

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy

This policy is available on-line at: www.tynecoast.ac.uk

- We will consider any request for this policy to be made available in an alternative format or language. Please contact: Head of Student Services, Inclusion and Safeguarding
- We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. We welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility or fairness of this policy.

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Executive Group, JCC QC&S Committee, Board	3.1	May 2026	December 2028	Head of Student Services, Inclusion and Safeguarding

Equality Opportunities: **Impact**

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Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Scope**
- 3. Age**
- 4. Disability equality**
- 5. Gender reassignment equality (transitioning)**
- 6. Pregnancy and maternity equality**
- 7. Race equality:**
- 8. Religion or belief equality:**
- 9. Sex equality (gender)**
- 10. Sexual orientation equality (sexuality)**
- 11. Prevent**
- 12. British Values**
- 13. Anti-Semitism**
- 14. Discrimination**
- 15. Harassment and Victimisation**
- 16. Key Principles**
- 17. Inclusiveness**
- 18. Changes to Service and Policy Management**
- 19. Responsibilities**
- 20. Actions to Implement and Develop Policy**
- 21. Monitoring and Evaluation**
- 22. Related External Links:**

1.0 Introduction:

Tyne Coast College is committed to the principles of equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging. We promote and foster a culture that enables every student and every member of staff to feel included, whatever their background, abilities or disabilities, age, race, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, gender or family circumstances.

We embrace the benefits and opportunities that come from having a diverse mix of staff and students in the College environment. We aim to ensure that the College is an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

2.0 Scope

The EDIB Policy covers everyone across the Tyne Coast College Group, including:

- students
- teaching and professional services staff
- college managers
- employers, partners, contractors, and sub-contractors.
- visitors to the College

We recognise and embrace diversity. Everyone is different so diversity includes us all not just those from minority groups. We promote a culture of equal rights and equal opportunities. We acknowledge that people often have different starting points and may face disadvantages and barriers.

We may take lawful positive action where permitted under the Equality Act 2010 to alleviate disadvantage or under-representation

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We as a college community are focused on ensuring that those minority groups within society who are more likely to experience discrimination and are protected by the Equality Act 2010 do not experience unfair discrimination, harassment or victimisation while working at, studying at or visiting Tyne Coast College. The Equality Act 2010 describes these as the 9 Protected Characteristics: -

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

3.0 Age:

An age group can:

- mean people of the same age or a range of ages

- be wide such as 'people under 50'
- be narrow such as 'people in their mid-50s' or people born in a particular year
- be relative, such as 'older than me' or 'older than us'
- be linked to actual or assumed physical appearance which may bear little relation to chronological age such as 'the grey workforce'.

A person could therefore belong to various age groups: a 19 year old could, for example, belong to groups that include 'young adults', 'teenagers', 'under 50s', 'under 25s' or '19 year olds'

4.0 Disability Equality

A person has a disability (someone who has the protected characteristic of disability) if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause.

In relation to physical impairment:

Conditions that affect the body such as arthritis, hearing or sight impairment (unless this is correctable by glasses or contact lenses), diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, conditions such as HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis, as well as loss of limbs or the use of limbs are covered.

HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis are covered from the point of diagnosis. Severe disfigurement (such as scarring) is covered even if it has no physical impact on the person with the disfigurement, provided the long-term requirement is met (see below).

People who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or who are certified as being blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist, are automatically treated as having a disability under the Act.

Neurodiversity includes conditions such as dyslexia and autism as well as learning disabilities such as Down's syndrome and mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia.

The other criteria to decide if someone has the protected characteristic of disability are:

- The length the effect of the condition has lasted or will continue: it must be long term. 'Long term' means that an impairment is likely to last for the rest of the person's life or has lasted at least 12 months or where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months. If the person no longer has the condition but it is likely to recur or if the person no longer has the condition, they will be considered to be a disabled person.
- Whether the effect of the impairment is to make it more difficult and/or time-consuming for a person to carry out an activity compared to someone who does not have the impairment, and this causes more than minor or trivial inconvenience. If the activities that are made more difficult are 'normal day-to-day activities' at work or at home.

