



Equality Policy

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Statement of Intent

At Dartford Science and Technology College (DSTC) we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The college's general duties, with regards to equality are:

- Eliminating discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Fostering good relationships across all characteristics and people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We will not discriminate against, harass or victimise any student, prospective student, member of staff or other member of the college community because of their:

- Gender
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

Dartford Science and Technology College (DSTC) aims to promote students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, with special emphasis on promoting equality, diversity and eradicating prejudicial incidents for students and staff. Our school is committed to not only eliminating discrimination, but also increasing understanding and appreciation for diversity.

Dartford Science and Technology College recognises that certain groups in society have historically been disadvantaged on account of unlawful discrimination they have faced on the basis of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age.

This policy will put in place a range of actions to eliminate prejudice, unlawful discrimination and victimisation within the college community and workforce.

1. Legislative Framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Educational Needs Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011

- 1.2. The Equality Act 2010 provides a modern, single legal framework with three broad duties:
- Eliminate discrimination
 - Advance equality of opportunity
 - Foster good relations
- 1.3. Dartford Science and Technology College fully understands the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities.
- 1.4. A protected characteristic, under the Act, is as follows:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
 - Sex (including transgender people)
 - Gender reassignment
 - Maternity and pregnancy
 - Religion and belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marriage and civil partnership (for employees)
- 1.5. The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student, a staff member or a governor:
- In relation to admissions.
 - In relation to job interviews.
 - In the way it provides education for students.
 - In the way it provides students access to any benefit, facility or service.
 - By excluding a student, staff member or governor or subjecting them to any other detriment.

2. Principles and Aims

- 2.1. We see all students and potential students, and their parents and carers, as being of equal value, regardless of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age.
- 2.2. Our policies, procedures and activities will not discriminate but will nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to any protected characteristic(s). Acceptance and celebration will be promoted through

the Individual Character Education (ICE) curriculum, Behaviour Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

- 2.3. Dartford Science and Technology College will promote race equality and have due regard to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different racial groups provided through the Individual Character Education (ICE) curriculum, Form Time and Staff and Student Code of Conduct.
- 2.4. Dartford Science and Technology College will promote disability equality throughout the college, ensuring the equality of opportunity, eliminating unlawful discrimination, eliminating disability related harassment and encouraging participation by disabled people in public life. This will be promoted through the Individual Character Education (ICE) curriculum, Behaviour Policy and Staff and Student Code of Conduct.
- 2.5. Dartford Science and Technology College will promote gender equality by eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment, and promote the equality of opportunity between men and women, girls and boys.
- 2.6. Transgender people are explicitly covered by the gender equality duty. For the purposes of this policy, the term transgender refers to an individual whose gender expression or identity is different from that traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. DSTC will currently only admit students that were born female at birth. This will be reviewed when further guidance has been published. DSTC respects the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive and safe environment within the school community. Students will be educated through the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (DfE September 2020) element of Individual Character Education (ICE) curriculum.
- 2.7. Dartford Science and Technology College is opposed to all forms of prejudice and recognises that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice related discrimination may fare less well in the education system. This will be promoted through the Individual Character Education (ICE) curriculum, Behaviour Policy and Staff and Student Code of Conduct.
- 2.8. Dartford Science and Technology College will ensure that all staff, governors, parents/carers, students and guests will comply with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations outlined in our policies and procedures.
- 2.9. Dartford Science and Technology College will ensure that admissions procedures will not discriminate in any way. It should be noted that these are managed by the Local Authority Assessment and Review Officer.
- 2.10. DSTC will:

- Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given necessary training and support.
- Ensure equality and diversity is promoted, role modelled and celebrated by all members of the school community.
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging, ensuring this is promoted in our policies, procedures and activities.
- Observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development, and ensure that all policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees regardless of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.
- Seek to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that may already exist.
- Ensure that policies, procedures and activities benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in the public life of everyone, regardless of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age. Governors will consider this when ratifying policies.
- Ensure staff promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos at DSTC, challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment. Staff will maintain appropriate levels of awareness of issues surrounding equalities which will be developed through continued professional development opportunities, guest speakers, familiarity of policies and procedures and the Staff Code of Conduct.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The governing body will:

- Ensure that the Dartford Science and Technology College complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish Equality Objectives (Appendix 1).
- Ensure that Dartford Science and Technology College's policies and procedures are developed and implemented with due regard to the Equality Act (2010).
- Ensure equal opportunities are promoted in its staff recruitment professional development programmes and in membership of the governing body.
- Provide information in appropriate and accessible formats when requested.

- Ensure that the necessary disciplinary measures are in place to embed this policy (Staff & Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy)

3.2. The Principal will:

- Implement the policy and its procedures.
- Ensure that all staff members receive the appropriate equality and diversity training as part of their induction and continued professional development.
- Ensure that all parents, visitors and contractors are aware of and are in compliance with the provisions of this policy.
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any case of discriminatory practice.
- Address any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with DfE guidance.

