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**Worcester College, Oxford**

**Equality and Diversity  
College Policy**

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## **1 Equal opportunities statement**

- 1.0 The College is committed to promoting equal opportunities and an inclusive culture which produces a positive, affirming, and dignified academic, employment and social environment for all.
- 1.1 All members of the College community will be respected and will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex or sexual orientation (“Protected Characteristics”).

## **2 About this Policy**

- 2.0 This Policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the prevention of discrimination within the College. It applies to all aspects of College life and all members of the College community including (but not limited to) students, employees, visitors, officers, fellows, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers, apprentices, interns, agency workers and applicants (including offer holders).
- 2.1 The College recognises that equality and inclusion must be at the heart of all activities. In exercising its policies, practices, procedures and other functions, the College will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to the Protected Characteristics.
- 2.2 The College understands inclusion to mean efforts and actions to foster an institutional culture in which each member feels, and is, valued, listened to and respected, able to be themselves and empowered to participate fully in the life of the College.
- 2.3 The College also recognises that freedom of expression and academic freedom are core academic values protected by law, though these rights must be exercised within the law.

## **3 Who is responsible for this Policy?**

- 3.0 The Governing Body of the College has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this Policy and for ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.
- 3.1 Day-to-day operational responsibility for this Policy, including regular review of this Policy, has been delegated to The Equality Officer.

- 3.2 Each and every member of the College must set an appropriate standard of behaviour with regard to this Policy. Fellows and senior management must lead by example and ensure that those they adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equity and inclusion. All staff who manage or supervise others are responsible for ensuring that equality is embedded in the work of their team, for promoting an inclusive working, research and learning environment, and for promoting a culture of dignity and respect.
- 3.3 The College will provide appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness, equal opportunities recruitment, and selection best practice.

#### **4 Discrimination**

- 4.0 All members of the College community are expected to act in accordance with this policy and to treat each other with respect at all times and in all forms of communication and/or commentary, including online. This Policy is intended to cover conduct within College premises, and outside College premises (again, including online) in the course of College or University activity of any nature.
- 4.1 The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:
- 4.1.0 **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic.
  - 4.1.1 **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone, but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified.
  - 4.1.2 **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
  - 4.1.3 **Victimisation:** this means treating someone badly or subjecting them to a detriment because they have complained (or has supported someone else's complaint) about discrimination or harassment.
  - 4.1.4 **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a

disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

## **5 Recruitment and selection**

5.0 In respect of students the College:

5.0.0 Will seek to attract and admit students of outstanding potential, whatever their background;

5.0.1 Will encourage applications from a wide pool of potential applicants, including taking lawful positive action where appropriate to improve diversity;

5.0.2 Will make decisions on student admissions solely on the individual merits of candidates and applying selection criteria appropriate to the course;

5.0.3 Will work to ensure that College teaching methods, techniques and availability provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve and demonstrate their full academic potential; and

5.0.4 Will work to ensure that College assessment methods and techniques provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve and demonstrate their full academic potential.

5.1 In respect of staff, the College

5.1.0 Will seek to ensure that College decisions on recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of personal merit, against objective criteria related to the duties and conditions of each particular post, in order to avoid discrimination; and

5.1.1 Aims to ensure diversity of representation and participation at all levels within the College.

## **6 Alumni**

6.0 The College's commitment to equality and diversity means that, subject to statutory provisions, no person will be treated less favourably than another because of their belonging to a protected group. This also applies to any former student, alumnus or alumna, or former employee where any alleged unlawful conduct arises out of and is

closely connected to the former student's or former staff member's previous relationship with the College.

## **7 Disabilities**

- 7.0 If a College member is disabled or becomes disabled, the College encourages them to tell Welfare or HR about their condition so that College can support them as appropriate. Information disclosed to us will be used by the College to make reasonable adjustments.
- 7.1 If any individual experiences difficulties within the College because of a disability, the College encourages those individuals to contact Welfare (for students) or their line manager or Human Resources (for employees) to discuss reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The College will consider the matter carefully and will try to accommodate these needs within reason. If the College considers a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, the reasons will be explained and the College will try to find an alternative solution, where possible.
- 7.2 The College monitors our physical premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, and subject to legal constraints, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

## **8 Breaches of this Policy**

- 8.0 Any member of the College community has the right to complain of behaviour that they believe is in breach of this Policy, even if it is not directed at them.
- 8.1 Complaints under this Policy should be directed to the Equalities Officer.
- 8.2 It is contrary to College policy to engage in victimisation or retaliation against individuals who staff who complain about discrimination. Issues can and should be raised without fear of reprisal. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under relevant disciplinary processes.

**Policy first adopted: adopted by Governing Body TT 2021 to take effect 01 October 2021**

**Policy next due for review: TT 2022**