



Policy on Belonging and Inclusion

New College Durham is committed to safeguarding & promoting the welfare of vulnerable groups and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

New College Durham

Belonging and Inclusion Policy

(Equality and Diversity Assessment)

We will consider any request for this procedure to be made available in an alternative format.

We review our policies and procedures regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies and procedures are subject to equality impact assessments. Equality Impact Assessments are conducted to see whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or human rights.

We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments, and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility or fairness of the policy.

To make suggestions or to seek further information please contact:

Human Resources Department

human.resources@newdur.ac.uk

Tel: 0191 375 4025/4023

If any employee has difficulty understanding this policy or needs assistance completing any documentation associated with the policy, please contact either your trade union representative or the college's Human Resource Department.

Policy Title	Belonging and Inclusion Policy
Document Owner	Director of HR
Owning Directorate	Corporate Services
Owning Department	Human Resources
Directorates and Departments affected by this Policy	All staff
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1. Introduction

1.1 As a provider of employment and education we value the diversity of our staff and students and are committed to encouraging everyone to realise their full potential and provide opportunities for all, irrespective of their protected characteristic/s. The College recognises protected characteristics as.

Age
Disability
Ethnicity (including race, colour, and nationality)
Gender reassignment
Religion or belief
Sex
Sexual Orientation
Marriage and civil partnership
Pregnancy and maternity

1.2 Our mission is to be open to people, places, methods, and ideas and this means that a commitment to equality is embedded in all that we do. We celebrate diversity and the strengths that it brings to our college community, and we challenge under-representation and differences in outcomes.

1.3 Staff, students, stakeholders, and service users should feel that they are an integral part of the college community and together we will operate as a system, reflecting and shaping our behaviours and organisational culture. Together we will.

- Drive the agenda at the highest level, sharing good practice and raising awareness across the organisation.
- Ensure students, staff, stakeholders, and service users understand their responsibility to address any barriers.
- Monitor, measure, and evaluate the impact of equality, diversity and inclusion, procedures, and practice.
- Promote belonging and inclusion in all areas of employment and learning and continually review our policies and procedures.

This policy complements our annual report and ensures that Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion is embedded into.

Curriculum
Policies
Processes
Staff recruitment and selection
Student recruitment
Staff and student behaviour
Marketing
Services
Accessibility

2. Scope

The policy is relevant to.

- 2.1 Staff employed on full-time, part-time, sessional contracts and external agency including those on work placement or on a visiting basis.
- 2.2 Students studying FE, HE and Apprenticeships including those on exchange or work placement.
- 2.3 All visitors, contractors, and volunteers.
- 2.5 Individuals working or acting on the college's behalf, including suppliers of goods or services.

3. Our values and principles

Staff, students, stakeholders, and service users are committed to ensuring that our college community remains a place where learning and working exists in an environment that advances equality of opportunity, celebrates diversity, and allows everyone to achieve their fullest potential.

3.1 Accountability

- We will accept responsibility for our actions, decisions and policies and the impact on staff, students, stakeholders, and service users.
- The College is opposed to any form of discrimination, and we will ensure that our practices are **legal**, **accessible**, and **fair** to students, staff, stakeholders, and service users.

3.2 Safeguarding

- Ensure that everyone understands their responsibilities to foster an inclusive learning, working and social environment and are aware of relevant good practice, policies, guidance, and support services.
- Set clear expectations for staff and students about personal conduct and responsibility which is clearly communicated to always promote the wellbeing of young people and adults at risk.

3.3 Partnerships

- Raise awareness with regards to discrimination and ensure that all students, staff, stakeholders, and service users are aware of their responsibilities under current equality legislation.
- Work in partnership with those who share our vision and values.
- Be transparent in our communications as to support services that are available for staff and students enabling them to make informed decisions and choices.

3.4 Inspire

- Proactively encourage applications from under-represented groups by inspiring students to learn with us and potential employees to become part of the college community.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant characteristic and people who do not.

3.5 Respect

- Create an environment where individuals are respected and have the opportunity to succeed.
- Treat everyone with respect, fostering trust, openness, and honesty.

