

Equal Opportunities Policy



The Mission of the College is:

to develop as a distinguished major provider of the highest quality academic and vocational education, leading to higher education and employment, and contributing to the Government's targets for education and training **and** to develop the lively and caring community of the College, enriching the lives of all students and equipping them with the qualifications and skills to meet the demands of a changing world with confidence and assurance.

Policy Statement

- The Sixth Form College Farnborough is opposed to racist, sexist and other forms of discrimination including sexual harassment. The College is committed to ensuring that its policies and practices secure equality of opportunity for its students and employees and for all those who come into contact with the College or its representatives.
- The College will take action in order that staff and students have equality of opportunity regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, class, marital status, gender, age, physical ability or sexual orientation.
- The College aims to be a community where all its members are valued and respected. This will be achieved through the curriculum, resources and environment and also through the quality of the relationships among the members of the community.
- Human Rights Act 1998: The College will act in accordance with the European Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
- The following are bound by this policy:
 - a) all staff;
 - b) members of the Corporation;
 - c) students;
 - d) any voluntary helpers, trainees;
 - e) representatives of other organisations working with the College;
 - f) any other person/s contracted to work on behalf of the College.
- This policy will be subject to review.

Operating Statements

The statements that relate to staff only are to be found in paragraphs 8 and 9

1. Marketing and Publicity

- 1.1 The College prospectus will contain a statement of the College's commitment to Equal Opportunities and anti-discriminatory education.
- 1.2 Publicity material, photographs and editorial will reflect the ethnic, cultural and gender mix of the College.
- 1.3 The College will regularly review publicity material and information leaflets with the aim of providing easily accessible information to all groups within the community.

The College will provide a welcoming environment.

2. Recruitment and Enrolment of Students

- 2.1 Information on College courses, facilities and services for students with Learning Difficulties will be available in the College Disabilities Statement.
- 2.2 Every effort will be made to enable students with Learning Difficulties to be integrated into the mainstream curriculum.
- 2.3 Students will have access to counselling and advice to ensure that they have full knowledge of the opportunities available in order to make informed choices.
- 2.4 An agreed checklist for admissions and enrolment interviews will be followed by College staff.
- 2.5 All applications from students with Learning Difficulties will be monitored and the Co-ordinator for Learning Support will consult with each student to ascertain how her/his individual needs can be met.

3. Induction of Students

A College induction programme will provide students with an introduction to the facilities provided within College, and their rights and responsibilities as students.

4. College Facilities

Students will have the opportunity to participate in social and leisure activities within College, e.g. Student Association facilities, canteen and sporting facilities. The College will seek ways to enable access for disabled students who wish to study here and any new building development will be designed to facilitate its use by people with disabilities.

5. Curriculum

- 5.1 The College will provide access to and positively encourage students to choose examined subjects, general activities and courses that will provide a balanced curriculum, appropriate to their needs.
- 5.2 Provision will be organised to offer students the widest possible choice in their selection of courses.
- 5.3 The College will attempt to provide courses to meet the needs of the local community.
- 5.4 The curriculum of the College will be organised to enable all students to develop their potential, to enhance their confidence and competence.
- 5.5 In the choice of syllabuses, resources and teaching materials curriculum areas should seek to reflect cultural diversity.
- 5.6 Since it is not always possible or desirable to select unbiased teaching materials, those that demonstrate stereotypes and bias in the images or language used should be challenged.
- 5.7 Students will be given opportunities to evaluate courses and methods of delivery and curriculum areas will be responsive to their comments.
- 5.8 Students' progress will be regularly monitored in order to assess both current attainment and individual needs.
- 5.9 There will be an attempt to ensure that outside speakers and participants at events include both women and men, and minority groups.

6. Student Support

Students will be entitled to the support necessary for effective involvement in their chosen course of study. Support will be available in the form of counselling and guidance, tutorial support, peer tutoring and provision of specialist support by the support staff.

7. Countering Discriminatory Behaviour

7.1 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined by the European Commission as:

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct, which may also be unlawful.

The essential characteristic of sexual harassment is that it is unwanted by the recipient, it is for each individual to determine what behaviour is acceptable to her/him and what she/he regards as offensive. Sexual attention becomes sexual harassment if it is persisted in once it has been made clear that it is regarded by the recipient as offensive, although one incident of harassment may constitute sexual harassment if sufficiently serious. It is the unwanted nature of the conduct which distinguishes sexual harassment from friendly behaviour, which is welcome and mutual.

A common misconception is that it is necessary for physical contact to take place for harassment to occur. This is not the case. Harassment may range from a serious physical assault, to verbal abuse, sexual blackmail, offensive language or images. Other examples of behaviour that could constitute harassment include, compromising invitations, threatening mail, comments, looks and innuendoes of a personal or suggestive nature.

7.2 Racism

The College accepts the following definition of institutional racism:
(McPherson Report 1999)

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. A racist incident is one which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

The College accepts and will implement the following recommendations from the McPherson report and the Commission for Racial Equality:

- All managers should ensure that they lead by example and take appropriate action where necessary. All employees should report racist incidents. This does not mean waiting until a complaint is raised. It means taking appropriate action whenever it is necessary to ensure that the standards set by the organisation are maintained in practice.
- The Principal will report recorded racist incidents to the Governing Body.

