

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Purpose

This document will act as The Inspire Education Group (IEG) policy in both its commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty mandated by the Equality Act 2010 and will also serve as its commitment to ensuring all students, staff and stakeholders are treated equitably and that diversity is valued and celebrated across the organisation. The document highlights IEG's responsibility to eliminate discrimination and harassment. In addition, this document will be reviewed annually to ensure the organisation is fully responsive to current legislation and embraces new developments within Equality, Diversity and inclusion (EDI). Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all, however, the (EDI Strategic Lead) has overall responsibility for the policy, with the EDI committee and EDI Coordinator.

Scope

The IEG is committed to raising awareness of equality and human rights, promoting diversity and combating all forms of inequality, disadvantage, prejudice, unfair discrimination, harassment and mistreatment within our community. The Group is committed to ensuring that all forms of prejudice and discrimination are challenged and investigated with rigour. The IEG is committed to raising awareness and training all staff to meet the standards highlighted within this policy. Finally, the Group's marketing policy, materials, promotional messages and information will project equality of access and opportunity to all the sectors of the community it serves. This policy applies to the group staff, students, visitors, contractors and volunteers.

Our Vision, Mission & Values

Vision: "To be an exceptional learning organisation, empowering your future"

Mission: "To transform lives through inspirational education and training"

Values:

- Innovative – We are enterprising, responsive and adaptable
- Nurturing – We are supportive, caring and friendly
- Sustainable – We deliver strong finances that support reinvestment and environmental gains
- Passionate – We are ambitious, inspirational and aspirational
- Inclusive – We provide opportunities for all, respecting and celebrating the diverse communities we serve
- Respectful – We promote high standards through a culture of challenge, support and professionalism
- Excellent – We always deliver the very best that we can

Commitment Statement

IEG is committed to ensuring the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion through the access of opportunity. As an organisation we aim to Champion Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, to forge a truly inclusive organisation where everyone has equality of opportunity to succeed. Our commitment is to go beyond legislation and be recognised as a leader of equality, diversity and inclusion. By ensuring a robust commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion the IEG will be able to strive towards its vision and mission for all people to see the IEG as the first-choice education and training provider in our region, which can transform lives through education regardless of their identity and/ or background.

Our Pledge

- Equality for All: Champion a culture where everyone feels empowered to succeed and reach their full potential, regardless of background
- Celebrating Diversity: Embrace a vibrant tapestry of cultures, beliefs and religions, recognising the immense value each individual brings to our organisation
- Strength in Difference: See diversity as a powerful asset, fostering an environment where all voices are heard and valued
- EDI Champions: Empower our EDI Committee and Special Interest Groups to shine a spotlight on the importance and benefits of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- External Recognition: Actively pursue external recognition for our commitment and EDI work, solidifying our reputation as an inclusive and welcoming space for all staff and students
- Anti-Racist Practices: Implement robust anti-racist practices across all aspects of our operations, promoting a culture of fairness and respect
- Zero Tolerance for Discrimination: Address any incidents of offensive or inappropriate behaviour swiftly and decisively, upholding our high standards
- Restorative Education: Where appropriate, utilise restorative practices to educate and empower individuals who fall short of expectations, fostering understanding and promoting positive change., business support, marketing and all other areas of the business

How we will achieve this

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Group has been set up to provide a structured strategic and operational forum to advance EDI across IEG. We have 5 special interest working groups (SIGs) who will report to the EDI Group and have an action plan to raise awareness:

- LGBTQ+
- Race, Religion & culture
- Gender
- Vulnerable Students
- Disability

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IEG will also raise awareness using a range of activities and communications:

- Through our strategic plan & Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy
- Induction programmes for new staff
- Staff meetings
- Staff development//training sessions
- Student tutorial programme
- College website and Intranet
- Schemes of Learning and teaching resources
- Meetings and minutes with Student Council, Governors
- Job advertisements and recruitment documentation

The Policy Statement

Duties

Duties under the Equality Act 2010

The IEG is fully committed to its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and the 2024 Workers Protection Act. It continues to be ambitious when advancing and embedding equality and diversity for all students, staff, stakeholders, contractors and visitors and to challenge and actively prevent all forms of discrimination. This policy reinforces the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) life of IEG including a broad and balanced curriculum provided for students attending IEG, according to section 78 of the Education Act 2002; and with reference to the advisory document published by the Department for Education; "Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools" (2014).

