

St Hugh's College Equality Policy

The College's Aims

St Hugh's College welcomes diversity among its staff, students and visitors, recognising the particular contributions to the achievement of the College's mission which can be made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

St Hugh's College aims to provide an inclusive environment which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected to assist them in reaching their full potential. The College will work to remove any barriers which might deter people of the highest potential and ability from applying to the College, either as staff or students.

The College's Commitment

The College is committed to using its best endeavours to ensure that all of its activities are governed by principles of equality of opportunity.

No prospective or actual student or member of staff will be treated less favourably than any other, whether before, during or after their study or employment at St Hugh's College on one or more of the following grounds (subject to any legal constraints and in relation to the protected characteristics laid out in the Equality Act 2010): age; disability¹; ethnic origin; gender (including gender reassignment); marital or civil partnership status; nationality; national origin; parental status; pregnancy or childbirth; race; religion or belief (or lack of it); sexual orientation; or length or type of contract (eg part-time or fixed term). The College has separate policies for race (Race Equality Policy) and gender (Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan) to meet the specific obligations of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2006. It also has a Code of Practice on Harassment to protect its members from any form of harassment or discriminatory behaviour which might inhibit them from pursuing their work or studies.

This policy applies to all members of the College community, both students and staff, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to job applicants, to student applicants, current and former students, to honorary and associate members and to visitors to the College.

With regard to staff, this policy applies (but is not limited) to advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, to opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits, facilities and pay, to health and safety, to conduct at work, to grievance and disciplinary procedures and to termination of employment.

¹ Under the Equality Act, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

With regard to students, this policy applies (but is not limited to) admissions, to teaching, learning and research provision, to scholarships, grants and other awards and benefits under the College's control, to student support and welfare, to access to College accommodation and to other buildings, facilities and services, to health and safety, to personal conduct and to student complaints and disciplinary procedures.

The College expects all its staff, students and visitors to take personal responsibility for familiarising themselves with this policy and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner towards other staff, students (prospective, current and former) and visitors. Members of the College community have a duty to treat colleagues with respect at all times, and not to discriminate against, victimise² or harass³ other students, members of staff or visitors, whether junior or senior to them. The College regards any breach of this policy by any employee(s) or student(s) as a serious matter to be dealt with through its agreed procedures and which may result in disciplinary action.

In order to realise its commitment to equality of opportunity, the College will:

- Promote the aims of this policy.
- Promote equality and good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Be proactive in eliminating discrimination, including harassment, victimisation and bullying, through training and the production, dissemination and review of its policies, codes of practice and guidance⁴.
- Have regard to its obligations under relevant legislation and for its policies, codes of practice and guidance to mirror the same and be changed to meet the demands of new legislation.
- Whilst acknowledging that they are not legally binding, have regard to any Codes of Practice issued or adopted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Make this policy, as well as all codes of practice and guidance, available to all staff and students.

² Victimisation is defined in the Equality Act as treating someone badly because they have done a 'protected act' (or because the institution believes that a person has or is going to do a protected act). A 'protected act' is making a claim or complaint of discrimination (under the Equality Act), helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information, making an allegation that the further or higher education institution or someone else has breached the Act, or doing anything else in connection with the Act.

³ There are three types of harassment that are unlawful under the Equality Act: unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or that is related to gender reassignment or sex, and less favourable treatment because the person concerned submits to or rejects the unwanted conduct. 'Of a sexual nature' can cover verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct including unwelcome sexual advances, inappropriate touching, forms of sexual assault, sexual jokes, displaying pornographic photographs or drawings, or sending emails with material of a sexual nature.

⁴ The Act includes discrimination by association ie being related to, or friendly with, someone with a protected characteristic, or perceiving someone to have a protected characteristic.

- Review regularly the terms of this policy and all associated codes of practice and guidance.

The policy statement is supported by the College's Race Equality Policy, Freedom of Speech Code of Practice, Harassment Code of Practice, and Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

The College's Responsibilities

The Governing Body of St Hugh's College has overall responsibility for setting strategic objectives and for taking all reasonable steps to ensure equality of opportunity and the prevention of discrimination, harassment and victimisation of staff, students and visitors in their relationship with the College.

The Equalities Committee is responsible for the development, implementation and review of policies and practices to support the College's Equality Policy in relation to staff, students, visitors and others closely associated with the College. The Presidents of the Junior and Middle Common Rooms (or their representatives) are on this Committee, and it is afforded by such other College members and members of College staff as may, in the opinion of the Principal, most accurately reflect the diversity of backgrounds and experiences within the College.

College Officers and Heads of Department are responsible for the day to day implementation and delivery of the College's strategic objectives for equality and diversity.

The College will regularly review the Integrated Equality Policy, as it does with its policies on race, gender and harassment.

Complaints

The College is committed to protecting its members from any form of harassment or discriminatory behaviour which might inhibit them from pursuing their work or studies. Violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening or offensive behaviour or language and bullying are unacceptable forms of behaviour. The College will view seriously any action which runs contrary to these principles, ensuring an environment in which the dignity of other members of College, members of staff and visitors is respected.

Any prospective or current student or member of staff, or visitor, who has a complaint concerning a breach of this policy, may bring such a complaint to the College.

Harassment by any Senior or Junior Member of the College, or by any employee of the College, on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief (or lack of it), sex and sexual orientation is a disciplinary offence and should be reported according to the College's Code of Practice. Harassment may be broadly understood as consisting of a course of

unwarranted behaviour such as to cause, and which may reasonably be expected to cause, such distress or annoyance as seriously to disrupt the work or substantially to reduce the quality of life of another person. It includes any offensive physical act, behaviour or expressions which relate to any of the protected characteristics.

Complaints of harassment, victimisation or bullying will be dealt with according to the College's Code of Practice on Harassment. Initially, attempts will be made to resolve the problem informally by discussion and conciliation. If such attempts fail, formal disciplinary proceedings may be commenced. Any member of the College who wishes to make a complaint or discuss any possible case of harassment informally and in confidence is invited to contact the Bursar, Senior Tutor, HR Manager or any member of the welfare team. A friend, or (in the case of students) a JCR Welfare Officer or MCR Welfare Officer, can be asked to contact one of these on behalf of the complainant. The Code of Practice is available from the Bursary or via the College's website.

Similarly, abusive behaviour of any sort – including but not limited to harassment, intimidation, victimisation or discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief (or lack of it), sex and sexual orientation – is a disciplinary offence, which should be reported through the appropriate channels.

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