

# High Tunstall College of Science



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## Equal Opportunities Policy: Students

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Stakeholder Consulted	-	Admissions and Safeguarding Committee
Review Date	-	October 2026
Responsibility for Review	-	Headteacher

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## Statement of intent

High Tunstall College of Science understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, all schools have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality between different groups;
- Foster good relations between different groups; and
- Promote mental health and wellbeing.

Our college's overall values are underpinned by our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are dedicated to ensuring that every student receives an education that offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential, and to promoting mental wellbeing amongst our students. We have developed this policy to provide a clear framework for how we will achieve our college's aims.

We aim to include all students at High Tunstall College of Science and will not discriminate a student because of their;

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

To achieve our aims, we will adopt the following methods:

- Embedding equality within teaching and resources
- Using key data indicators to understand the needs and characteristics of our college
- Promoting community cohesion
- Promoting parental engagement
- Investing in regular staff training
- Using key data, such as measures of wellbeing, to monitor the progress of students with protected characteristics
- Regularly reviewing our equality policy to ensure it reflects current trends and issues

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

1.2. This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
- DfE (2018) 'Gender Separation in mixed schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

1.3. This policy is related to the following other college policies:

- LAC Policy
- SEND Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Supporting Pregnant Students and School-Age Parents Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The Governing body will:

- Be responsible for ensuring the college complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure students and potential students will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to:
  - Admissions.
  - The way the college provides and education for students.

- How students are provided with access to benefits, facilities and services.
- The exclusion of a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- Ensure all policies are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans in collaboration with the headteacher.

2.2. The Headteacher will:

- Implement this policy, ensuring that all staff and students apply its guidelines fairly in all situations.
- Conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Review and amend this policy, taking into account new legislation and government guidance, and previously reported incidents, in order to improve procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for students who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and personal counselling.

2.3. Staff will:

- Be alert to the possible harassment of students, both inside and outside of the college, and to deal with incidents of harassment/discrimination as the highest priority.
- Carry out their statutory duties relating to equal opportunities, inclusivity and pertaining to their specific roles.
- Have due regard to the sensitivities of all students, and not provide material that may cause offence.
- Act as a role model for equality, diversity and inclusion across the whole college community.

### **3. Data protection**

- 3.1. The college will adopt secure controls on sensitive personal data, ensuring all data is accurate, secure and processed fairly and lawfully.
- 3.2. The college will respect all students' right to privacy and will not disclose a student's trans status or sexual orientation to any other students, staff members or third parties.
- 3.3. The college holds a Data Protection Policy containing further information addressing data protection.

### **4. Protected characteristics**

- 4.1. We will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a student, or prospective student, because of their:

- Sex.
  - Race.
  - Disability, which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health.
  - Religion or belief.
  - Sexual orientation.
  - Gender reassignment.
  - Pregnancy or maternity.
- 4.2. We will not discriminate against a student, or prospective student, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent, with whom the student or prospective student is associated.
- 4.3. We will not discriminate against a student, or prospective student, because of a characteristic which they are believed to have, even if the belief is mistaken.

## **5. Sex**

- 5.1. For the purpose of this policy, sex refers to their biological assignment at birth depending on their reproductive organs. We understand some students may wish to identify with another gender, and we will support students through their transitioning phases.
- 5.2. We will ensure that students of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to students of other sexes,
- 5.3. The college will only separate students by sex where there is reasonable justification or if one of the following applies:
- Students will suffer a disadvantage connected to their sex
  - One sex have needs that are different from the needs of the other sex
  - Participation in an activity by girls or boys is disproportionately low
- 5.4. The college will consider non-statutory exceptions on a case-by-case basis, and regularly review the impact of any separation to ascertain whether it remains lawful.
- 5.5. Students will be offered equal opportunity to undertake any activity in the college, e.g. in relation to technology lessons all students will be allowed to choose which skills they learn.
- 5.6. There may be occasions where we deem it necessary to teach some subjects in single-sex classes, such as RSE, but we will ensure that such classes do not give students an unfair disadvantage when compared to students of the other sex in other classes. Occasions where students are separated to be taught in single-sex classes will be documented and the separation justified to ensure parents, Ofsted and, where

necessary, the wider community can understand the reasons behind segregation.