In order to fulfil its commitment to promoting EDI across the Group, as well as meeting its requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the organisation will:

- Ensure the Policy is implemented by setting equality objectives and impact. Measures and action plans to ensure that it delivers on its duties, which will be overseen by the EDI Committee. See the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (2024-2027)
- Implement necessary actions and training to ensure that equality is advanced and embedded for all, in line with a broad spectrum of corporate and curriculum policies, which guide the delivery of the whole curriculum and wider corporate business, Including Sexual Harassment Training
- Engage and communicate, both internally and externally, with students, staff, visitors, employers and the wider community where appropriate, in relation to the above

- Ensure an organisation-wide commitment to advancing and embedding EDI that it is understood by all
- Ensure the IEG's EDI Policy and Strategy align and link to the IEG's strategic values and objectives
- Ensure that EDI is mainstreamed into all its activities such as through the equality impact assessment process for its policies, procedures and services and alongside being embedded within the academic and extracurricular. Also through embedding the assessment of EDI within the Group's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) processes to monitor the attendance, retention and achievement rates across different groups
- Ensure activities are fully accessible to disabled people in line with our public duty under the Equality Act 2010
- Ensure the monitoring of the impact of the EDI policy across the provision
- Ensure the policy is informed by current legislation, and best practices and is supplemented by the following IEG policy documents:
 - Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure
 - Grievance Policy and Procedure
 - Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy
 - Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
 - Marketing Policy
 - Learner Assessment and Appeals Procedures
 - Disclosure of Public Interest (Whistleblowing) Policy
 - Anti-Bullying Policy
 - Positive Behaviour Policy
- Ensure all instances of discrimination, harassment or victimisation including abuse, bullying, unacceptable and unwanted behaviour based on a person's protected characteristics are viewed seriously and treated as disciplinary offences, which may lead to the dismissal of a staff member or the exclusion of a student

Related Documentation

HR013 - Bullying & Harassment – Policy & Procedure

HR008 - Grievance Policy and Procedure

HR004 - Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

CQ002 - Assessment Policy

CQ001 - Appeals Policy

HR001 - Whistleblowing Policy

EDI002 - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

STU004 - Student Positive Behaviour Policy

HR017 - Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy

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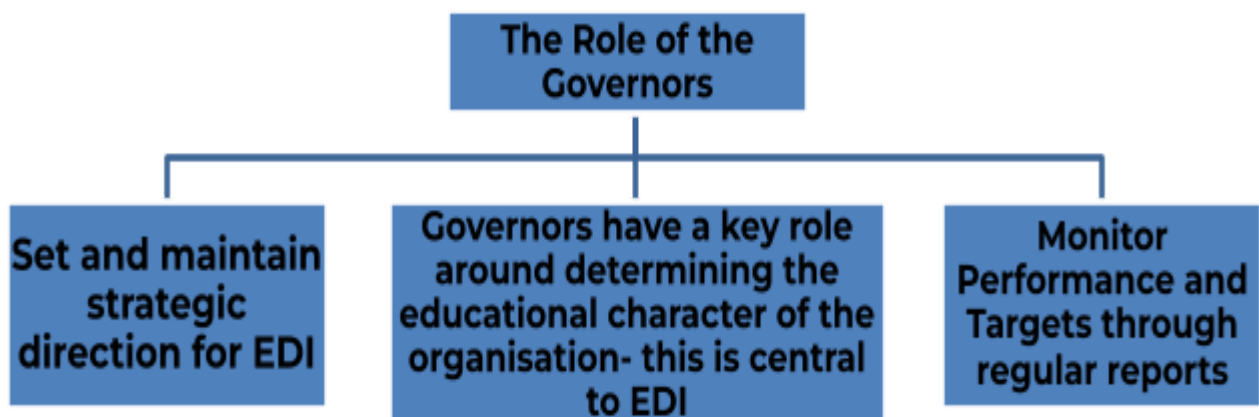
Site: IEG Website, Inspire Insights

Responsibilities

For IEG to fully meet its commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty it is vital that each member of the Group takes responsibility for following and supporting this policy. The policy applies to all IEG stakeholders including students, governors, staff, agents, employers, contractors, volunteers and visitors. Furthermore, all members of the IEG community are expected to follow the commitment to promoting EDI across the Group. To realise our commitment to EDI it is important that those in different roles across the Group understand their function in its success.

