



SINGLE EQUALITIES POLICY

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| Policy approved & adopted by | Head of College |
| Date | Sept 2023 |
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‘True community is based upon equality, mutuality and reciprocity. It affirms the richness of individual diversity as well as the common human ties that bind us together’.

Pauli Murray

Introduction

At Valley College, our single equality policy sets out how we will meet our statutory duties in the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act (Specific Duties) regulations 2011 and how college will work to improve the equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, and how we will work to eliminate discrimination. Respect for diversity is at the heart of everything we do within college to enable learners to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and equality is a key principle in how we treat all people fairly. At Valley College we strive to offer high quality education and to promote good relations between college and the wider community regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Faith, Religion and Belief

(9 protected characteristics – Equality Act 2010)

We also recognise broader influences and will also take into account issues such as

- An individual’s ability to access education
- Cultural and economic backgrounds
- Physical and social environments
- Health

This policy outlines the commitment of the trustees, staff and learners to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the college community. For our college this means not simply treating everybody the same but understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different

learners in college, whilst celebrating and valuing the achievements and strengths of all members of the college community. These include:

- Learners
- Staff
- Parents/carers and advocates
- Governing committee
- Multi-agency staff linked to the college
- Visitors to college

We believe that equality at our college should permeate all aspects of college life. Every member of the college community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth and we are committed to ensuring that all staff and learners, existing or potential, receive fair and equal treatment. The College expresses its opposition to all forms of prejudice, inequality and discrimination.

Ofsted identified 'equality of opportunity' as a strength.

Monitoring and Review

Valley College is an inclusive college. We collect and analyse a range of equality information for our learners by ethnicity, disability, gender and gender:

- Learner achievement
- Attendance data
- Serious Incidents
- Racist Incidents
- Bullying and Harassment Complaints
- Homophobic/Biphobic/Transphobic Incidents

We make regular assessments of learner's progress and as part of this process, we regularly monitor the performance of different groups, to ensure that all groups of learners are making the best possible progress. We use this information to adjust future teaching and learning plans, as necessary.

Valley College is also committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation. We aim to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and establish a trustee body that is representative of all sections of the community in order to respect and respond to the diverse needs of our population.

We collect and analyse a range of profile information for our staff and keep this information confidentially to enable us to be more inclusive.

Developing Best Practice

Learning and Teaching

We aim to provide all our learners with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, teaching and learning will:

- Provide equality of access for all learners and prepare them for life in a diverse society.
- Use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping.
- Use materials to promote a positive image of and attitude towards disability and disabled people.
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour.

- Provide opportunities for learners to appreciate their own culture and religions and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- Use a range of sensitive teaching strategies when teaching about different cultural and religious traditions.
- Develop learner's advocacy skills so that they can detect bias, challenge discrimination, leading to justice and equality.
- Ensure that learning programmes cover issues of equality and diversity.
- Where appropriate, promote and celebrate the contribution of different cultures relevant to the subject matter.
- Seek to involve all advocates in Valley College
- Provide extended learning opportunities that involve all learners.
- Take account of the performance of all learners when planning for future learning
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of learners.
- Identify resources and training that support staff development.

Learning Environment

There is a consistently high expectation of all learners regardless of their gender, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination. All learners are encouraged to improve on their own achievements and not to measure themselves against others. Advocates are also encouraged to view achievements in this light.

- Tutor enthusiasm is a vital factor in achieving a high level of motivation and good results from all learners.
- Adults in the college will provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity.
- The college should place a very high priority on the provision for special educational needs and disability. We will meet all learners' learning needs including the more able by carefully assessed and administered programmes of work.
- The college must provide an environment in which all learners have equal access to all facilities and resources.
- All learners are encouraged to be actively involved in their own learning.
- A range of teaching methods are to be used to ensure that effective learning takes place for all learners
- Consideration will be given to the physical learning environment – both internal and external, including displays and signage

Curriculum

At Valley College, we aim to ensure that:

- Planning reflects our commitment to equality in all learning themes promoting positive attitudes to equality and diversity.
- Learners will have opportunities to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality.
- Steps are taken to ensure that all learners have access to learning by taking into account their cultural, backgrounds, linguistic needs and learning styles.
- All learners have access to relevant qualifications which recognise attainment and achievement and promote progression.

