

Equality Policy

Policy Title:	Equality Policy
Academic Year:	2025-2027
Policy Reference:	G9
Description:	Policy for developing a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the iCollege feel proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life.
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Author:	Rachel Craggs WBC HR HRR001
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Who was consulted:	WBC HR
Related documents:	Equal Opportunities Statement
Acronyms:	MC - Management Committee FC – Finance Committee PERS - Personnel Committee LA - Local Authority WBC - West Berkshire Council HT - Headteacher SLT - Senior Leadership Team
Date for Review:	December 2027

Equality Policy

Contents

1. Aim.....	3
2. Purpose of Policy	3
3. Applicability.....	3
4. Aims and Objectives	4
5. Reasonable Adjustments	5
6. Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
7. Prohibited Behaviour under the Equality Act.....	7
8. Responding to and Reporting Incidents.....	7
9. Monitoring and Review	9
10. Published Data	9
11. Equality Objectives	9
12. Further Documentation	10
13. Other Related Statutory Policies for Schools	10
14. Adoption and Review Date	10
15. Check List.....	11

Equality Policy

1. Aim

iCollege is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our learners and our workforce and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our learners and our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each learner and employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The school, in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities, is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

We recognise the value of each individual and we are committed to making a difference to the lives of the communities we serve, treating all people with dignity and respect.

At **iCollege**, we believe that diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, work and visit here.

2. Purpose of Policy

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all members of our school community;
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation;
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination (see Appendix A);
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

3. Applicability

This Equality Policy applies to all of the school's learners, staff, governors, parents/carers, visitors and community users.

The policy supports our responsibilities in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This states that, in carrying out their functions, public bodies, including schools, are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

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Equality Policy

The Equality Act 2010 has broadened the groups that are protected to include nine protected characteristics. We all have one or more of the protected characteristics, so the Act protects everyone against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

- (i) **Age:** where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).
- (ii) **Disability:** a person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- (iii) **Gender Reassignment:** the process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- (iv) **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
- (v) **Pregnancy and Maternity:** Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
- (vi) **Race:** Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
- (vii) **Religion or Belief:** Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- (viii) **Sex:** A man or a woman.
- (ix) **Sexual Orientation:** Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

To show how we are complying with the Act, we are required to:

- Publish information that illustrates how our school impacts on the different protected characteristics;
- Investigate, set and publish objectives that will improve equality in our school.

4. Aims and Objectives

iCollege commits to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion among our learners, employees and wider community via:

a) The curriculum

In order to ensure that every learner has the opportunity to develop his or her abilities fully within an individual subject

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Equality Policy

area:

- the curriculum, its assessment and styles of teaching in its delivery, will be planned with an awareness of the needs of individuals across the range of aptitudes, cultures and backgrounds;
- as far as possible, the curriculum will be balanced, objective, free-from-bias and sensitive to the need to support a diverse and tolerant community;
- the content, where appropriate, will present positive images relating to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, those who have or plan to undergo gender reassignment, marital / civil partnership status, those who are pregnant or have recently had a baby, their religion or belief, their sexual identity and orientation, and it will aim to counter stereotyping particularly where there are displays;
- departmental policies for grouping learners within teaching groups will aim to enable children to work to the best of their abilities;
- the criteria for organising teaching groups will be clear, consistent, and in accordance with the principles of this Equality policy;
- iCollege will support tutors in making every effort to ensure that children who suffer from ill health which leads to regular or lengthy absences from school, do not fall behind in their studies;
- iCollege will also support tutors in making every effort to ensure that learners who join the school in the middle of a year or course are given the opportunity to catch up with work not previously covered;

5. Reasonable Adjustments

At **iCollege** we are aware of our duty under the Equality Act 20 to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled learners. A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on the learner's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

We take positive steps to ensure that disabled learners can fully participate in the education provided by the school and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that we provide for learners

6. iCollege Responsibilities

In order to ensure that every learner has the opportunity to develop his or her abilities fully in the school as a whole:

- within the constraints of the timetable and staffing, learners will have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, and to courses taught at an appropriate level for their aptitudes and experience;

iCollege will ensure that learners' special educational needs are recognised and supported in accordance with its Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy;