Governors

The governing body carries the ultimate responsibility, under the law, to ensure that IEG meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. In particular governors at IEG will:



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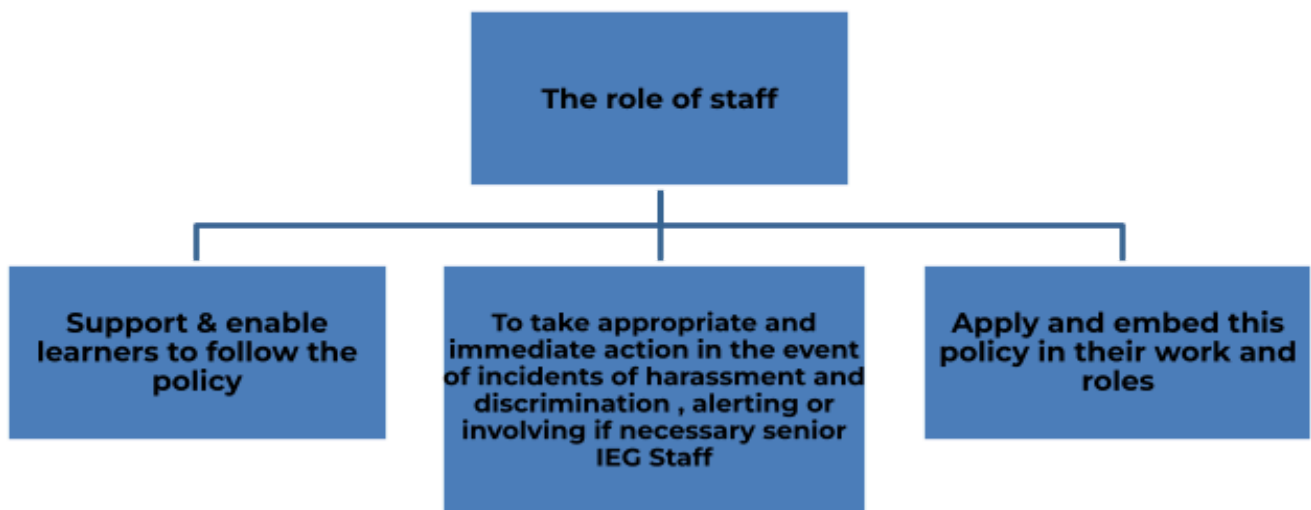
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy - Responsibilities

Staff

Each member of IEG staff is responsible for supporting this policy and the law. Every role in the Group has an EDI component and staff will:



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Code of Practice

EDI for Teaching & Learning

The Inspire Education Group (IEG) is committed to inclusive learning and embedding EDI in all aspects of the curriculum. In doing so we recognise that all students are individuals with individual learning styles and support needs. It will therefore provide a diverse range of learning opportunities to facilitate access and achievement for the whole community. Adherence to this policy will ensure:

- Courses and training opportunities will be made accessible to as wide a range of students as possible, by enhanced flexibility in both delivery and timing. Procedures for accreditation and assessment will be flexible and responsive to the needs of the whole range of students who attend IEG locations. This will include supporting those students for whom special arrangements and/or facilities may be required during examinations or assessments
- Students will understand their rights and responsibilities; and the rights and responsibilities of others under the Equality Act 2010, which will prepare them for future employment and life inside and outside of the Group
- The content and resources of IEG study programmes will be regularly examined by practitioners to ensure they do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any student group
- Individual learning targets will be matched to the students' needs yet stretch and challenge students to aim high in all that they do, in order to add value, increase success rates and maximise achievement. Students will understand their targets and understand the steps required in order to achieve them
- Tracking of the progress of all groups of students will be carried out by practitioners to eliminate possible gaps in achievement rates, retention and attendance. Regular monitoring and data analysis will be used to inform the planning and development of the curriculum by Assistant Principals, Curriculum Managers, subject leaders, tutors/teaching staff and the Quality Team. Any gaps that are identified will be addressed by using a range of inclusive strategies to create an inclusive and accessible practice which will in turn support reducing the gap
- The content and resources of IEG programmes should be enhanced by including positive acknowledgement of the contributions made to society by all cultures
- Courses/training content and methods of delivery will be examined to ensure that they address the needs of all students. Ways of modifying curriculum delivery to facilitate access for individuals with additional support needs will continue to be sought and embedded
- Additional support will be provided for all students requiring it, subject to available resources. Reasonable adjustments will be carried out where appropriate