3.3. Employees will:

- Be mindful of any incidence of harassment or bullying in the college.
- Address any minor issues of harassment or bullying in the college and report any major breaches of the policy to the Principal.
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and the college's culture.
- Promote equality and good relations, and not harass or discriminate in any way.
- Monitor students' progress and academic needs to ensure the appropriate support is in place.
- Keep up-to-date with equality legislation and its application by completing the appropriate training.

3.4. Students will:

- Not discriminate against or harass any other student or staff member.
- Actively encourage equality and diversity in the college by contributing their cultural experiences and values.
- Report any incidents of bullying or harassment, whether to themselves or to others, to an appropriate member of the college staff.
- Abide by all the college's equality and diversity policies, procedures and codes, including the Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy.

3.5. Dartford Science and Technology College will publish Equality Objectives annually on its website, in order to demonstrate how it is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010, and advancing equality of opportunity.

4. Gender Reassignment

- 4.1. The Act ensures legal protection against discrimination (direct or indirect) for all protected characteristics mentioned previously, including gender reassignment.
- 4.2. A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if that person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.
- 4.3. All members of staff and students have a right to privacy, which includes the right to keep one's transgender status confidential. College staff should not disclose information that may reveal a child or other staff members' transgender status without the explicit permission of the child and parent(s).
- 4.4. In consultation with the student a staff member will be identified in whom any transgender child can confide and who can deal with any issues that may arise, for instance bullying or harassment.

5. Uniform/dress Policy

- 5.1. The Act does not deal specifically with college uniform or other aspects of appearance, such as hair colour and style, and the wearing of jewellery and make-up, but the general requirement not to discriminate in the treatment of students applies here in relation to other aspects of the college policy.
- 5.2. Dartford Science and Technology College will ensure that its uniform policy does not discriminate because of race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age.
- 5.3. Dartford Science and Technology College will be sensitive to the needs of different cultures, races and religions and act reasonably in accommodating these needs, without compromising important college policies, such as college safety or discipline.

6. Curriculum

- 6.1. All students will be entitled to access to a curriculum and to teaching and learning opportunities which meet their needs, including extra support where this has been identified as a statutory need. When planning the curriculum, the college will take every opportunity to promote and advance diversity and equality.

7. Promoting Equality

In order to meet our objectives, the college has identified the following priorities:

- 7.1. Dartford Science and Technology College will provide support staff (known as Independent Support Assistants, ISA's) who are directly related to **special educational needs** and disabled children's educational needs as a reasonable adjustment so they can integrate wholly in all parts of school life through the application for High Needs Funding from Kent County Council (KCC). High Needs Finding supports the use of ISA's directly.
- 7.2. Staff will ensure that all students are able to take part in extracurricular activities and residential visits, and the college will monitor uptake of these visits to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- 7.3. Dartford Science and Technology College will ensure that all forms of prejudice-motivated bullying is taken seriously and dealt with consistently and fairly.
- 7.4. There will be a clearly defined behaviour system including rewards and consequences embedded to provide consistency for all students and to ensure transparency and consistency for all students.
- 7.5. The school will increase access as needed for **special educational needs and** disabled children and young people taking necessary steps to meet students' needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled students, enabling our students to take as full a part as possible in the activities of the college.
- 7.6. The school will ensure there is adequate access to the physical environment.
- 7.7. The school will adapt and scaffold the delivery of written information to disabled children and young people as per EHCPs.
- 7.8. The school will listen to the views of parents, staff, outside agencies and local colleges.
- 7.9. Throughout the year, the college will plan elements of the Individual Character Education (ICE) scheme of work to raise awareness of equality and diversity.
- 7.10. Bullying and prejudice will be carefully monitored and dealt with accordingly. Regular training will be given to both existing and new staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice-related bullying.

8. Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents

- 8.1. Dartford Science and Technology College is opposed to all forms of prejudice and we recognise that students and staff who experience any form of prejudice related discrimination may fare less well in the education system.
- 8.2. The school will ensure that students and staff are aware of the impact of prejudice, stereotyping, microaggressions and unconscious bias to ensure all members of the school community are educated to make informed decisions and reduce the number of discriminatory and prejudiced incidents.
- 8.3. If incidents still occur, the school will address them immediately and report them to the LA.

9. Appeal Process

- 9.1. Staff members retain the right to appeal against a decision on the acceptability of their appearance using Dartford Science and Technology College's grievance procedure with regards to the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010.