Resources and Materials

When ordering new resources and materials staff consider how they promote equality.

The provision of good quality resources and materials within Valley College is a high priority. These resources should:

- Reflect the reality of an ethnically, culturally and sexually diverse society.
- Reflect a variety of viewpoints.
- Show positive images of males and females in society.
- Include non-stereotypical images of all groups in a global context.
- Be accessible to all members of the college community.

Language

We recognise that it is important at Valley College that all members of the college community use appropriate language which:

- Does not transmit or confirm stereotypes.
- Does not offend.
- Creates and enhances positive images of particular groups identified at the beginning of this document.
- Creates the conditions for all people to develop their self esteem.
- Uses accurate language in referring to particular groups or individuals and challenges in instances where this is not the case.

Extended Learning Opportunities

It is the policy of this college to provide equal access to age-appropriate activities. We undertake responsibility for making contributions to extended learning opportunities and are aware of the college's commitment to equality of opportunity (e.g. volunteers) by providing them with written guidelines drawn from this policy. We try to ensure that all such non-staff members who have contact with learners adhere to these guidelines.

Provision for Bi-lingual Learners

We undertake at Valley College to make appropriate provision for all EAL/bi-lingual learners/groups to ensure access to the whole curriculum. These groups may include:

- Learners for whom English is an additional language
- Learners who are new to the United Kingdom
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveler Learners
- Advanced bi-lingual learners

Muslim Prayer

We support our Muslim employee's and understand the need for Muslim prayer. We will provide a quiet space for prayer during allocated break times if staff require. This needs to be articulated to the employee's line manager.

Ramadan and fasting

Ramadan lasts for 29-30 days every year and is based on the lunar calendar. The dates vary depending upon regional customs and when the new moon is first sighted. During this period participating Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset every day. Fasting represents a significant change in eating habits for those observing Ramadan and can have an impact on the ability to carry out normal work tasks at the usual times. (Please refer to appendix A for further information)

Personal Development and Pastoral Guidance

- Staff take account of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination and the experience and needs of particular groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveler, refugee and asylum seeker learners.

- All learners are encouraged to consider the full range of career opportunities available to them with no discriminatory boundaries placed on them due to their disability, gender, gender identity, race or sexual orientation whilst acknowledging that a disability may impose some practical boundaries to some career aspirations.
- All learners/staff/advocates are given support, as appropriate, when they experience discrimination.
- We recognise that perpetrators may also be victims and require support.
- Positive role models are used throughout the college to ensure that different groups of learners can see themselves reflected in the college community.
- Emphasis is placed on the value that diversity brings to the college community rather than the challenges.

Staffing and Staff Development

We recognise the need for positive role models and distribution of responsibility among staff.

- This must include learners' access to a balance of male and female staff where possible.
- We encourage the career development and aspirations of all college staff.
- It is our policy to provide staff with training and development, which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of learners.
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds.

Staff Recruitment

- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice through the recruitment and selection process.
- Equalities policies and practices are covered in all staff inductions.
- All temporary staff are made aware of policies and practices.
- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and impact.

There are instances in which a job will qualify for a genuine occupational qualification on the grounds of gender. However, only in very few instances would this be permissible, for example, where the job is likely to involve physical contact with members of the opposite sex, where matters of decency or privacy are involved. With reference to the Equality Act 2010 where possible we recruit same gender staff to provide intimate personal care.

Partnerships with Advocates/Families and the Wider Community

We will work with advocates to help all learners to achieve their potential.

- All advocates are encouraged to participate in the full life of the college.
- Members of the local community are encouraged to join in college activities.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Our Directors's committee will ensure that the college complies with statutory requirements in respect of this policy.
- The Head of College is responsible for the implementation of this policy and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support and report progress to the Director's committee.
- The Head of College has day-to-day responsibility for coordinating the implementation of this policy.
- Our staff will promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the college, challenge inappropriate language

and behaviour, respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, ensure appropriate support for learners with additional needs and maintain a good level of awareness of equalities issues.

- All members of the college community have a responsibility to treat each other with respect, to feel valued, and to speak out if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour.
- We will take steps to ensure all visitors to the college adhere to our commitment to equality.

Commissioning and Procurement

Valley College will ensure that we buy services from organisations that comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in any tendering process.