- iCollege will lead staff in giving appropriate advice and encouragement with regard to options choices, to work experience and to academic and vocational choices at all transition points and it will ensure that these choices are not hindered by gender, disability or cultural stereotyping;
- iCollege will make every effort to ensure that each learner has the opportunity and is encouraged to enter for public examinations;

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Equality Policy

recognise successful learning and development, and to celebrate achievement across as broad a range of learner activity as possible;

- iCollege will aim to ensure that teaching is by an appropriately qualified member of staff;
- iCollege will aim to ensure that the delivery of the curriculum takes place in the appropriate rooms with the necessary equipment. Within the constraints of Health and Safety, all equipment is available to learners of all abilities;

c) The Pastoral System

Promoting equal opportunities is a major aim of the pastoral system of the school. This includes the following:

- the formation of positive relationships regardless of individuals' personal situations;
- addressing issues of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, those who have or plan to undergo gender reassignment, marital / civil partnership status, those who are pregnant or have recently had a baby, their religion or belief, their sexual identity and orientation within the programmes of pastoral education, including the PSHE Programme;
- school procedures and policies for dealing with misbehaviour and bullying;
- equal opportunities to participate in trips or other extra-curricular activities;
- positive attempts to assist disadvantaged learners, for example by offering financial support for school trips;
- communication with parents regarding equal opportunities issues that affect the education and welfare of their children.

d) Learner Admissions

The school seeks to ensure that learners seeking admission will not be barred on the grounds of disability, ethnicity, gender, those who have or plan to undergo gender reassignment, marital / civil partnership status, those who are pregnant or have recently given birth, their religion or belief, their sexual identity and orientation, or for any other reason that cannot be justified.

Within the school environment, we aim to ensure that learners with disabilities are not disadvantaged due to difficulties in access to rooms or to specialist equipment.

In accordance with legal requirements, the ethnic make-up of the school population is monitored on learner admission records and staff applications for a post. The school respects the right of the individual to refuse to give this information.

e) Staff and Learner awareness and conduct

Create a school environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all the learners and employees are recognised and valued.

- This commitment includes teaching learners and training employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include learners and employees conducting themselves to help the school provide equal opportunities in education and employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- All employees should understand that they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, learners, suppliers and the public.

Equality Policy

f) Complaints

Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, learners, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the School's work activities.

- Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the Schools Grievance Procedure and/or Disciplinary Policy, or the Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedures and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic) is a criminal offence.

g) Training/promotions

Make opportunities for training and development available to all learners and employees, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximize the efficiency of the School. Decisions concerning employees being based on merit (apart from any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

h) Recruitment

Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

- In employment terms this includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

i) Monitoring

Monitor the make-up of the learner cohort and workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

- Monitoring will also include assessing how the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and any supporting action plan such as the School's Equality Information and Objectives Document, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.
- Overall responsibility for monitoring the Equality Policy within the school rests with the designated member of the Leadership Team reporting to the Governing Body.

7. Prohibited Behaviour under the Equality Act

Harassment on account of any of the protected characteristics is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment. All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify

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Equality Policy

challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs, according to a learner's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher/head teacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the head teacher and the governing board as they occur.

Harassment on grounds of any of the protected characteristics or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

Types of discriminatory incidents include:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation gender reassignment 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 school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender, sexual orientation or gender reassignment;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of a 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 or race gender, disability, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

8. Responding to and Reporting Incidents

It should be clear to learners and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the school.

Incidents relating to staff will be dealt with under the following policies and procedures (as appropriate):

- Disciplinary Procedure for Schools
- Code of Conduct for Schools
- Schools Grievance Procedures
- Responding to Bullying and Harassment Policy for Schools