10. Monitoring and Review

- 10.1. Dartford Science and Technology College will review this policy annually to ensure that all procedures are up-to-date.
- 10.2. The policy will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways:
 - Individual attainment data
 - Equal opportunities recruitment data
 - Ofsted judgements for behaviour and attitudes on equality and diversity
 - Incident records related to harassment and bullying
- 10.3. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

Appendix 1

Equality Objectives

DSTC is committed to the active implementation and promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion for all members of our community to ensure every person feels seen, empowered and valued. We strive to create a psychologically safe environment where we eliminate discrimination, promote diversity and welcome, protect and respect diverse people.

Objective 1

To ensure all young people have access to an ambitious, fully inclusive, equal and diverse curriculum allowing them to feel represented, empowered and valued.

Why is this an objective?

Our vision is to educate and empower citizens of the future to be able to thrive and flourish in the adult world. We are helping to form active citizens who are creative, compassionate, empathetic, ambitious and resilient. Active citizens who think differently, are kind to themselves and others, learn from their mistakes and have hope for the future.

Our curriculum develops our young people holistically ensuring they think critically and about the world around them and question social injustices more deeply. We intend to build their self esteem and self image to ensure they navigate social media, current affairs and the wider world to confidently make effective and informed decisions.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring all policies are representative of our diverse community.
- Providing equality and diversity professional development opportunities
- Continuing to develop our *Week of Culture*.
- Ensuring our curriculum prepares students for life in a diverse society.
- Creating personal development opportunities through the ICE (PSHE) and form time curriculum, assemblies and extra curricular activities to educate all members of the community about equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Plan and deliver a calendar of events including, but not limited to, Black History Month, International Womens' Day and Pride Month to develop a culture of acceptance and celebration of diverse characteristics.
- Ensuring all staff are equipped to challenge discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour, educating those who have behaved in an inappropriate way.
- Actively challenge social injustices and become an anti-racist school.

Objective 2

To promote mental health and wellbeing for all members of the school community, regardless of their starting point and/or protected characteristics.

Why is this an objective?

DSTC has experienced an increase in Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) concerns in line with the local and national context. SEMH is the most significant need and often leads to Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and Anxiety Based School Avoidance (ABSA).

Research shows students and staff from marginalised groups often have higher rates of mental health concerns. As a community we want all staff and students, whichever their protected characteristic, to know they will not be judged and have access to meaningful support through well written policies and non-discriminatory practices.

We will achieve this through:

- Developing a fully trained Mental Health First Aider.
- Pastoral Leaders in each Key Stage who build effective relationships with students, parents/carers, other stakeholders and external agencies.
- The Staff Wellbeing Policy
- The Menopause Policy
- The Flexible Working Policy
- Weekly Principal Drop-ins
- Regular drop-in sessions with the School Business Manager to support all staff with any areas of policy and procedure which may affect their mental health and wellbeing.
- Introduction of a staff wellbeing day.
- Access to the Education Support helpline.
- Form rooms in the same room as the teachers' classroom minimising movement around the school allowing them to be prepared for period 1.
- Access to a trained school counsellor to provide additional support..
- Continuing to build on positive relationships with external agencies to ensure the appropriate referrals are made for our vulnerable students.
- Teacher briefings for In Year Admissions and Children in Care to ensure staff are aware of potential triggers and how to minimise the possibility of this occurring.
- Ongoing development of our Eco Project as a wellbeing space for the school and local community.

Objective 3

To educate and empower citizens of the future through a values culture which promotes a socially just environment for all members of the community to flourish.

Why is this an objective? Our school vision and values must be seen, heard and felt in every aspect of our work to ensure we are fully committed to an equal, diverse and inclusive environment.

As a non-selective school in a selective area we must actively promote high expectations, rigorous standards and challenging ambitions. To achieve this staff and students need to be guided by a set of shared values.

We will achieve this by living our values which are:

- Implementing our school values.
- I am creative; we think differently
- I am resilient; we are determined
- I am kind; we are compassionate
- I am curious; we ask questions
- I am brave; we are courageous
- I have a voice; we speak up

Objective 4

To be an inclusive workplace attracting a diverse range of candidates, creating an environment in which:

- colleagues are treated with respect
- students can interact with adults who are positive role models
- individual's unique backgrounds and perspectives within our diverse environment are valued and respected

Why is this an objective?

At DSTC we wish to build an inclusive environment, where colleagues are able to be themselves at work and feel supported, empowered, valued, respected, fairly treated and able to achieve their full potential:

We will achieve this by:

- Regularly reviewing our recruitment strategies to appeal to a wide and diverse range of candidates.
- Ensuring all members of the leadership team are safer recruitment trained.
- Delivering unconscious bias training to all staff via our iHASCO training suite.
- Being an inclusive employer we will not tolerate discrimination.
- Using fully inclusive HR policies for all staff.
- Regularly reviewing our HR policies to ensure they met all statutory guidance.

- Ensuring our staff understand the importance of diversity, equality and inclusion with all staff completing mandatory training and development courses to help build their knowledge and understanding of these critical areas of school life.