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EDI for Staff

The Group will ensure all of its staff are treated equitably and that decisions taken on staff recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career management and the termination of employment are based on objective criteria.

The Group seeks to employ a workforce which reflects its diverse community, engaging in a range of recruitment strategies which place our employment opportunities in front of the diverse population in our region and will treat all staff with dignity and respect and provide a working environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

EDI for Staff Development

All IEG staff will have equal access to training and development opportunities throughout the induction process and in staff development programmes. Staff will also be made aware of the EDI Policy. In addition, staff development will support and facilitate good practice in embedding EDI objectives gained from training courses. To facilitate opportunities for all, information and publicity concerning training opportunities will be widely available to all staff. All staff are required to undertake mandatory training in EDI.

EDI for Recruitment and Selection of Staff

Group staff will not discriminate unfairly and illegally, directly or indirectly, in making selection decisions. As such:

- All staff involved in the selection and interview process will have been trained or briefed on recruitment and selection procedures and the Equality Act 2010
- All applications will be assessed according to clear pre-stated criteria which will be both objective and job-related
- Any applicant who is classified as having a disability will be given the opportunity to discuss ways of overcoming any problems of access or any other issues relating to their disability. Any reasonable adjustments for staff will be considered and implemented where practicable
- Any applicant who is classified as having a disability and meets the essential criteria for the post will be guaranteed an interview
- Candidates will only be asked health-related questions during the interview process when this is necessary to support the candidate through that process or if it refers to specific requirements of the post (e.g. heavy lifting)

Compliance with Legal Responsibilities

The Equality Act 2010 gives the key legislative requirements relating to EDI. The Act identifies nine protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and philosophical beliefs, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnerships. All nine characteristics are covered in the employment duties of the Act. See Appendix 2.

The protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is not included in the educational duties of the Act.

The Act outlaws unfair discrimination against an individual because of a protected characteristic and this includes the following types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination (including discrimination based on association or perception) – occurs when you treat a person less favourably than you treat another person because of a protected characteristic
- Indirect discrimination - occurs when a practice has the effect of putting people sharing a protected characteristic within the general group at a particular disadvantage
- Indirect Discrimination by association- ‘Indirect discrimination by association’ is where the person bringing a claim does not hold the relevant protected characteristic (e.g. religion) but suffers the same disadvantage at the hands of the employer’s PCP as those who do have that characteristic
- Harassment – occurs when someone behaves in a way that creates an offensive, hostile, degrading, humiliating or intimidating environment for a person
- Victimisation - occurs if you treat someone badly because they have been involved in a claim or complaint about discrimination
- Discrimination arising from disability - occurs when you treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and cannot justify such treatment
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments (for disabled people) – occurs when an organisation fails to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person to avoid the disabled person being placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person

The Act has introduced a new public sector equality duty which requires IEG:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

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The first part of this duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation applies to all nine protected characteristics while the rest of the duty applies to eight of the protected characteristics and excludes marriage and civil partnerships.

The IEG actively wishes to encourage participation in education and training both internally and externally by staff/students from all backgrounds and groups including those generally under-represented in Further and Higher Education.

