are committed to understanding the nature and impact of economic disadvantage. We will work to reduce the barriers faced by people through the provision of high-quality teaching and learning, outstanding support and a curriculum based on the needs of students and employers.

We will continue to emphasise the development of provision designed to attract those with lower expectations of success and prosperity and, with our partners, will explore new ways of working that make our provision more accessible to those who are disadvantaged, including through a trauma informed approach.

## Our Context

Our student population comes from areas of high deprivation and over 55% of our 16-18 population receive financial support.

Many of our students live in, or on the edge of poverty and experience higher than average levels of ill health and poor educational attainment. The pandemic and ensuing cost of living crisis only serves to exacerbate the situation that many of our students experience day-in day-out.

We believe that we have a duty to our community to address issues relating to class and social mobility and for Children Looked After (CLA) and care experienced learners. Currently CLA learners do not achieve as well as the rest of the College population – we need to address this inequality if we are to deliver our mission fully.

Halesowen College is committed to treating deprivation as a context and not an excuse for poor performance, so we expect students from less affluent households to succeed as well as those from ones that are more affluent. The flexible and tailored support provided within our college ensures that we provide targeted interventions appropriately to enable all students to succeed.

## Our Intended Impact

### We will:

- ensure high-quality transition arrangements and subsequent support for Children Looked After and care leavers regardless of their age
- narrow achievement rate gaps for students who live in areas of deprivation (deciles 1 to 3 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation) across all curriculum areas and for Children Looked After
- consider socio-economic factors when impact assessing major plans, policies, procedures, and practice
- ensure on-going curriculum development activity that supports the recruitment and success of people from deprived backgrounds

# Understanding and Tackling Inappropriate Behaviours

## Responsibility of All

All staff, students and visitors, by their own behaviour and their response to others, are legally responsible for helping to ensure that individuals do not suffer any form of bullying, discrimination or harassment and that they are supported in making complaints.

Difficulty in deciding what constitutes harassment should not deter anyone from complaining of behaviour that they perceive as offensive or distressing.

Some behaviour, that causes offence or distress, may be conscious or deliberate, or may arise from thoughtlessness or insensitivity. In either case, the person causing harassment should be given a clear signal that his or her behaviour is unacceptable. This may be done directly or through a suitable third party. No one should be deterred from complaining of behaviour, which causes distresses by embarrassment, intimidation or fear of publicity. The need for confidentiality will be respected wherever possible.

All incidents of harassment and bullying should be reported immediately, either by the recipient of the harassment or bullying or by a witness to the incident. Employees who are a witness to any incident should ensure that their own behaviour or conduct does not contribute or collude with the unacceptable behaviour or conduct.

In addition, we will take malicious and deliberate false allegations very seriously and may take disciplinary action as a result.

Policies are in place to ensure that inappropriate behaviour is addressed:

- Dignity At Work Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Student Conduct Policy

The College also has robust arrangements for whistleblowing and has a Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure which can be accessed from our website.

# Promoting Choice, Opportunity and Progression

We strive for equity of access to the delivery of our programmes of learning, and to ensure that all members of Halesowen College's community can learn, teach, train and succeed in a mutually supportive environment.

We will also enable equity of access to employment with positive action where appropriate and within the scope of the Equality Act 2010. For example, when we require new staff, we will continue to use positive action to support increased diversity in areas that are not representative of the community that they serve.

## Our Commitment to Promote Choice, Opportunity and Progression

### We will:

- Ensure that our admissions processes for students are based on the ability to succeed and will not involve unduly restrictive conditions or requirements.
- Implement a staff recruitment policy that will identify the best candidate based on the ability to carry out the duties of the role, and not on perceptions based on any of the protected characteristics.
- Review the information that we provide about our programmes to ensure that it is clear, contains relevant facts and can be understood by all potential students and their parents.
- Seek to make staff more aware of the cultural assumptions, stereotypes and biases that may exist within curriculum materials and assessment methods, encouraging and supporting them in developing curriculum materials that reflect a wider range of experience and culture.
- Monitor the composition of the student body and seek to address identified imbalance and under representation
- Monitor the retention, attendance and achievement of students by protected characteristics collected at enrolment and seek to address identified gaps.
- Ensure, through our quality assurance policies, that equal opportunity issues are addressed in the design and delivery of learning programmes.
- Review our portfolio of programmes to ensure that the range of opportunities provided reflects the needs of all sections of the community, within funding guidance.
- Reserve the right to refuse admission to our premises or any of our programmes on the grounds of security, safety or breach of the Equality Scheme.
- Reserve the right not to engage or work with representatives of political parties that, in our view, hinder our commitment to equalities by disadvantaging individuals or groups of people.
- Seek to collect data on all protected characteristics and explain why it is collected and stored, and how it will be processed.
- Develop a culture where staff and students are comfortable in sharing their data so that we can best support our community.