- Whether the condition has this impact without taking into account the effect of any medication the person is taking or any aids or assistance or adaptations they have, like a wheelchair, walking stick, assistance dog or special software on their computer. The exception to this is the wearing of glasses or contact lenses where it is the effect while the person is wearing the glasses or contact lenses, which is taken into account

The abilities of people who have disabilities are valued through:

- encouraging staff and students to disclose a disability, learning difficulty or long-term health condition, or neurodiverse condition

5.0 Gender reassignment equality (transitioning)

Gender reassignment is a personal process (rather than a medical process) which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with.

This personal process may include undergoing medical procedures or, as is more likely for young people, it may simply include choosing to dress in a different way as part of the personal process of change.

A person will be protected because of gender reassignment in any of the following situations:

- when they make their intention known to someone – it does not matter who this is, whether it is someone at college or university or at home or another professional.
- once they have decided to transition, they are protected, even if they take no further steps or decide to stop later on.
- as soon as there is evidence of an intention to transition even though they have not reached an irrevocable decision to do so.
- when they start or continue to dress, behave, or live (full-time or part-time) according to the gender they identify with as a person.
- when they undergo treatment related to transitioning, such as surgery or hormone therapy.
- when they have received gender recognition under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

A person is protected under the Equality Act 2010 where they have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, regardless of the stage or form that their transition takes. This policy uses the term *transgender person* to describe someone with this protected characteristic. The College is committed to ensuring that individuals who plan to transition, are in the process of transitioning, or have completed their transition are protected from all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

6.0 Pregnancy and maternity equality

The protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity applies to a person who:

- is or has been pregnant

- has given birth and is treated unfavourably within a period of 26 weeks beginning with the day on which they gave birth
- is breastfeeding and is treated unfavourably within the period of 26 weeks beginning with the day on which they gave birth.
- Outside the 26-week period the student/apprentice may be protected by the sex discrimination provisions.

They are protected even when their baby is stillborn so long as they were pregnant for at least 24 weeks before the birth

7.0 Race equality:

Race means a person's:

- colour, and/or
- nationality (including citizenship), and/or
- ethnic or national origin
- A racial group is composed of people who have or share a colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins
- A person has the protected characteristic of race if they belong to a particular racial group, such as 'British people'.
- Racial groups can comprise two or more racial groups such as 'British Asians'.

Racial and cultural diversity is represented at all levels within the Colleges through:

- challenging racial and cultural stereotypes
- understanding, valuing, and respecting different racial and cultural backgrounds
- integrating equality into
- our education and training programmes

8.0 Religion or belief equality:

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief.

A religion need not be well known to gain protection as a religion. It must, though, be identifiable and have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within religions may be considered a religion. Cults and new religious movements may also be considered religions or beliefs.

Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief.

'Religious belief' goes beyond beliefs about and adherence to a religion or its central articles of faith and may vary from person to person within the same religion.

A belief which is not a religious belief may be a philosophical belief, such as humanism or atheism.

A belief need not include faith or worship of a god or gods but must affect how a person lives their life or perceives the world.

For a belief to be protected by the Equality Act 2010:

- It must be genuinely held.
- It must be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on information available now.
- It must be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.
- It must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance.
- It must be worthy of respect in a democratic society.
- It must be compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

Students, apprentices, staff, volunteers, and visitors are treated irrespective of their religious belief and practice or political opinions by:

- respecting a persons' freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance and persecution.
- providing an environment where everyone can raise issues and debate differences

9.0 Sex equality (gender)

In College everyone is welcome regardless of their gender identity

We will

- challenge gender stereotypes
- supporting people in balancing work and home life

10.0 Sexual orientation equality (sexuality)

The College will promote sexual orientation and gender identity equality and take action to:

- challenge discrimination
- promotion of equality for everyone irrespective of their sexuality
- respecting different gender identities and lifestyles

11.0 Prevent

There is no place for extremist views of any kind whether originating from internal sources – students, staff or governors, or external sources (i.e., online or from specific groups or individuals). It is imperative that our students, staff and third parties (e.g., visitors and partners) see our colleges as safe places where they can discuss and explore controversial issues safely and in an unbiased way and where relevant organisational processes encourage and facilitate this. As a Group we recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for our students. We also recognise that if we fail to challenge extremist views we are failing to protect our Tyne Coast College Group.

