



Equality and Diversity

at Wakefield College

A warm welcome to Wakefield College!

Wakefield College is committed to helping achieve equality for all learners, staff and other College users, and aims to ensure that all learners, whatever their background or ability, have the opportunity to benefit from excellent and inspirational educational opportunities.

This is reflected in the College's mission statement:

“Transforming lives through learning....Inspiring young people, adults and employers through world-class learning and challenging them to fulfil their potential to benefit themselves and their communities.”

This guide aims to help you:

- a. understand what is meant by equality and diversity ;
- b. find out more about Wakefield College's Single Equality Scheme;
- c. keep you informed about what the law says about equality and diversity;
- d. think about what equality and diversity means for you as a member of the College community.

Celebrating difference

Wakefield College aims to become a fully inclusive organisation, eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and embracing diversity in all that we do.

We celebrate the rich variety of people who make up the College Community, from different cultures and different ethnic backgrounds.

Some may have a disability, others may follow different religions. We may differ in our sexual orientation, languages or belief systems but we are united by an ambition to succeed and fulfil our potential.

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.” (Maya Angelou)

What is equality?

Equality is about creating a level playing field to give everyone a fair chance to fulfil their potential and is backed up by specific anti-discrimination legislation. At Wakefield College this means that everyone, whatever their culture, background or identity, has the same right to be treated as equal and has an equal right to fulfil their potential.

What is diversity?

Diversity recognises that each of us is different and unique and, as a College, we are aiming to meet the needs of individual learners. Different people will have different aspirations, expectations, opportunities, responsibilities and needs. In short, diversity is about valuing difference.

At Wakefield College, that means that we aim to make all learners and potential learners feel welcome, irrespective of background, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or race, and give them the support and encouragement they need to succeed.

How you fit in

Equality and diversity is the responsibility of everyone in the College. We all contribute to the culture in College and in developing an atmosphere of open communication and mutual respect.

If you are a victim of discrimination or you witness any incidents of discrimination, don't stay silent. Make sure that you tell your tutor or your line manager – they can help you, take appropriate action and let you know about other organisations that can help (See staff or student intranet for more information).

You can make a positive contribution to equality and diversity by rejecting prejudice and stereotypes of various groups of people because of their race, gender, religion, lifestyle, sexual orientation, age or disability.

You can also join in celebrating festivals and human rights events which contribute to the richness of College and bring us all closer together.

Together we can eliminate prejudice, celebrate difference and build a truly inclusive College.

College policies

At Wakefield College, we have put in place policies, training and procedures to make equality and diversity a reality for the whole College community; these include:

- Single Equality Scheme
- Staff development and training
- Equality and Diversity Committee
- Disability Equality Advisory Group (DEAG)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Group

Definitions

Direct discrimination

This occurs when an employee, prospective employee or student is less favourably treated because of their race, sex, disability, age, religion or sexual orientation. This tends to be obvious discrimination, for example, a female candidate with the best qualifications and experience does not get an interview, but a male candidate with fewer qualifications does.

Indirect discrimination

This occurs when there are rules, policies or procedures in place which have a discriminatory effect on certain groups of people. For example, a rule requiring women to wear skirts would discriminate against women from certain cultures and religions.

Victimisation

This occurs when a person is singled out or punished for making a complaint of discrimination or supporting someone who has made a complaint.

Stereotyping

This occurs when particular characteristics are attributed to all members of a particular group of people.

Disability

A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on one's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Religion or belief

Any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief.

Ethnic group

A group that regards itself, or is regarded by others, as a distinct community by virtue of characteristics of shared history and cultural tradition

Harassment

This is defined as “unwanted conduct that violates people’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.”

Prejudice

This is prejudice: making a decision about an event or a person before becoming aware of relevant facts and maintaining that view even in the face of contrary evidence.

Racism

The prejudice that members of one race are superior to members of other races

Sexism

The prejudice that one gender is superior to another gender

Homophobia

This is an irrational hatred, intolerance, and fear of lesbian, gay and bisexual people and their culture.

These definitions may help you understand more about equality and diversity. Discrimination can take many forms and Wakefield College takes any incidents very seriously. It may be useful for you to know what the law says about discrimination.

Transphobia

The irrational fear of, and/ or hostility towards, people who are transgender





What the law says:

The Single Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1st October 2010

This act replaced the anti discrimination laws with a single act. Direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation are outlawed by the new act.

All the groups who were covered by the old equality legislation are protected from discrimination under the new act but they are now described as nine “Protected characteristics” - sex; race; disability; marriage and civil partnership; sexual orientation; religion or belief; pregnancy and maternity; gender reassignment and age.

This provides protection from discrimination at the same level across all protected characteristics. Some groups, for example disabled people and carers, will be more effectively protected against discrimination.

The College is also required to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relationships across all sections of the College community.

At its heart, the new act is about treating people fairly, with dignity and with respect.

No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

NELSON MANDELA

Equality and diversity quiz

What do you know about equality and diversity? Try this quiz.

1. Which of the following are NOT protected by anti-discrimination law?

There may be more than one!

- a. Age
- b. Sex
- c. Disability
- d. Obesity
- e. Sexual orientation
- f. Transgenderism
- g. Race
- h. Religion
- i. Class

2. How many people in the UK have a disability?

1 in 5

1 in 15

1 in 25

3. Diversity means:

- a. Celebrating and valuing difference
- b. Treating everyone the same
- c. Targeting help at individual groups

4. Can you specify the sex of an individual required for a job?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

5. What minimum font size does the Royal National Institute for the Blind recommend using in printed public documents?

- a. 8 - 10 points
- b. 12-14 points
- c. 16-18 points
- d. 24 + points

6. In cases of discrimination, what is the maximum amount of compensation that can be awarded?

- a. £500
- b. £500,000
- c. £1,000,000
- d. No limit

7. Is this an incidence of discrimination?

A young woman was dismissed from her job in a cathedral gift shop because she is an Atheist.

True or false?

8. If you were picked on at work because you were friends with a gay man, you could take action against your employer.

True or false?

9. Is this an incidence of discrimination?

An Asian employer is dismissed by a public sector organisation for failing an aptitude test which other, white staff were not asked to take.

True or false?

10. It is unlawful for an employer to ask for your date of birth on a job application form.

Check your answers on the last page

Useful websites

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

<http://www.agepositive.gov.uk>

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/>

The Dyslexia Institute: www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk

Epilepsy Action: www.epilepsy.org.uk

The National Autistic Society <http://www.autism.org.uk/>

Answers

1. Obesity and class
2. 1 in 5
3. a – celebrating and valuing difference
4. c- Sometimes (if it's a genuine occupational requirement).
5. b – 12-14 points
6. d- no limit
7. c – 5
8. True
9. True
10. False - but an employer must be careful not to use it to discriminate.





If you would like to know more about Equality and Diversity at Wakefield College, see our Single Equality Scheme at www.wakefield.ac.uk/CorporateInformation/