3.6 Excellence

- Foster an environment that enables all to reach their full potential.
- Support our staff and students to achieve and maintain high standards in everything that they do.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 The **Equality Act 2010** legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand. It sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone.

4.2 The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (PSED) came into force on 5 April 2011. It means that public bodies must consider all individuals when conducting their day-to-day work, shaping policy and delivering services. It requires public bodies or public funded organisations to have due regard to:

- eliminate any form of unlawful discrimination (including direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited under the Act).
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.
- remove or minimise disadvantages by people who share a relevant protected characteristic.
- meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic where these are different from the needs of people who do not share it.
- encourage people who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

4.3 We are dedicated to ensuring that **Fundamental British Values** is promoted and embedded in college which will support our learners to develop a strong sense of social and moral responsibility. Students are prepared for life in Modern Britain by developing an understanding of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

4.5 The college is recognised as a **Disability Confident Leader** (level 3). Holding this quality mark demonstrates as an employer we.

- encourage employees to be open and to discuss access and support needs.
- make sure that employees know that, should they acquire a disability, or should an existing disability or health condition worsen, every effort will be made to enable them to continue in their current job or an alternative one.
- provide support for existing employees who become disabled or experience health problems, for example, through occupational health sessions, offering flexible working patterns, offering home working. This can include but is not limited to making reasonable adjustments as necessary to support staff, including applications to Access to Work for advice and financial support.

We have demonstrated that we.

- have undertaken and successfully completed the Disability Confident self-assessment.
- are taking all the core actions to be a Disability Confident employer.
- are offering at least one activity to get the right people for your business and at least one activity to keep and develop your people.

4.6 Holding the **Inclusive Employer Standard Bronze** demonstrates that the college actively upholds these principles, showing measurable progress in embedding inclusion across its culture and practices. This recognition benefits the whole organisation by enhancing reputation, attracting, and retaining diverse talent, improving employee engagement, and fostering innovation through varied perspectives.

4.7 The college has adopted the **IHRA definition of antisemitism**. Antisemitism is recognised as a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish

community institutions and religious facilities. The definition helps us better understand and recognise instances of antisemitism, and gives examples of the kind of behaviours, which, depending on the circumstances, could constitute antisemitism.

5. Key Principles

- 5.1 The college community has a responsibility to ensure that all students and staff are free from any form of harassment. Discriminating comments are not acceptable, even if intended to be friendly or humorous. Conduct or remarks which have the effect of interfering with an individual's work or education, or which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive atmosphere are not acceptable or tolerated.
- 5.2 In seeking to achieve a balanced workforce at all levels, the college will ensure that no employee, job applicant or candidate for promotion or training will be disadvantaged or treated less favourably because of conditions or requirements that are not related to the job.
- 5.3 All employees and potential employees are treated with equality and fairness at all stages of employment, and that their treatment is based solely on objective and job-related criteria, the college will ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded into all its policies, practices, and procedures.
- 5.4 Support to employees will be available through the Human Resources Team (including reference to independent counselling as appropriate) as well as via normal line management.
- 5.5 Human Resources, Occupational Health and Health and Safety will collaborate with managers to ensure reasonable adjustments are in place and working arrangements and premises ensure equal access for all employees or potential employees.
- 5.6 Students, staff, and visitors are treated fairly and are not subjected to discrimination on any grounds, including those defined within the protected characteristics.
- 5.7 All staff should monitor their conduct and language to eliminate discriminating remarks or practices and should actively counter such behaviour amongst students.
- 5.8 Training, development, coaching, and mentoring are available for staff who require support.
- 5.9 Students must never be given the impression that discriminating attitudes and practices are acceptable.
- 5.10 Teaching staff should make sure students are aware of expectations. Management must ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a timely and consistent manner and in line with relevant policies.
- 5.11 It is expected that the Student Code of Conduct is promoted within induction and reinforced through tutorial will all students on a regular basis.
- 5.12 Equality, diversity, and inclusion should be planned and purposeful within the curriculum ensuring that it is relevant to the content/subject being delivered.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1 All employees of New College Durham have a responsibility for the implementation of the Belonging and Inclusion Policy and are required to comply and promote the aims and values accordingly.
- 6.2 This policy combined with the annual report outlines our commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equal opportunities, and fostering good relations. Regular review of existing policies and procedures will be undertaken, and appropriate changes implemented when relevant and appropriate.

