



UTC South Durham

Equality Policy



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Approved by	Governing Body
Signed: (Principal) 	Date: 10 June 2022
Signed: (Chair of Governors) 	Date: 10 June 2022

Date to be reviewed by	June 2026
Review History	Reviewed – Tom Dower Oct 19 Reviewed – Tom Dower Nov 20 Reviewed – Catherine Purvis-Mawson, April 2022
Responsibility	Principal

1. Introduction

The Governing Body of University Technical College South Durham (UTC South Durham) is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and students. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.

One of our core values, accessibility, is inherently about equality: *“We welcome to our community people from different backgrounds, gender, abilities and locations. All students, irrespective of their starting point, will thrive and progress to meaningful education, employment or training.”*

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation.

We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Governing Body has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy and the Principal has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. Day-to-day operational responsibility, including the establishment of a review cycle for this policy, has been delegated to the Deputy Principal.

2. Guiding principles

Our policy is designed to take account of the protected characteristics recognised under the Equality Act 2010. Currently these are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and beliefs and those of no faith
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, the Governing Body of UTC South Durham is guided by eight principles:

2.1 All learners are of equal value.

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- Whatever their gender and gender identity
- Whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whatever their academic abilities

2.2 We recognise, respect and celebrate difference.

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. 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 barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- Disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- Ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- Gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised. People who also do not identify with gender are also recognised and supported.
- Religion, belief or non-faith background
- Sexual orientation

2.3 We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- Positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- Mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, those who do not identify with gender, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment

2.4 We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development.

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, e.g. in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- Whatever their gender and sexual orientation, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity

2.5 We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- Disabled and non-disabled people
- People of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Girls and boys, women and men, people who do not identify with gender

2.6 We will consult and involve widely.

We will engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.

We will consult and involve:

- Disabled people as well as non-disabled
- People from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Both women and men, girls and boys
- All sexual identities

2.7 Society as a whole should benefit from the promotion of equality and the rejection of discrimination.

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- Disabled people as well as non-disabled
- People of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Both women and men, girls and boys
- All sexual identities

2.8 We base our practices on sound evidence.

We will maintain and monitor quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- Disability
- Ethnicity, religion and culture
- Gender

In particular we will collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, national origin and national status; and gender and will make adjustments to the policy as appropriate.

Every three years we will draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall UTC improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify will take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.

We will keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

3. The curriculum

We will keep each curriculum area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the principles set out above.

4. Ethos and organisation

We will ensure the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- Students' progress, attainment and achievement
- Students' personal development, welfare and well-being
- Teaching styles and strategies
- Admissions and attendance
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

5. Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The Governing Body of UTC South Durham is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to above:

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia
- Bringing discriminatory material into the UTC
- Verbal abuse and threats
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups
- Ridicule of an individual for difference eg food, music, religion, dress etc
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of a protected characteristic - eg race, gender, disability or sexual orientation

6. Harassment and victimisation

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation will not be tolerated. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

7. Discipline and termination of employment

We will ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

8. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the UTC complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

A member of the Governing Body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy. They will be identified in the minutes of Governing Body meetings.

8.1 The role of Governors

The Governing Body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities and diversity in this policy and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the UTC is fully inclusive to students, and responsive to their needs based on their various backgrounds and protected characteristics.

The Governing Body, through clear recruitment processes, ensures that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our UTC on grounds of any protected characteristic.

The Governors will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the UTC environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make the UTC communications as inclusive and clear as possible for parents, carers and students.

The Governors welcome all applications to join the UTC, whatever a child's background or protected characteristics.

The Governing Body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our UTC on account of their background or protected characteristics.

8.2 The role of the Principal

It is the Principal's role to implement the UTC's Equality Scheme and is supported by the Governing Body in doing so.

It is the Principal's role is to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Scheme, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The Principal ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion, communication, training and development opportunities or day-to-day activities.

The Principal promotes the principle of equal opportunity/diversity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of UTC life.

The Principal treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

8.3 The role of all staff

All staff will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the UTC's Equality Policy.

All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender, disability and other protected characteristics and challenges stereotypical images and attitudes.

All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice/discrimination (including racism or homophobia) and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Principal.

Teachers support the work of support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

All staff in roles with line management responsibilities must set an appropriate standard of behaviour; lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice as appropriate.

The Governing Body could be held to be vicariously liable for actions of their staff. However, staff should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst in the UTC or on UTC-related business or acted in other ways that are in breach of the principles of this policy. Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We will take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

9. Information and resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and Governors and is available to all students and their parents and carers.

10. Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

11. Staff development and training

We will ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

12. Breaches of the policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other UTC policies are dealt with, as determined by the Principal and Governing Body.