7.3 Racial Harassment

Definition:

"Any words or actions towards an individual or a group which make a person feel frightened, humiliated, ridiculed and/or undermined in self confidence and self-esteem because of their colour, ethnic group or nationality." (Hampshire County Council Racial Harassment Policy)

The following examples may be considered in defining racial harassment; this list is not intended to be exhaustive:

- racist graffiti;
- physical assault against a person or group because of colour, ethnicity or nationality;
- use of derogatory names, insults and racist jokes;
- verbal abuse and threats;
- racist comments in the course of discussion;
- ridicule of an individual for cultural differences e.g. food, music, dress;
- refusal to co-operate with other people because of their colour, ethnic origin or nationality;
- discrimination by employers in connection with work placements or work experience.

"Racial" means of any colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

- 7.4 All members of the College community have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Incidents of racial or other forms of harassment will be treated seriously, as will harassment and expressions of prejudice in any form; e.g. against an individual on the ground of religion, class, marital status, gender, age, disability and sexual orientation.
- 7.5 Victims of harassment will receive support from the College. Victimisation or retaliation against a member of the college for making a complaint will be treated as a disciplinary offence and investigated.
- 7.6 All serious incidents of harassment should be reported. In the first instance students should report the matter to their Personal Tutor or any other member of staff they feel able to approach. In consultation with the student the member of staff should refer the matter to the Deputy Principal (Student Services) for investigation. Staff should seek assistance from her/his line manager or a more senior member of staff. If the harassment continues a formal complaint should be made to the Principal who will investigate the matter in the manner prescribed in the disciplinary procedures.
- 7.7 Where an allegation is made against an individual the matter will be dealt with via the College disciplinary procedures for both staff and students.
- 7.8 All expressions of prejudice should be challenged by College staff in a firm and positive manner. Incidents of a less serious nature should be tackled immediately within the context of the situation.

- 7.9 Confidential advice concerning the nature and seriousness of incidents can be sought from the member of staff with responsibility for Equality and Diversity (Catherine Cole, Deputy Principal, Student Services).
- 7.10 For the purposes of monitoring incidents of racial, sexual and other forms of harassment, brief accounts of every incident investigated will be passed on to the member of staff with responsibility for Equality and Diversity. No individuals will be named in these accounts or details given that might prejudice the anonymity of the person(s) involved.

8. Recruitment and Selection of Staff

- 8.1 The College is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities in all aspects of recruitment, selection and promotion of staff. The College will comply, in the spirit as well as the letter, with the statutory obligations of the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Disability Discrimination Act. Accordingly, advertisements and job descriptions will emphasise the College Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 8.2 Clear and consistent procedures in respect of advertising, shortlisting, interviewing and appointments will regulate practices and safeguard against direct or indirect discrimination.
- 8.3 Selection Criteria
- a) Short-listing and interviewing will deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job and ability to fulfil the job requirements; appointments will be made on merit only;
 - b) for each short-listing selection criteria should be drawn up based on job and employee specifications;
 - c) all short-listings should be made according to these selection criteria;
 - d) records of decisions should be kept for one month;
 - e) short-listing should not be done by one person alone.
- 8.4 The College will consider applications made on a job share basis.

8.5 The conduct of interviews

- It is desirable for both men and women to be represented on interview boards. All interviewers should be aware of their responsibilities in regard to Equal Opportunities.

- Interviewers will not discriminate by asking questions about personal circumstances unrelated to the requirements of the job.
- Candidates from minority ethnic groups should not be asked questions which could be seen as directly or indirectly discriminatory, e.g. questions about an understanding of UK customs.
- Candidates should not be asked questions about any disability unless this is specifically related to the requirements of the post.
- The Chair will be responsible for disallowing discriminatory questions, expunging from the records any questions that are discriminatory and preventing a continuation of this line of questioning.
- Interviews should be standardised in terms of composition of the panel and time allowed for each interview. Interview panels should include a recognised specialist from the work area appropriate to the job specification.

9. Staff Development

9.1 The College has a detailed Staff Development Policy. Through the operation of this policy and staff appraisal care will be taken to ensure that opportunities are available to all staff. Consideration will be given to the promotion of Equal Opportunities in staff development.

9.2 Policy Statement on Sexual Harassment:

All employees at The Sixth Form College Farnborough have the right to be treated with dignity; sexual harassment will not be permitted or condoned. It is the responsibility of each employee to treat others with dignity but in the event that sexual harassment occurs, an employee has the right to make a complaint which will be treated seriously. The perpetrator of the harassment may be personally liable under the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975.

9.3 Support:

It is the duty of all staff with line managerial responsibilities to ensure that colleagues comply with the policy, and to take corrective action if incidents of sexual harassment come to their attention.

9.4 In the event of sexual harassment:

- a) the recipient should, either personally or through a third party, make it clear to the alleged aggressor that it is unwelcome and should request that the harassment ceases;

- b) if it continues, the recipient should inform her/his line manager or a more senior colleague and request support to ask that the harassment should cease;
- c) if it continues, the recipient should make a formal complaint to the Principal who will investigate the matter seriously, expeditiously and confidentially in the manner prescribed in the disciplinary procedures.

In the event of the allegation being upheld, disciplinary measures will be taken against the perpetrator of the harassment.

When an employee is experiencing difficulties involving sexual harassment, the College is committed to providing sympathetic and supportive listeners. Colleagues wishing to seek such support should contact the representative of their union or professional association in the first instance.

Victimisation or retaliation against a colleague for bringing a complaint of sexual harassment will be treated as a disciplinary offence and investigated.