

## **EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) POLICY**

<b>Audience:</b>	X-COLLEGE
<b>Requirement:</b>	Essential
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Chief People Officer
<b>Review Delegation:</b>	Corporation
<b>Review Cycle:</b>	Every 2 years
<b>Last Review:</b>	November 2024
<b>Due for Review:</b>	November 2026

# **SOUTH HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE GROUP (SHCG) EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

## **1.0 Statement of Principles**

South Hampshire SHCG Group (SHCG) is committed to advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in all that we do. SHCG strives to develop an inclusive community culture in which everyone can feel valued and in which everyone received fair and equal treatment regardless of their protected characteristics as outlined under the Equality Act 2010. EDI is embedded across all our practices, services and behaviours and is threaded into SHCG strategic values as outlined by our commitments made in the Strategic Plan.

SHCG note our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty and we confirm our intention to fulfil our obligations to this through this policy.

We actively champion the EDI principles in our SHCG and wider community.

SHCG advocates that all staff have a duty of care to look after the interests of and support learners, their colleagues and those working alongside them.

This policy takes account of our commitment to eliminating discrimination, identifying and removing barriers and providing equal opportunities for our learners, staff, governors, workers and visitors to ensure that no one feels excluded or disadvantaged.

## **2.0 Scope**

This policy applies to all conduct in the Group (education and the workplace) and also to conduct outside of the campuses that is related to the Group or your work (e.g. at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues or other students) or which may impact on SHCG's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to SHCG).

## **3.0 Legislation and responsibilities**

**3.1** This policy reflects the following legislation

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty (included in the EA2010)
- Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Modern Slavery Act 2015

**3.2** SHCG notes and will comply with the general equity duty by aligning to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. These are to

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality 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 for those who do not.

**3.3** SHCG will further have due regard to advance equality involving: Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- Fostering good relations to tackle prejudice and promoting understanding people who share a protected characteristic and others.

**3.4** The nine Protected Characteristics set out by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- age
- disability
- race
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- gender reassignment
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership
- sex (male or female)

#### **4.0 Discrimination**

Staff and students must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

**Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.

**Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

**Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

**Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

**Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

## 5.0 Compliance

SHCG will comply with all legislation, statutory and non-statutory codes of practice and our contractual requirements in relation to equality and diversity.

To comply with the specific duties requested upon SHCG by the Equality Act 2010 SHCG will:

- Publish information (primarily on its website) to demonstrate SHCG's compliance with the general equality duty.
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.
- Give due regard to the specific duties when developing, evaluating and reviewing policies.
- Give due regard to equality concerns when making organisational decisions
- Give due regard to the specific duties when designing, delivering and evaluating services, including co-educational provision.

## 6.0 Intent and implementation

SHCG is committed to:

- Promoting respect for all and celebrating diversity.
- Provide a positive working, learning and social environment.
- Work towards eliminating any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and associated barriers based on a protected characteristic and other status including background and other personal circumstances.
- Where appropriate, take steps to meet the needs of individuals from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others.

In order to realise our commitment to EDI, SHCG will:

- Seek to embed equality in all its activities
- Ensure everyone accepts their responsibility to uphold equality and show respect to others.
- Encourage applicants for study and employment from the widest pool of potential candidates, especially where representation is disproportionately low
- Use an evidence-based approach to inform its activities to increase equality and to measure the impact of any changes
- Monitor and publish data on its staff, students and applicants
- Hold regular EDI Committee meetings with cross- SHCG representation to ensure EDI is embedded across all decision making, policy, procedure, projects and activities.
- Engage leadership and management with the EDI Principles, objectives and action plan through the EDI Committee.
- Produce a three yearly EDI Strategic Plan and an annual EDI action plan to support the development and provision of equality and diversity. The action plan will be monitored and reviewed by the EDI Committee, with oversight provided by the Resources Committee.

## 7.0 Concerns

Where there is a concern about an action, inaction or incident that occurs in breach of this policy relating to learners, the affected individuals should write to [info@shcg.ac.uk](mailto:info@shcg.ac.uk). The matter will be dealt with under the SHCG Complaints policy.

Where there is a concern about an action, inaction or incident that occurs in breach of this policy relating to staff, workers or those acting on behalf of the organisation, the affected individual(s) should if possible in the first instance speak with their leader or a member of the People and Culture team. The People and Culture team will work with the individual(s) to address the issue using an appropriate route, depending on the nature of the concern. Following this, should a more formal process be sought by the employee, they should reference and follow the process outlined in the SHCG Grievance Policy.

Should the incident relate to actions or inactions within the People and Culture team, the individual should notify the Chief Operating Officer.

SHCG will address the specific incident and will act on any measures or recommendations to prevent any repetition.

## **8.0 Alignment with other policies**

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following policies

- Grievance Policy (for staff)
- Disciplinary Policy (for staff)
- Safeguarding Policy

## **9.0 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

SHCG will actively collect and report against the protected characteristics of its staff, students, and governors to inform the advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion across the college group recognising obligations with data protection requirements.

The Executive Leadership Team will receive information about any concerns raised in relation to this policy through reporting on Safeguarding, Quality or People and Culture, as appropriate.