- 5.7. Where a subject is taught in a single-sex class, trans students will be allowed to attend the single-sex class that corresponds with the gender they identify with.
- 5.8. Students' age and stage of development will be taken into consideration before segregating sports teams.
- 5.9. Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities; where segregation is deemed necessary, the single-sex sports teams will receive the same quality and amount of resources.

## **6. Race and ethnicity**

- 6.1. We will ensure that students of all races and ethnicities (including those who have EAL) are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other students, and the college will regularly review its practices to ensure that they are fair.
- 6.2. Staff will ensure students with EAL are treated equally and fairly, while ensuring they are supported at all times.
- 6.3. The college will not segregate students on the basis of their race or ethnicity, understanding that claims of 'separate but equal' will not be tolerated, and that such actions will always be viewed as direct discrimination.
- 6.4. The college may, however, take positive action, e.g. organising open days for students and families of a specific race that is under-represented, to address the particular challenges affecting students of one racial or ethnic group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.

## **7. Disability**

- 7.1. We will ensure that students with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other students simply because they have a disability, which includes any mental health issue, regularly reviewing our college practices to ensure they are fair.
- 7.2. The college will avoid implementing rules that could have an adverse effect on students with disabilities (e.g. by making physical fitness a basis for admission, or asking all students to deliver a presentation, as this could be unfair towards students with anxiety), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.
- 7.3. Staff will ensure that they do not discriminate against students with disabilities because of something which is a consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a student on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for him/her to get in and

out), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

- 7.4. The college will make any reasonable adjustments, and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of students with disabilities, especially where the student also has SEND but does not have a SEND statement or EHC plan.
- 7.5. The college will meet its duty to undertake accessibility planning for students with disabilities and ensure that an Accessibility Plan is implemented and reviewed where necessary.
- 7.6. The college will adhere to its SEND Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for students with SEND.

## **8. Religion and belief**

- 8.1. Staff will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably because of their religion or belief.
- 8.2. The college will ensure that students are provided with the appropriate space in which they can practice their faith, e.g. to perform their daily prayers.
- 8.3. Absences in relation to religious observances will be handled in accordance with the college's Attendance Policy.
- 8.4. The college will liaise with local religious leaders of all faiths to inform the amount of leave students will be granted in relation to religious observance.

## **9. Sexual orientation**

- 9.1. Staff will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bi-sexual students, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other students.
- 9.2. The college will ensure that students are taught about the nature of marriage, including same-sex marriage by presenting the facts of English and Welsh law – teachers will not offer personal opinions when discussing marriage in RSE. The college will educate students on positive relationships, families and gender identities within the LGBTQ+ community. RSE lessons will be taught in accordance with our Relationships and Sex Education Policy.
- 9.3. Staff will ensure that any religious beliefs with regards to sexual orientation are taught to students in an educational context, in a manner that is not prejudicial or discriminatory.
- 9.4. The college will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our college where students can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

## **10. Gender reassignment**

- 10.1. Staff will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably in relation to gender reassignment, i.e. because they are trans or have trans parents, siblings or other family members. The college recognises that gender reassignment does not necessarily involve physical change, and can be solely social and emotional.
- 10.2. Students have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code, outlined in our College Uniform Policy.
- 10.3. We will ensure that there are suitable toilet and changing facilities for students to use, including:
  - Unisex toilets and changing facilities
  - Gender specific toilets and changing facilities
  - Private changing facilities
- 10.4. The facilities will be made available to all students and students can use the facility they feel most comfortable in, e.g. if a trans student wished to use a private changing room.
- 10.5. The college will support trans students to feel comfortable and ensure they can celebrate their identity.
- 10.6. The college will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our college where trans students can discuss issues of gender without fear of discrimination.