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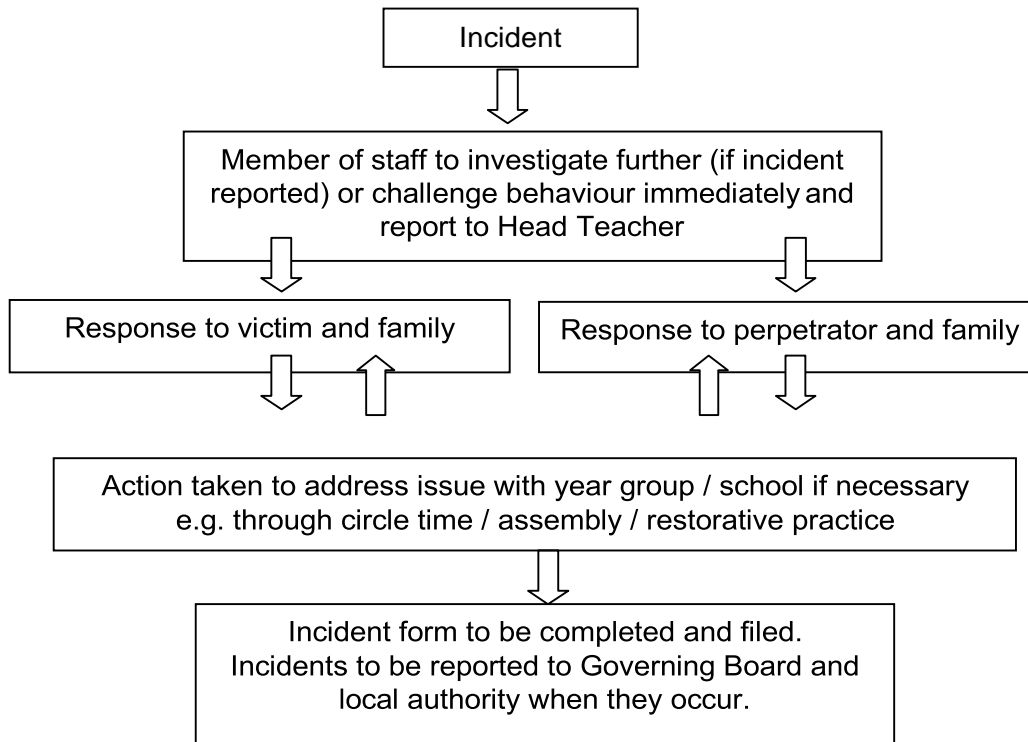
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Equality Policy

Incidents involving the Governing Board should be referred to the Chair of Governors.

A suggested procedure for responding and reporting incidents involving learners is outlined below:



9. Monitoring and Review

The School Management Team and Management Committee recognise that action and progress in relation to equality and diversity needs to be monitored and analysed and in order to do this, we will:

- Assess the impact of our policies, practices and procedures.
- Review the school's Equality Policy in line with current legislation and any other improvements identified.
- Review the Equality Objectives annually and publish them at least once every four years.
- Monitor data on learners' achievements, attendance and participation by race, gender and disability and use this to inform strategies to raise

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Equality Policy

achievement.

- Monitor the requirement and selection process to ensure that no individual applying for a post at the school is discriminated against.
- Monitor the school's admissions, behaviour and exclusion policies to ensure that learners from minority groups are not disadvantaged as a result of the application of these procedures.
- Monitor the use of services to ensure that all sections of the wider community have equal and fair access to services provided.
- Monitor the non-use of school services and take action if barriers to access school services exist.
- Undertake workforce profiling, including the monitoring of school workforce and learner demographics.
- Ensure information is available in alternative formats and languages, and that meetings are held in accessible buildings and at suitable times.

10. Published Data

We will publish the following data on the school's website:

- Equality Objectives will be published at least once every four years.
- Equality data relating to staff and learners who share a protected characteristic will be published annually to show how the school is complying with the Public Sector Duty. *(Data relating to the workforce is only required for schools with 150 staff or more)*. This **could** include:
 - (i) The race, disability, gender and age distribution (where appropriate)
 - (ii) An indication of likely representation on sexual orientation and religion/belief (provided no one can be identified as a result).
 - (iii) An indication of any issues for transsexual staff and learners, based on engagement with transsexual staff or voluntary groups
 - (iv) Staff grievances and dismissals.
 - (v) Learner exclusions.
 - (vi) Attainment data to show how learners with different characteristic are performing.
 - (vii) Information on the steps being taken in response to the analysis undertaken of the available attainment data.