# Monitoring and Reporting on Our Progress

## Students and Apprentices:

We will collect and report on all protected characteristics, ensuring that there is no hierarchy of characteristics.

This will identify any achievement gaps.

In the **Education Programmes for Young People** provision type, we will collect and report on participation and outcomes of priority groups including children who are looked after (CLAs) in addition to the above.

For all **provision types**, we will collect and report on participation and outcomes for students and apprentices living in disadvantaged postcode areas including any WMCA priority cohorts.

We monitor the in-year performance of students and apprentices on a termly basis through our Divisional Performance Review processes and build any need for substantial change into our Business Planning, thus ensuring that EDI is central to the business and curriculum planning of Halesowen College.

Automated processing using multiple characteristics will also be performed to ensure that being a member of multiple protected groups isn't causing any further gap or disadvantage.

Performance monitoring will include:

- retention, attendance, achievement, progression and destination rates of all groups
- disciplinary action relating to all groups
- complaints from all groups collected

## Staff:

**Staff Community** We will monitor the make-up of our staff body, including by type of contract and job family, by protected characteristic.

We will also monitor the following by protected characteristic:

- Internal Promotions
- Disciplinary Proceedings
- Grievances
- Leavers

## Staff Recruitment

By protected characteristic, except for marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity, we will monitor and report on the number of:

- Applications
- Short Listed Candidates
- Appointments (including to type of contract and level)

## Facilities, Estates and Services:

To ensure our facilities, estates and services are accessible we will:

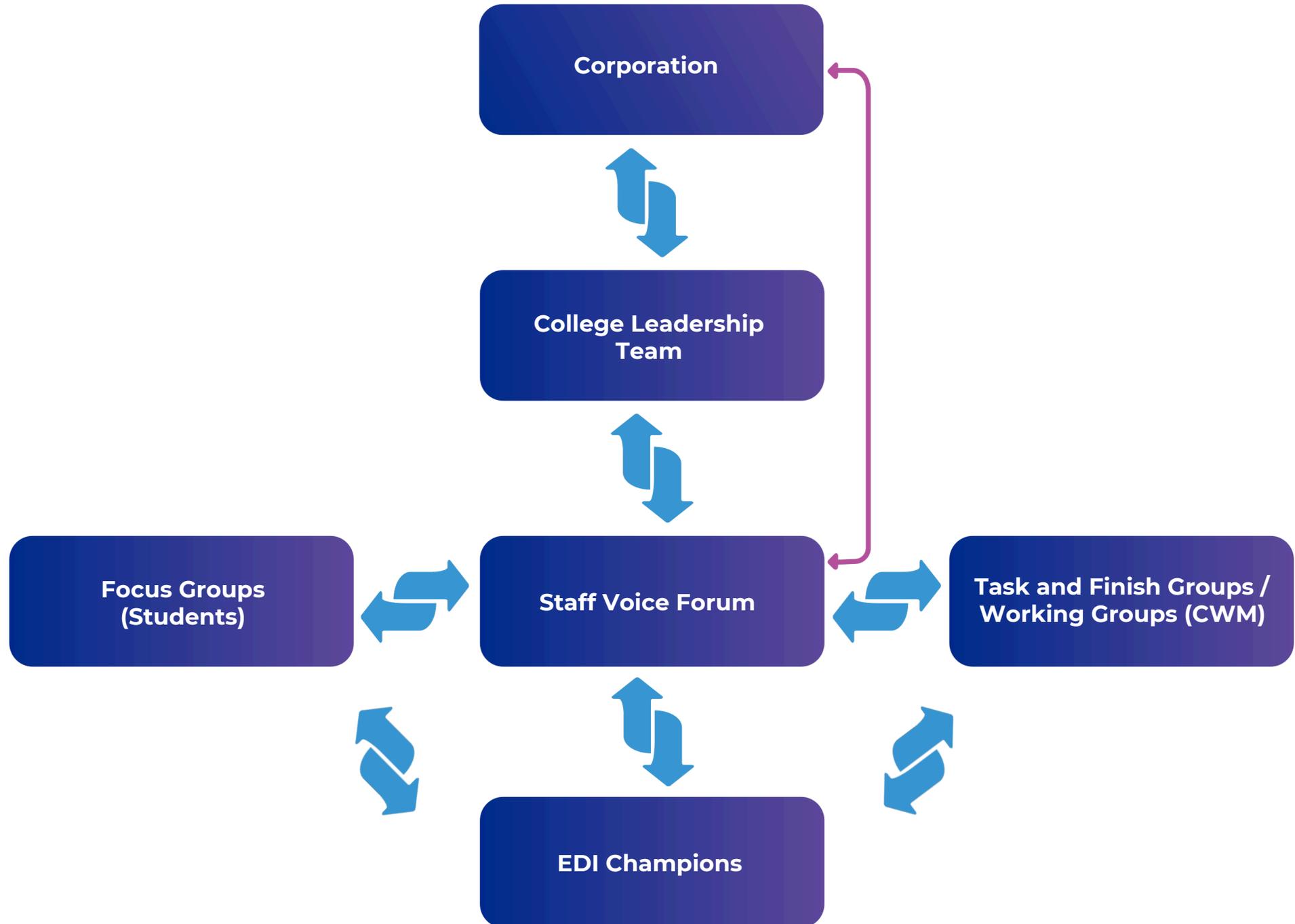
- Complete internal and external audits of the accessibility of our facilities and services
- Monitor the diversity and inclusiveness of selected services, such as catering
- Use student voice and participation mechanisms to inform improvements to facilities, estates, and services