Any prejudice, discrimination, or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by students, staff, visitors or partners will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with using the relevant disciplinary procedure. Where deemed necessary, the College will alert any concerns about extremism to partner agencies.

12.0 British Values

The College community will actively embrace, promote, and practise the British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs and those without. These values will be placed at the heart of the culture of Tyne Coast College Group. The embracing and practice of these values underpins our Prevent Strategy as such acceptance and practice increases the resilience of individuals and helps prevent them from developing extremist views and becoming involved in extremist activity.

13.0 Anti-Semitism

Tyne Coast College has a zero-tolerance approach to antisemitism in all its forms.

Adoption of the definition sends an important message that Tyne Coast College Group will not tolerate instances of antisemitism within our institution, whether that be online or on campus.

On 26 May 2016, the Plenary in Bucharest decided to adopt the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

Manifestations of anti-Semitism might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectively. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, colleges, universities or places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

We are urged to ensure that racism and religious hatred of any kind is not tolerated anywhere, including in our universities and colleges”.

14.0 Discrimination

We will protect individuals from different types of discrimination. These are:

Direct Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably because they have a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by Association occurs when someone is treated less favourably because they associate with someone else who has a protected characteristic.

Perception Discrimination Perceptive discrimination is the legal term that applies when an individual is treated unfairly because it is believed that they have a certain protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, whether it is true or not.

Indirect Discrimination is when there's a practice, policy or rule which applies to everyone in the same way, but it has a worse effect on some people than others. The College conducts equality impact assessments on new or revised strategies and policies to ensure that any change is considered, and adjustments made to minimise the impact on any groups with protected characteristics. The College can justify indirect discrimination where it can show it has acted proportionately and reasonably in achieving a legitimate aim of its business.

15.0 Harassment and Victimisation

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Harassment is in the perception of the individual, not the organisation. Even if the behaviour is not directed at them, whether they do or do not have the protected characteristic, if it is occurring within their environment, they have the right to complain of harassment.

Third Party Harassment occurs where an individual from out with the College is harassing either an employee or a student.

Victimisation occurs when an employee or student is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

16.0 Key Principles

- We believe that all students and staff should benefit from being at Tyne Coast college group, we are committed to adopting flexible strategies and practices that cater for all and consider individual circumstances and varying needs.
- We are firmly committed to ensuring that all people have the same right to access learning.
- We are committed to promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging, avoiding unfair discrimination within our own recruitment practices for both employment and learning.
- We are committed to ensuring that any changes in the way we provide services or how our services are assessed do not negatively impact on any particular section of society and will impact assess any change to ensure that this is achieved or minimised.

17.0 Inclusiveness

We will ensure that the College's educational provision responds, as far as possible, to the diverse needs of students from a wide range of circumstances including:

- different sexes
- different racial ethnic and religious backgrounds

- Those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities, physical and mobility difficulties
- Sensory impairments and medical conditions
- Rural isolation
- Social disabilities
- Additional caring responsibilities
- Care leavers and looked after children
- Transgender, non-binary and intersex people
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

We will monitor our provision and the success of students of different sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, religion or belief and disability. We will work to reduce gender imbalances within vocational areas of study.

17.1 Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm

We recognise our obligation in-line with the Department for Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges to protect children, young people and adults at risk of harm from instances of physical, emotional, sexual or institutional harm whilst attending college. Students attending Tyne Coast College Group have the right to expect protection from harm from any individual(s) connected with the Tyne Coast College and its business. Staff are required to respond proactively and protectively to alleged or actual incidents of harm.

17.2 Looked After Children

Care leavers and care-experienced young people are statistically less likely to achieve well at college. We will recognise our obligation to these people and ensure that suitable support is in place to improve their chances of achieving their learning goal.

17.3 Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all and welcome applications, both as an employer and as a provider of education, from a wide range of candidates including those with criminal convictions. We undertake to treat all applicants fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. Having a criminal record will not necessarily debar any individual from working or studying at Tyne Coast College. This will depend on the nature of the position, together with the circumstances and background of the offences.

17.4 Harassment

We recognise our responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment and uphold the right of employees and students to be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment is harmful, causes distress, and can lead to illness and poor performance. No form of harassment will be condoned at the College, whether it is between staff, students, or visitors.