11. Equality Objectives

Equality objectives may arise from analysis schools have carried out on their published data or other information, where they have identified an area where there is potential for improvement on equalities. Alternatively, equality objectives may be set in anticipation of a change in local circumstances. Some examples for primary and secondary schools might be, however these would clearly change over time:

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Equality Policy

Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
To reduce the incidence of homophobic language, hostile attitudes and behaviour towards and between, learners with and without a disability	To reduce the incidence of the use of homophobic language by learners in school
To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through all appropriate curricular opportunities, with particular reference to issues of equality and diversity	To narrow the gap between boys and girls in English KS3 and KS4 results
To reduce the number of prejudice-based incidents, in particular towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners and increase understanding of equality through direct teaching across the curriculum	To reduce the number of prejudice-related incidents, in particular towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners
To narrow the gap between children with and without disabilities at the end of Key Stage 2.	To narrow the gap between boys' and girls' achievement and attitudes throughout year 9

To narrow the gap between boys and girls in writing by the end of KS1	To foster good relations further between different communities within our school
To promote cultural development and understanding through a rich range of experiences both in and beyond the school	To narrow the gap between the different black and minority ethnic groups in English KS3 and KS4 results
To continually consider how well the school ensures equality of opportunities for all its learners	To promote cultural understanding between different ethnic groups within our school community.
To tackle prejudice and promote understanding in relation to people with disabilities	To reduce the incidence of prejudice-related bullying in relation to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010
To narrow the gap in mathematics between boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 1	

12. Further Documentation

- Equality Act 2010

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- Department for Education Advice: The Equality Act 2010 and Schools (May 2014)

13. Other Related Statutory Policies for Schools

- Admissions Arrangements
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints (incorporating the Complaints Procedure)
- Accessibility Plan
- Premises Management Documents
- School Information Published on a Website
- Capability of Staff (Staff Capability)

The following Model policies are also available to those schools that purchase services from WBC HR via SLA Online:

- Disciplinary Procedure for Schools
- Code of Conduct for Schools
- Schools Grievance Procedures
- Responding to Bullying and Harassment Policy for Schools

14. Adoption and Review Date

The Equality Policy will be adopted in September 2016 (reviewed by West Berkshire 2019) and will be reviewed in September 2023.

15. Check List for School Staff and Governors

- Is information collected on the protected characteristics with regards to both learners and staff* e.g. learner achievement, attendance, exclusions, staff training? Is this information used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides? *Data relating to staff does not need to be published where the school has less than 150 employees.
- Are the Equality Objectives specific and measurable and have they taken into account areas for improvement identified through analysis of the published data?
- Is learner achievement analysed by the protected characteristics? Are there trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action, and has action been taken to address these?
- Does the curriculum include opportunities to understand the issues related to the protected characteristics?
- Are all learners encouraged to participate in school life? Are

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learners who make a positive contribution reflective of the school's diversity e.g. through class assemblies / school council?

- Is bullying and harassment of learners and staff monitored by the protected characteristics and is this information used to make a difference to the experience of other learners? Are incidents of bullying and harassment related to the protected characteristics reported to the governing board when they occur?
- Are visual displays reflective of the diversity of your school community? How are role models related to the protected characteristics promoted positively in lessons, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies?
- Does the school take part in annual events such as Black History Month, Deaf Awareness Week and One World Week to raise awareness of issues around the protected characteristics?
- Is the school environment as accessible as possible to learners, staff and visitors to the school? Are open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend held in an accessible part of the school, and are issues such as language barriers considered?
- Are the facilities selected for activities off site including residential trips as accessible as possible to learners and staff?
- Are the accessibility needs of parents, learners and staff considered in the publishing and sending out of information, in terms of the protected characteristics?
- Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to candidates and voters who are disabled?

14: Change Record				
Version Number	Date Approved	Management Committee Minute Reference	Description of Amendments	Date
2			Updated to include LGBTQ+ inclusion in school and workplace	February 2022
2.1	12.12.23	MC	Updated header and footer (MR)	Nov 23
2.2	10.2.26	MC	One change to equality objectives	Dec 25

Keeping Children Safe in Education

All staff at iCollege take seriously their responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in their care; this includes providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

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