The information will be used to:

- Monitor whether there are differences in the way different groups are treated
- Monitor whether there are differences in the experience of any different groups
- Analyse and investigate the underlying reasons for any differences
- Identify areas where specific action could be taken to improve inclusive practice and ensure that it is taken
- Highlight any unfairness, disadvantage or possible discrimination and act where appropriate
- Inform the departmental and college-wide Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Development Plans and EDI Strategic Objectives
- Ensure that all our facilities, estates and services remain accessible, diverse and inclusive



# EDI Reporting Mechanisms



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum

The College has a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum which will monitor this scheme and ensure proactive approaches are taken to achieving all objectives.

## Equality Analysis (Equality Impact Assessments)

Halesowen College will consider the needs of all individuals when shaping policy, implementing processes and delivering services. We will ensure that our decision-making is robust, transparent and that we have considered the impact of our proposal on all equality groups. Having a sound decision making process not only fulfils our statutory requirements but it also ensures that we are better placed to deliver policies and services that are inclusive, efficient, and effective.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out our legal duty to undertake Equality Analysis and, although it does not explicitly require Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to be conducted, we will consciously consider the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision making. We will improve clarity regarding for which policies there is a college requirement for an EIA to be completed and keep records of how we have considered the equality duties via Equality Impact Assessments.

Analysis/Assessment is a simple way of evidencing that we have complied with the equality duties.

The Equality Impact Assessment template is available to view in Appendix A.

# Training

Halesowen College acknowledges that equality is a journey and that our commitment to the Equality Scheme will need to be supported by an on-going and comprehensive programme of equality and diversity training. This will involve everyone throughout the organisation (governors, senior leaders, students, and all staff) regardless of their role or their location.

Staff are also required to take personal responsibility for keeping themselves updated on current equality issues and legislation as part of their role, working for an inclusive organisation.

Promoting equality and diversity will become part of induction for all new staff and students, and training events for all will be publicised and monitored as part of our quality review of staff and students' development.

## Complaints Relating to Equality and Diversity

Staff and students will be made aware of the complaint procedures via induction. Copies of the Equality Scheme and Complaint Procedure will be made available on our website.

Any complaints will be taken seriously, and any member of staff or students found guilty of unlawful discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, including where appropriate, dismissal for gross misconduct. Any member of the public, visitor or service provider involved in discrimination or harassment will also be dealt with following the appropriate procedure.

The organisation will seek to provide a supportive environment for staff, students or other parties who make claims of discrimination or harassment through the appropriate procedure. Any complaints will be dealt with promptly and fairly.



# Roles and Responsibilities

The success of this Equality Scheme depends on its cross-college implementation, and it is therefore everyone's responsibility working for, or with, Halesowen College to drive the equality objectives and to abide by the key principles set in this Equality Scheme.

## Accountability

The accountability for meeting the statutory duties and for the delivery of the Equality Scheme rests with Halesowen College's Governing Body.

The Chief Executive and Principal has overall responsibility for Equality & Diversity and implementation of the College statutory duties.

The Chief Executive and Principal has overall responsibility for this Equality Scheme and has ultimate accountability for compliance with the College's equality obligations.