## **11. Pregnancy and maternity**

- 11.1. The college will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably because they become pregnant, or have recently given birth, or because they are breastfeeding.
- 11.2. We will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for the treatment and support of students who are pregnant or have just given birth.
- 11.3. To ensure all school-age parents and pregnant students are properly supported and the college can fulfil its duty of care, the college has a Supporting Pregnant Students and School-Age Parents Policy.

## **12. Looked after children (LAC)**

- 12.1. LAC, and previously LAC (PLAC), will be given the highest priority for admissions, as per the requirements of our Admissions Policy.
- 12.2. Staff will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state.
- 12.3. A personal education plan will be created, and implemented, for all LAC and PLAC, to ensure that their education and development needs

are fully covered, including appropriate transition and catch-up support to ensure that they do not fall behind.

- 12.4. Staff will ensure that any SEND that a LAC or PLAC has, are duly taken into account and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND statement or EHC plan.
- 12.5. The college adheres to our LAC Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for LAC.

### **13. The curriculum**

- 13.1. Students will be exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, and the college will not make any unjustified changes to our curriculum content on the grounds of any protected characteristics that a student may have.
- 13.2. The college will ensure, however, that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and delivered in such a way that prevents discrimination, and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes.
- 13.3. To ensure equality, diversity and tolerance is taught and promoted we hold assemblies on a regular basis offering equality of opportunity and equality is integrated into the curriculum.
- 13.4. The observation of inclusive teaching strategies is a key aspect of the SLT's annual programme of monitoring.
- 13.5. We will respect the right of parents to withdraw their child from RSE.

### **14. Promoting inclusion**

- 14.1. We will promote inclusion and equality at our college through:
  - Ensuring that students are called by their preferred names, taking into account the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.
  - Ensuring, as far as possible, that our governing body and staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
  - Providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
  - Instilling in students an awareness of prejudice, giving them confidence that it can, and must, be eradicated.
  - Providing a variety of educational and residential visits that expose students to a wide range of cultural experiences.
  - Ensuring equal access to opportunities, such as extra-curricular activities and the curriculum.
  - Taking care in the use of language and the choice of resources, so that teaching and non-teaching staff avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.

- Valuing the cultural experiences and contributions of all students, regardless of any protected characteristic that they may have.
- Communicating our policy to parents to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.
- Discussing equality issues as an agenda item for the college council.
- Promoting equality of opportunity within the wider society.
- Ensuring admission arrangements will not unfairly disadvantage a student from a particular social or racial group, or with SEND.

## **15. Students that have left college**

15.1. Our responsibility not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a student has left college. It will continue to apply with regards to subsequent actions related to our previous relationship with the student, such as the provision of references.

## **16. The Public Sector Equality Duty**

16.1. We will meet our duty to publish:

- Annual information to demonstrate how the college is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding students who have any of the protected characteristics outlined in the Protected characteristics section of this policy.
- Equality objectives (at least every four years) outlining how we may further equality in our college.

16.2. There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and students will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

## **17. Bullying and discrimination**

17.1. Our Anti-bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.

17.2. Any bullying incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

17.3. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services, and/or the police, of any incident.

17.4. Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in our Complaints Procedures Policy.

## 18. Staff training

- 18.1. New staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their induction.
- 18.2. Whole-college staff training for will be delivered in-house.
- 18.3. Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training that will:
  - Focus on staff specialisms in relation to equality, for example, a focus on homophobic bullying to address a planned approach towards inclusion.
  - Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations.
  - Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support students with protected characteristics.
  - Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards students with protected characteristics.
  - Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics.
  - Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, educators and students about any issues related to a protected characteristic.
  - Ensure that the college is aware of, and participates in, relevant awareness days, such as Black History Month, World Disability Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, PRIDE, and International Women's Day.

## 19. **[Updated]** Monitoring and review

- 19.1. This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and Governing body biennially and updated where appropriate – any amendments will be duly communicated to staff members.
- 19.2. **[Updated]** This policy will next be reviewed in October 2026.