The Measurement of Impact of the Policy

This policy will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on learners, staff, advocates from the different groups that make up our college.

Equality Impact Assessments

Undertaking equality impact assessments (EIAs) is similar to undertaking health and safety risk assessments. It involves predicting and assessing what the implications of a policy, function or strategy will be on a wide range of people. Whilst there is no specific legal requirement to carry out formal documented EIA's, the Equality Act 2010 requires the 'due regard' to equality in all of the college activities.

EIAs are a way in which we can analyse all of our work (this could be a policy, procedure, project, strategy or service) to ensure it meets the needs of all our service users and that no group (in relation to ethnicity, disability, gender, gender identity, age, religion and belief, and sexual orientation) is disadvantaged or cannot access our services.

Publicising the Policy and Plan

This Policy is a public document and is made available on our website, on the Valley College network, and in induction meetings.

Annual Review of Progress

This policy has a three-year life span and our performance is subject to annual review and revision of the action plan.

The 9 protected characteristics

Age

Age is defined by reference to a person's age group. It means a person belonging to a particular age group. An age group includes people of the same age and people of a particular range of ages. Where people fall in the same age group they share the protected characteristic of age.

- We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation relating to age
- We will eliminate any criterion, practice or provision within college that disadvantages people of a particular age, unless it can be objectively justified.
- We will identify any learner achievement gaps between different age groups and work to close any gaps.
- We will promote positive attitudes towards people of all ages.

Disability

Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' effect on an individual's ability to do normal daily activities.

- We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation relating to disability.
- We will promote positive attitudes and take steps to remove any barriers.
- We will make reasonable adjustments wherever practicable to support staff with disabilities.

Sex

Sex relates to the gender of an individual ie whether male or female, and includes transsexual and transgender people.

- We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation relating to sex.
- We will ensure that all employment related policies and practices are fair, transparent and free from gender bias.
- We will ensure that the curriculum positively reflects gender and gender contributions in the workplace.

Race

Race refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic, or natural origins.

- We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation relating to race.
- We welcome to college all people, in all areas, regardless of their colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.
- We will promote positive attitudes and raise awareness of different racial groups.
- We will eliminate any criterion, provision or practice that disadvantages people of a particular race.
- We will ensure all staff have the opportunity to understand issues relating to race.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation relates to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

- We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation relating to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic).
- We welcome people in all areas, regardless of their sexual orientation.
- We will provide support when needed to staff or learners who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, whilst understanding and maintain their right to privacy and confidentiality and ensure they feel valued.
- We will ensure staff and learners are informed about sexual orientation issues.

Gender Reassignment

This refers to an individual who is proposing to, is currently undergoing, or has undergone a process to change their gender. A person does not need to be undergoing medical supervisions to be protected. Someone who chooses to live as another gender without undergoing any medical procedures is still covered.

- We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation relating to gender reassignment.
- We welcome all people in all areas, of all genders, including those who identify as transgender.
- We will support and protect any staff or learner who seeks to undergo gender reassignment, or who chooses to live full or part time as the gender with which they identify.
- We will ensure staff receive training and understand issues relating to gender reassignment.

Marriage/Civil partnership

Marriage covers any formal union of a man and woman/ man and a man/ woman and woman which is legally recognized in the UK. Civil partnership refers to a registered civil partnership of a same sex couple under the Civil Partnership Act 2004, including those registered outside of the UK.

- We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation relating to marriage or civil partnership.
- We will eliminate any criterion, provision or practice that disadvantages people on the grounds of marriage or civil partnership, unless it can be objectively justified.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Pregnancy and maternity covers the condition of being pregnant and subsequently the period after giving birth. It is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, including as a result of breast-feeding.

- We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation relating to pregnancy and maternity.
- We will provide support to staff and learners to ensure they are safe and able to achieve their potential.

Religion and Belief

Religion means any religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including a lack of belief (eg atheism). Belief also covers suchlike as animal welfare or climate change.

- We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation relating to religion and belief.
- We welcome people in all areas regardless of their religion or belief.
- We will facilitate opportunities for religious observance/time off for religious festivals (as per attendance policy)
- We will eliminate any criterion, provision or practice that disadvantages people on the grounds of religion or belief.
- We will ensure staff have the opportunity to understand issues relating to religion and belief.