Where appropriate, every effort will be made to resolve the situation informally. Some incidents, however, by virtue of their serious nature, will need to be dealt with immediately under the College's formal procedures.

17.5 Victimisation

We will ensure that staff and students can complain or bring to our attention any concern about discrimination or harassment without fear of victimisation.

We will investigate any claims of victimisation and make every effort to resolve the issue informally unless the seriousness of the incident is such that formal proceedings are required.

17.6 Complaints

Where an individual or group wishes to make a complaint that we have not complied with the requirements of this policy we will encourage them to make a complaint following our Complaints Policy and Procedure.

The English Human Rights Commission provides useful information on where to get advice and support if someone feels they are a victim of discrimination or harassment but is unable to provide individual advice itself.

[Home Page | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](http://equalityhumanrights.com)

18.0 Changes to Service and Policy Management

We ensure that any change to our service impacting on people and our policies relating to services are equality impact assessed prior to changes being implemented to ensure

19.0 Responsibilities

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that the college complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the general duty to have due regard to.

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share any of the above protected characteristics and those who do not
- Promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- The College recognises that all staff and students have a duty to support and uphold the principles contained in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and supporting policies. This includes creating a positive and mutually supportive working environment for our staff and an excellent teaching and learning experience for our students.
- Everyone has a responsibility to report or challenge any bullying, harassment, or discrimination against any individual. All allegations will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly, through the relevant procedure.

Discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation or religion and belief is not tolerated and is likely to be unlawful under the equality's legislation.

Reporting procedures for concerns relating to harassment, bullying, discrimination or victimisation are set out in the Harassment and Bullying Policy, which is available on the College intranet:

<https://southtynesidecollege2.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/Intranet/Policies/Harassment%20and%20Bullying%20Policy%20V6.pdf>

Everyone within the Tyne Coast College Group has a responsibility to uphold the principles of equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging. In addition, the following specific responsibilities apply:

19.1 The College Board of Governors, to take positive action to implement the duties of the Equality Act 2010.

19.2 The Chief Executive Officer,
for the effective implementation, co-ordination and monitoring of the policy.

19.3 The Executive of Human Resources,
for provision of initial staff training at induction and updated training to respond to changes in legislation and to develop good practice.

19.4 Line Managers:

Managers across the College will promote equality and diversity in support of this policy. Managers will:

- Ensure they do not discriminate in the course of their duties, and seek appropriate guidance from Human Resources where they think discrimination may occur
- Ensure that staff in their teams have received appropriate Equality and Diversity training
- Actively challenge instances of discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Take appropriate action against those who infringe this policy
- Ensure equality and diversity is embedded.

19.5 Staff: Individual staff at all levels are expected to uphold the principals within this policy. Staff will:

- Treat others with dignity
- Identify and inform managers of any suspected discriminatory practices.
- Attend training to enhance their understanding of the commitment to equality and diversity and the elimination of discrimination.
- Make good use of opportunities to promote understanding of equality and diversity and associated legislation amongst their students.

19.6 Everyone is responsible for:

- The policy is understood and implemented.
- Their behaviour always considers the uniqueness of others.
- Everyone is treated with respect, courtesy, and dignity.
- Behaviour not in accordance with the EDI Policy is challenged and acted upon.

19.7 Partners, Employers, Contractors and Sub Contractors:

Are all responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and any equality conditions in contracts or agreements

20.0 Actions to Implement and Develop Policy

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan will be reviewed each year and submitted to the Chief Executive Officer, Senior Management Group and the College Board for approval. The Plan will include specific targets to be achieved, taking account of:

20.1 College goals, targets and performance data

20.2 Legislative requirements

20.3 Issues raised by staff and students

20.4 The needs of the community in which the College is based

20.5 Positive action to promote and celebrate Equality and Diversity

21.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

The College will monitor and evaluate achievement in respect of equal opportunities by taking the following actions:

21.1 Gathering statistics about staff and students, analysing the statistics, identifying any issues arising and making proposals for specific actions to address any inequalities

21.2 Monitoring the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

21.3 Ensuring curriculum and course design takes account of equality issues

21.4 Reporting regularly on equality and diversity to the College Management Team and the Full Board.

21.5 Keeping staff and students regularly updated in respect of equal opportunities issues

22 Related External Links:

[Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance)

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-children-safe-in-education)