- 6.3 Students, staff, stakeholders, and service users will work together to create a culture of understanding and respect for difference, thus providing a safe place for learning and working, developing ideas and concepts that impact on all key stakeholders.
- 6.4 **The Board of the Corporation (and/or sub committees)**, in conjunction with the **Senior Leadership Team** will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.
- 6.5 **The Deputy Chief Executive for HR and Corporate Services** will ensure that this policy is applied throughout the college, and that effective and robust monitoring systems are maintained. That the provision of training and information is available and disseminated to enable managers and staff to discharge their responsibilities under the Policy. Any actions taken comply with the values and aims of this Policy are recommended to the Board as appropriate.
- 6.6 **Managers** will ensure that this policy is adhered to in department(s) under their control and the policy is promoted to all employees and job applicants. Inform employees of their responsibilities and opportunities under the policy and appropriate action is taken in accordance with established procedures against employees who are found to infringe it.
- 6.7 **Trade Union Representatives** will help the college promote this policy and encourage full participation by all staff. They will support the monitoring and review of this policy and provide feedback from members where appropriate.

7. Implementation

- 7.1 Staff, students and visitors will be made aware of this policy through a range of communications and training activities.
- 7.2 Belonging and Inclusion and SEND training forms part of our recruitment process for new staff and this training is completed as part of recruitment checks. No new member of staff will be allowed to commence employment until this training is completed fully.
- 7.3 Staff and students receive a thorough induction which explores in more detail the importance of belonging and inclusion to the whole college community looking at accountability, safeguarding, partnerships, inclusion, respect, and excellence which are all core college values.
- 7.4 Regular training is offered to all staff in all areas of belonging and inclusion to enable them to conduct their roles in a way that reflects the ethos of the organisation and the broader community.
- 7.5 Training will be consistently reviewed and identified through but not exclusive to an assessment of the college and employees' needs, feedback from learner voice and staff survey, changes in law and/or legislation. Formal online training is completed every 3 years and is part of our training cycle, this is monitored and recorded on our Single Central Record.
- 7.7 Staff involved in (staff) recruitment and selection and (student) admissions are offered appropriate and regular training on belonging and inclusion and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities within this policy.
- 7.8 External contractors are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to belonging and inclusion and the requirement to comply with relevant policies and procedures.

8. Monitoring

- 8.1 The Board and the Joint Consultative Committee will receive annual report(s) which will enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.

- 8.2 The policy focuses on our legal duties and legislation. The annual report focuses on:
- implementation of our belonging and inclusion objectives/action plans and key achievements by staff and students.
 - any action undertaken in relation to modification of the workplace or working conditions including recruitment to enable wider opportunity of posts within the organisation.
- 8.3 The Belonging and Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing Steering Group will.
- drive and monitor the objectives within the annual report and ensure actions are taken to fulfil our responsibilities under legislation are monitored and address areas for improvement.
 - monitor student recruitment, progress, achievement, and destination are challenging and that the recruitment, performance, and destinations of different student groups are closely monitored, and actions taken to address any identified gaps.
 - review incidents and complaints to ensure these are proactively managed and addressed, any recommended actions are followed up and the implementation measured.

9. Partnership and Engagement

- 9.1 Through actively supporting and encouraging staff and student equality groups and networks and recognising the key role they play in promoting and supporting belonging and inclusion across the college, the college will make available such resources as is reasonable.
- 9.2 This policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years considering changes through an annual calendar of events and initiatives as well as online through our website and social media updates. These events, involving students, staff and the wider community, support with raising awareness and help us lead by example.

10. Procedure Review

- 10.1 In recognition that changes in legislation. law and identified best practice may impact on this policy it will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years.
- 10.2 It may be necessary to consider the effectiveness of this Policy that a consultation will be undertaken with students, staff, stakeholders, and service users to ensure effectiveness and process.

Implementation Date	1 July 2017
Review Date	October 2028