APPENDIX A

Ramadan and fasting

Ramadan lasts for 29-30 days every year and is based on the lunar calendar. The dates vary depending upon regional customs and when the new moon is first sighted. During this period participating Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset every day. Fasting represents a significant change in eating habits for those observing Ramadan and can have an impact on the ability to carry out normal work tasks at the usual times.

Effects of fasting on the body

During a fasting period, the metabolic rate of a fasting person slows down and other regulatory mechanisms start functioning. Fasting promotes the efficient utilization of body and dietary fat. The total food intake during fasting, while less than normal, is sufficient to maintain good health. However, it is important to balance food and fluid intake between fasts. In order to stay healthy, it is advisable to eat food from the major food groups, such as bread and cereal, milk and dairy products, meat and beans, vegetables and fruit.

Ramadan in College

We will where possible make reasonable changes and allowances to accommodate cultural and religious practices without it detrimentally impacting on Valley College. Employees who are fasting during Ramadan need to inform their line manager to provide an opportunity to discuss any particular requests or requirements they may have. With particular reference to Ramadan, these may include:

- Allowing fasting employees to take work breaks at appropriate times during the day;
- Giving special consideration to requests for annual leave or unpaid leave during the period and at the end of Ramadan (Eid) when participating employees may wish to celebrate Eid with family and friends;
- Where possible avoid organising social events during major religious festivals so as not to exclude certain employees, unless you are participating in National or other events with set-dates.

We understand that:

- Fasting may affect people in different ways (for example some people may become a little irritable or slightly tired at times) and some understanding from managers and colleagues can be helpful.
- Ramadan may offer an opportunity for closer team relations and appreciation of all cultures through being sensitive to other people's needs – for example being considerate of participating colleagues who are resisting the temptation to consume any type of food and drink whilst at work.

Learners may also be fasting during Ramadan and need to be given additional consideration during this period due to the potential health effects referred to above. We expect learners/advocates to inform Valley College staff that they/their learner will be fasting.

Learners may become irritable or tired at times. Also the effects of fasting may be felt most strongly in the afternoon and informing Valley College staff will help to ensure that the possible effects of fasting are understood.

Valley College will consider providing a quiet area where a learner can rest or undertake other activities during

lunch and break times when other learners may be eating.

Valley College will be considerate to the fact that participating learners are resisting the temptation to consume food and drink during the day and where possible, avoid taste testing or organizing special events such as cake sales or special lunches.

Educational Off Site Visits:

The impact of religious cultural festivals should be identified through the risk assessment process, as this will affect both accompanying adults (staff and volunteers) and learners. A considered judgement should be taken around the people, the venue and how the day is organized. This is central to safe practice and will enable college to decide on the appropriate actions necessary to reduce any risks to staff, learners and volunteers to an acceptable level.

Common health issues to be aware of during fasting

There are a small number of common health complaints that can occur during a fasting period:

- **Headaches:** In preparation for fasting, reducing caffeine intake gradually during the two weeks leading up to Ramadan may help to ease headaches.
- **Dehydration:** Very little fluid intake can cause dehydration and is related to headaches, especially on particularly hot days.
- **Low blood sugar:** Can cause confusion, slurred speech and fainting. Simple carbohydrates work the fastest to elevate blood sugar, but complex carbohydrates (e.g. grains and seeds, such as barley, wheat, oats, millets, semolina, beans, lentils, whole meal flour, basmati rice, etc.) and protein maintain it. Dates are high in natural sugars with a low glycemic index (GI) and will slowly release energy throughout the day.

General advice for anyone fasting:

By taking a few precautions, it is easy to stay healthy during a fasting period. General advice is:

- Don't overeat in the evening;
- Drink sufficient water between Iftar (sunset meal) and Suhoor (pre-dawn meal) to avoid dehydration as dehydration can lead to fainting or shock (very low blood pressure).
- Eat vegetables and fruit at the end of a meal;
- Gradually reduce caffeine drinks such as coke, coffee and tea three to five days before Ramadan. Then stop them altogether during fasting period as caffeine is a diuretic;
- Smoking is always a health risk factor. It reduces the benefits and efficiency of various vitamins, metabolites and enzyme systems in your body. If you cannot stop smoking, cut down gradually starting a few weeks before Ramadan.