## The Governing Body

Halesowen College has a Governor specifically dedicated to promoting the Equality & Diversity agenda. Overall, the Governors are responsible for ensuring that:

- Halesowen College complies with the law and meets all its duties, including the general and the specific duties
- The Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed
- Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is promoted
- Adequate resources are made available for implementation of the Equality Scheme
- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion College Development Plan fosters a positive ethos regarding diversity and the elimination of discrimination
- The Strategic plan includes a commitment to equality
- Scrutiny and challenge are provided on reports regarding recruitment, retention, attainment and achievement rates for students from different backgrounds and on information regarding our EDI objectives
- They are properly trained in their duties under this legislation

## The Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Taking the lead in creating a positive, inclusive environment in which everybody is treated with respect and dignity
- The overall implementation of our equality commitments and for promoting equality
- Ensuring that this Equality Scheme is integral to the College's business planning processes
- Assessing the impact of any current and future policies in relation to equality
- Ensuring monitoring information is collected, analysed, and regularly reported
- Ensuring that the procedures for the recruitment and promotion of staff enshrine best practice in equal opportunities
- Ensuring appropriate action is taken against staff or students who discriminate
- Ensuring that all premises and facilities are accessible
- Ensuring that the procedures for procurement are inclusive and open to all

## **The Assistant Principal for Students and Safeguarding is responsible for:**

- Providing a consistent and high-profile lead for equality, diversity, and inclusion for Halesowen College
- Keeping up to date with our statutory duties on equality and taking up training and learning opportunities
- Overseeing appropriate and varied consultation and involvement in the development of the Equality Scheme
- Ensuring the Equality Scheme is implemented and reported on
- Monitoring and approving Equality Impact Assessments
- Publishing the Equality and Diversity annual report
- Leading the College wide project to work with the National Centre for Diversity to retain the Leaders in Diversity Standard

## **The Head of Inclusion is responsible for:**

- Keeping up to date with our statutory duties on equality and taking up training and learning opportunities
- Implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Equality Scheme
- Analysing equality and diversity data and reporting to the Senior Leadership Team
- Monitoring the retention and achievement of students from minority and priority groups
- Implementing systems that deal with incidents of discrimination or harassment effectively
- Designing and delivering training and awareness raising campaigns

## **All Staff are responsible for:**

- Considering equality and diversity in all quality assurance mechanisms such as course reviews, student surveys, self-assessment reports and observations of teaching and learning
- Promoting equality and diversity in curriculum planning, learning, and teaching methods, classroom organisation, assessment procedures, educational visits, student induction and tutorial programmes
- Promoting the Equality Scheme inside and outside Halesowen College
- Consistently challenging and reporting any inappropriate language, behaviour or discrimination by students, other staff or by organisations working in partnership with the College, including subcontractors, contractors and placement providers
- Dealing with equality and diversity incidents and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- Promoting equality of opportunities, eliminating discrimination and fostering good relations
- Becoming familiar with the organisation's equality data and trends, knowing their contribution to the overarching targets and setting targets
- Keeping up to date with our statutory duties on equality and taking up training and learning opportunities
- Involving students appropriately in decision making
- Ensuring those responsible for teaching and learning have schemes of work and teaching resources that demonstrate sensitivity to issues of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Promoting a positive working and studying environment that is free from discrimination, harassment or bullying and treat all individuals with dignity and respect
- Introducing all students to equality principles and opportunities during induction
- Contributing to Equality Impact Assessments
- Encouraging activities and projects that support learning and/or that promote diversity, for example regarding the Protected Characteristics and FREDIE+ values
- Providing appropriate and effective levels of support to break down any barriers to learning
- Reporting any Hate Crime incidents promptly

### **Contractors, Partners, and Service Providers are responsible for:**

- Complying with legislation on equality, diversity and inclusion
- Following the College's Equality Scheme and any equality conditions in contracts or agreements

### **Students, and where students are under 18, their Parent or Carers, Employers and Visitors have a proportionate responsibility for:**

- Understanding and acting in accordance with this Equality Scheme
- Complying with the College's policies and regulations in respect of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Supporting staff in challenging and reporting discriminatory language and behaviour

### **Staff with Specific Responsibilities:**

The **Director of HR** will oversee the Equality and Diversity agenda for the workforce and will:

- Have responsibility for the development, implementation and monitoring of staff development opportunities, staff consultation and guidance and support on all matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Ensure that the College's staffing profile is becoming more reflective of sector averages, and approve the use of positive action in recruitment where appropriate
- Compile regular reports on staffing in terms of equality indicators for the governors and produce reports detailing staffing information initially relating to demographics and pay gaps, then subsequently grievances and disciplinary action
- Organise events and activities to raise awareness of this Equality Scheme, and ensure that all staff understand Equality and Diversity issues through a rolling programme of staff development
- Ensure that development events are open and accessible and that wherever possible they meet the needs of all the individuals
- Ensure that complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying among staff are investigated in line with the College's procedures
- Take the lead responsibility for carrying out impact assessments on all People policies and acting on the results
- Gather the range of staff quantitative and qualitative information and ensure that this information is used effectively to improve equality



The **Chief Information Officer** has responsibility for the Equality and Diversity agenda for student matters and will:

- Lead the provision for reporting on the recruitment, retention, achievement and progress of different groups of students
- Provide an agreed range of student quantitative and qualitative information and share it through recognised electronic data dashboards to ensure that this information is used effectively to improve equality
- Provide agreed information that will help relevant college leaders to target recruitment of specific groups of students

The **Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards** is responsible for ensuring that Equality and Diversity is embedded within all quality improvement activities such as observations of teaching and learning, course reviews, self-assessment reports and any other quality improvement activities.

The **Director of Estates and Facilities** is responsible for communicating the Equality Scheme to all contractors Halesowen College partners with and for ensuring that all the facilities are accessible.

The **Chief Finance Officer** is responsible for ensuring that all the procurement processes comply with the College's legal obligations in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as complying with College values.

The **Procurement Manager** is responsible for ensuring that all partners, contractors and consultants are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in their service provision. This covers obligations under the Modern Slavery Act, following college values, as well as sustainability. This is enacted via the Supplier Code of Conduct, which we ask all suppliers to confirm their agreement to. The College ensures compliance with Modern Slavery obligations with an annual statement, supported by a policy which is reviewed each year.

Our **Equality and Diversity Champions** will actively champion the equality and diversity commitments laid out in the Equality Scheme within their faculty or department.

# Equality Impact Assessment Template

Completion of the following template is a requirement, where indicated by the College's Policy Index, when proposing new college policies, procedures and guidelines, (hereafter referred to as policy) as well as when proposing significant policy updates.

Question	Response
Policy name	
Policy author(s)	
Executive sponsor	
Is this a new (N) or existing (E) policy, procedure, plan or process?	
To which cohort(s) does the policy, procedure, plan or process apply? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff</li> <li>- Students (indicate groups)</li> <li>- Public (specify who)</li> <li>- Employers</li> <li>- Other (please specify)</li> </ul>	
Will the policy, procedure, plan or process affect members of the target group(s) equally?  If no, indicate how the policy will affect specific groups within a cohort differently and why	
In targeting the policy at a specific group, or groups, within a cohort, will another group, or groups, within that cohort be disadvantaged?  If yes, how will this be addressed?	
What information has been gathered about the diversity of the target cohort(s)?	

Question	Response
<p>Does this policy contain visual images?</p> <p>If yes, do they reflect the diversity of the College?</p>	
<p>Indicate how this policy supports Halesowen College in its General Equality Duty to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act</li> <li>- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> <li>- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul>	
<p>Indicate any potential negative impacts identified in relation to the protected characteristics listed below, or why you believe that there are not negative impacts in relation to these protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Age</li> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Gender / Gender Reassignment</li> <li>- Marriage / Civil Partnership</li> <li>- Pregnancy / Maternity Leave</li> <li>- Race</li> <li>- Faith, Religion or Belief</li> <li>- Sexual Orientation</li> </ul>	
<p>Indicate any potential negative impacts identified in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disadvantaged students</li> <li>- Looked After Children</li> <li>- English as an Additional Language</li> <li>- High Needs students</li> <li>- Students accessing Free Meals</li> <li>- Students with SEN</li> <li>- Students without GCSE English and/or Maths</li> </ul> <p>Or state why you believe that there are not negative impacts in relation to these needs</p>	

Question	Response
<p>Indicate who the policy has been considered by and/or who has been consulted about the policy.</p> <p>If external or advisory groups have been involved specify them.</p> <p>If this policy was discussed with staff/student for consultation/review purposes did this lead to any equality issues being raised?</p>	
<p>How would you assess the overall impact of this policy on equality?</p> <p>High, medium or low?</p>	
<p>Who completed this audit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name</li> <li>- Job Title</li> <li>- Date</li> </ul>	

Send the completed Equality Impact Assessment with the proposed policy when submitting for approval at the appropriate Board and copy to the Head of Safeguarding and EDI.



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All information is correct at time of print. If you need this guide in any other format, please get in touch.



[www.halesowen.ac.uk](http://www.halesowen.ac.uk)