



braintree college

EQUALITIES POLICY

1. BACKGROUND

Braintree College is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all who learn and work here. We respect and value positively differences in race, belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability, class and age.

We value diversity and aim to ensure that all employees, learners and visitors are treated as individuals regardless of age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, gender, sexuality, trade union activity, socio-economic background or other relevant distinction.

2. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidance regarding equality and diversity and to establish key principles, structures and monitoring arrangements for the College. This policy is applicable to all employees and learners in the College.

3. PROCEDURES

In order to ensure that all employees and learners in the College are treated with equality and fairness at all stages of employment and enrolment, and the treatment is based solely on objective and job/course related criteria, the College will ensure that equality issues are embedded into all its policies, procedures and College environment.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The College will work to ensure that:

- Equality of opportunity is embedded in all policies, practices, decision making and evaluation processes.
- We offer flexible opportunities which meet local learning need and enable all students to realise their potential.
- All staff are clear about standards and strategies to meet diverse learner need and are equipped to respond effectively.
- We secure the fullest participation of all students and staff in all areas of College life and act to address under representation.
- We develop a staff profile, management team and governing body which reflect the student body.
- The College will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment.
- There are well understood and well used procedures for challenging all forms of discrimination, harassment and unacceptable behaviour.
- We undertake rigorous and open monitoring of learner and staff performance and experience to identify and act on equality gaps.

- We value learner and staff feedback to help us improve what we do and to help us to identify any patterns of equality which are not readily identified through the use of data.
- Develop strategies for the embedding of Equality & Diversity.

5. PROCEDURES

Braintree College will take action to eradicate racism and promote and encourage the participation and success of black and minority groups of students.

- We take positive action to encourage the recruitment and increase the success rate of black and minority groups of students on all courses and at all levels.
- We will ensure that the curriculum addresses anti-racism.
- We will value and accredit experiences and qualifications gained outside the UK.
- We will work to create a learning environment which is welcoming and supportive of black and minority groups of students and staff.
- We will respect and, where necessary provide for the practices which support students' religious beliefs.
- We will seek to increase the number of staff from black and minority groups. We recognise the contribution they can make to student success.
- We will work to secure the fullest participation of black and minority students, staff and governors in College life.

Although a secular institution, Braintree College will welcome diversity of belief providing it is not contrary to the values of the College, in particular the promotion of any religion or belief.

- Members of any religion or none will be treated with equal dignity and fairness. Harassment, religious or racial discrimination and incitement to religious hatred will be addressed through College disciplinary procedures.
- We will encourage students to respect other views, think critically and form their own opinions and value judgements.
- We will respect and, as necessary, provide for the practices which support the religious needs of students and staff. This includes:
 - The setting aside of suitable space for prayer, ablution and other religious observances.
 - Welcoming diversity of appearance and clothing, providing health and safety requirements have been met, dress conforms to the majority view in society of what constitutes decency, and clothing does not display discriminatory slogans.
- The delivery of learning programmes- including residential visits, internal examinations and timed assessments - will support as reasonably practicable religious festivals or observances which may affect learners' ability to participate fully.
- Requests for extended unpaid staff leave to meet particular religious or cultural requirements will be considered sympathetically where sufficient notice is provided to maintain the expected standard of customer service.

Braintree College is committed to ensuring that disabled people, including those with learning disabilities are not substantially disadvantaged. Braintree College will strive to ensure that no learner or staff is discriminated against or denied any educational or social opportunity on the grounds of any disability.

- We will value positively students' achievements and support them to realise their potential.
- We will work with students and staff with disabilities to improve access across the College sites.
- The College will work with learners to identify individual needs and make every effort to meet these through responsive teaching, specialist staff, study aids, assistive technologies and environmental adaptations.
- We will train and resource staff to use inclusive learning strategies and to recognise and meet particular needs.
- We will ensure assessment strategies and exam arrangements enable all learners to evidence their knowledge and skills.

- We will ensure that all members of staff with disabilities have an annual opportunity to discuss with their line manager the adequacy of the College response to their needs, and to suggest improvements. We will make reasonable adjustments to meet those needs.
- We will act to improve the proportion of staff with disabilities in line with the local population profile.
- The College will monitor and regularly review its Disability Equality Scheme.

Braintree College is working actively to create a supportive and inclusive environment for both women and men which enables full participation and access in learning and employment. Braintree College will not allow sexual harassment or unfavourable treatment in any form.

- We strongly oppose sexism and are committed to taking positive action to identify and remove sexism in College life.
- We will take positive action to develop equality of opportunity for women at every level of the learner pathway and throughout their College career.
- We will monitor the participation, performance and progress of female and male students and act to address inequalities.
- We will take positive action to encourage learners into non-traditional areas of work or study so that gender stereotyping becomes the exception.
- Sexual harassment will not be tolerated in any area of College life. College commitments will be made explicit to new learners and staff.
- Employment policies and procedures will be family friendly and opportunities for professional development will be organised to ensure that those with external care commitments have opportunities to participate.
- The College will monitor and regularly review its Gender Equality Scheme.

Braintree College is working actively to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all women and men. Braintree College aims to eradicate discrimination on the grounds of sexuality and to promote equality of opportunity for all.

- We strongly oppose discrimination on the grounds of sexuality and are committed to taking positive action to identify and remove homophobia when it occurs.
- We will encourage positive acceptance of the range of sexual orientation.
- Homophobic harassment will not be tolerated in any area of College life. College commitments will be made explicit to new learners and staff and sexual harassment and discrimination will be vigorously challenged through College disciplinary procedures.
- Employment policies and procedures will be family friendly and will apply equally to households based on same sex partnerships and to non traditional parenting and care arrangements.

Braintree College recognises that people can develop throughout their life and that an individual's life experiences add value to their role as a member of the College community and their personal learning experience.

- We will promote actively and support educational achievement for people of all ages.
- We will work to remove arbitrary age barriers to educational access and to the realising of individual potential and success.
- We will provide differentiated learning experience which meets the needs of particular age cohorts.
- We will promote actively up-skilling and re-training programmes for those in employment or who wish to re-enter employment.
- We will develop teaching and learning and support strategies to meet the particular needs of learners from different age groups.
- We will promote positive images of achievement by people of all ages and which recognise and celebrate the knowledge and experience which people bring to their learning throughout life.
- We welcome job applications from all age groups and select on the basis of specific skills and abilities.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Vice Principal- Student Support has responsibility for managing Equal Opportunities. The Governing Body will review the Equal Opportunities Policy and Equalities action plan annually.

Agreed: Corporation: tbc

Last updated: 4 December 2007

Equality Impact Assessed: 3 December 2007

Next review due: Sept 2008

Responsibility: Vice Principal – Student Support

Equal Opportunities

The Equality & Diversity Working Party is responsible for producing and monitoring the Equalities action plan.

Staff and governors are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of and meet their statutory responsibilities. Learners are made aware of, and expected to behave in a way that is consistent with, the College's Equalities Policy.

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Vice Principal – Student Support has ultimate responsibility for this policy and to this end will keep this overarching policy under review. Given the complexity of the issues contained within this Policy, however, it is to be expected that those managers responsible for individual procedures and aspects of the Policy will also monitor relevant aspects of its implementation and will advise the Vice Principal – Student Support if changes need to be made to the Policy as a result. The Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with legislative developments and the need for good practice.

Monitoring will be undertaken as well in accordance with best practice recommendations, particularly from bodies such as the commission for Racial Equality (CRE), Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR), and with regard to data protection principles.

This policy should not be read in isolation, but as an integrated part of College policies and cross referenced with relevant College policies and procedures.