In addition to the protected characteristics, examples of under-represented groups include the following:

- People who are unemployed or who have been out of the labour market because of domestic, childcare or other caring responsibilities
- Learners who are or have been 'Looked After' especially those in the care of the local authority
- People who speak English as an additional language
- People in low-income groups
- People without formal qualifications
- People with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Ex-offenders
- Part-time and temporary workers
- Unskilled manual workers

In addition, under Regulation 3 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 requires colleges to:

- Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty at least annually, and
- Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years. The objectives should focus on what the Group believes it should reasonably achieve to further one or more of the aims of the general Equality Duty and must be specific and measurable. The Group publishes its equality objectives on its website

Monitoring and Evaluation

Corporate monitoring of the policy will be the responsibility of the EDI Committee. Faculties and departments/faculties will also be responsible for the local monitoring and implementation of the policy through procedures and practices, reporting through the planning process and to the EDI Committee, as required. This will include:

- The Annual EDI Report which includes progress against the Equality Objectives and statistical information on learners and the workforce in line with the protected characteristics

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- Self-assessment at the curriculum, faculty and group level
- Student and Staff surveys
- Data analysis
- Monitoring of formal complaints
- Reporting to governors
- Collecting and disseminating examples of good practice
- Quality Improvement Strategy
- EDI Committee
- Reviews of Teaching & Learning

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Protected Characteristics

The Inspire Education Group (IEG) commits that it will not discriminate against anyone for any reason connected to the 'protected characteristics' under the act. In addition, the IEG has a wider commitment to ensure equality of opportunity for all, and therefore also includes commitments for all people regardless of their socio-economic status. A brief description of each characteristic is set out below.

What do we mean by protected characteristics?

The following definitions have been adapted from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (www.equalityhumanrights.com).

| |
|---|
| Age |
| The Act defines age by reference to a person's age group and when it refers to people who share the protected characteristic of age, it means they are in the same age group. |
| Disability |
| A person is a disabled person (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. |
| Sex |
| A person's sex refers to the fact that they are male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men or women or either boys or girls. |
| Gender Reassignment |
| Refers to discriminating against a person for being transgender. References to transsexual people under the act cover staff who are proposing to undergo, or are undergoing, or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex, i.e. gender reassignment. There is no requirement that the process of gender reassignment includes medical supervision. It is recognising that there may be a difference between physical sex and gender identity. This policy relates not only to the protected characteristic of gender reassignment but also to the wider Trans community. |
| Looked After Children |
| In the context of our Single Equality Scheme and Ofsted inspections, this term covers children in the care of a local authority and also children who are fostered or adopted. |



Marriage and Civil Partnership

Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and start a family. The European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2002 that this right extends to transsexual people who are now able to marry or enter civil partnerships in their acquired gender because of the Gender Recognition Act (2004).

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 means that gay men and lesbian women in the UK are now able to register civil partnerships. Couples who register a civil partnership have the same rights as heterosexual married couples in areas like tax, social security, inheritance and workplace benefits. Changes to the 1973 Matrimonial Causes Act in the form of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, which came into force on 29 March 2014, now enable same-sex couples to marry in civil ceremonies and for civil partners to convert their partnership into a marriage if they wish.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic in its own right (prior to the Equality Act 2010 pregnancy and maternity came under sex discrimination). Discrimination (i.e. less favourable treatment) because an employee is breastfeeding is a form of sex discrimination within the workplace.

Race

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 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'.

Religion and Beliefs

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 mainstream or well-known to gain protection as a religion. It must, though, be identifiable and have a clear structure and belief system.



Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation means the attraction a person feels towards one sex or another (or both), which determines who they form intimate relationships with or are attracted to. Some people are attracted to those of the same sex (lesbian women and gay men). Some people are attracted to people of both sexes (bisexual people). Some people are attracted to the opposite sex (heterosexual people). Everyone is protected from being treated less favourably because of sexual orientation, whether they are bisexual, gay, lesbian or heterosexual. Sexual orientation discrimination also covers discrimination connected with manifestations of that sexual orientation.

Socio-economic Status

Although not a protected characteristic under the act, the College commits not to discriminate against anyone due to their socio-economic background.

Young Carers

A young carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative who has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem (www.nhs.uk). Many young people are sole carers for a person in their family as well as undertaking a full-time Group's course.

Ex-Offenders

It is widely acknowledged that education plays a vital role in the prevention of crime and re-offending. IEG is keen to ensure that a criminal record is not a barrier to education.