

Quality Manual

01.26.01 **POLICY ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION OF STUDENTS**

PURPOSE To ensure students are not discriminated against because of their sexual orientation

SCOPE All students enrolled at West Suffolk College

RESPONSIBILITY Student Welfare Team, Academic Staff

PROCEDURE

Sexual Orientation Policy

1 Statement of Intent

This policy is intended to support West Suffolk College in promoting equality between learners of different lawful sexual orientations.

2 The College's Commitment

The College encourages, celebrates and values lawful diversity brought to the College by individual learners. The College is committed to equality of treatment of all learners. This will apply to the operation and implementation of all policies relating to learners. The College will treat all learners with dignity and respect, and seek to provide a positive learning environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation in relation to the learner's sexual orientation.

The aim is to produce a positive inclusive ethos with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination, to respecting diversity and difference and to encourage good relations between heterosexuals, lesbian, gay and bisexual people within the College.

The College will work towards the elimination of prejudice and discrimination, whether overt or covert, and will seek to ensure that all learners have equal access to the full range of College facilities.

Where personal information is divulged in confidence, every attempt will be made to respect this.

3 Meeting our Commitment

The College will not discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in the way it recruits and selects learners and arranges progression.

Date	Author	Impact Ass.	Issue	Review Date	Quality App	Section	Page
Dec 08	Ian Mathers/Sarah-Louise Neesam	Dec 08	2	Dec 10		1	1 of 4

The College will ensure that all learners regardless of their sexuality shall have equal rights to the use of facilities, benefits and services.

The College will ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in relation to the exclusion of learners.

Harassment on the grounds of sexuality is viewed by the College as a very serious offence. If it is proved that a learner is harassed by another learner it may lead to the expulsion of the harasser.

The College will ensure that any references provided to enquirers are not influenced in any way by the sexual orientation of the learners.

4 Ensuring Equality and Diversity

Homophobic or other abuse, harassment or bullying (for example name-calling, derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour and intrusive questions) are serious disciplinary offences, and should be dealt with under the appropriate procedure.

Homophobic propaganda, in the forms of written materials, graffiti, music or speeches will not be tolerated. The College undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on the premises.

The College values all its learners equally, and will endeavour to create an environment in which all learners, whatever their orientation, feel equally valued and welcomed.

The College aims to eliminate sexual orientation discrimination in its structures and practices as well as to encourage change in individual behaviour and attitudes, and ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all learners, regardless of their sexuality.

The holding of beliefs religious or otherwise which regard any lawful sexual orientation as morally wrong will not be a justification for promulgation of such views on the College campus or for harassment, abuse, propaganda or insults directed against lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual learners.

The College environment, in terms of its pictures, images, publicity materials and literature should reflect the diversity of its learners and students, including diverse sexualities.

The College will provide a supportive environment for learners who wish it to be known that they are lesbian, gay, or bisexual. However, it is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their sexuality in the College. Revealing the sexuality of a learner without his or her permission is a form of harassment.

Date	Author	Impact Ass.	Issue	Review Date	Quality App	Section	Page
Dec 08	Ian Mathers/Sarah-Louise Neesam	Dec 08	2	Dec 10		1	2 of 4

The College recognises that lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual learners come from diverse backgrounds, and will strive to ensure that they do not face discrimination either on the grounds of their sexual orientation or with regard to other aspects of their identity (for example race, gender, age, religion or disability).

5 Division of Responsibility

Governors are responsible for ensuring that

- the College's strategic plan includes a commitment to sexual orientation equality
- equalities training is a part of the College's strategic plan
- Managers are responsible for ensuring that the senior management team have responsibility for taking the lead in challenging homophobic behaviour on the part of managers and learners and creating a positive, inclusive ethos
- they are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to sexual orientation legislation
- all aspects of College policy and activity are sensitive to issues in relation to lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual learners
- the procedures for the recruitment, selection and progression of learners enshrines best practice in equal opportunities
- the College's publicity materials present appropriate positive and non-stereotypical messages about people of diverse sexualities
- appropriate training and development is provided to support the appreciation and understanding of diversity
- Staff are responsible for ensuring that
- they are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to sexual orientation legislation
- they challenge homophobic behaviour, whether deliberate or otherwise, by learners

6 Publicising our Policy and Progress

This should go to:

- The public:

The College's commitment to equality, including sexual orientation equality will be included in the College publicity material

- Learners:

All learners will have access to or receive a full copy of the policy.

The learners' induction programme should highlight the College's commitment to sexual orientation equality, the action that can be taken by learners who suffer discrimination and the action to be taken as to any perpetrators of such discrimination

Date	Author	Impact Ass.	Issue	Review Date	Quality App	Section	Page
Dec 08	Ian Mathers/Sarah-Louise Neesam	Dec 08	2	Dec 10		1	3 of 4

7 Complaints

The College will seek to provide a supportive environment for learners who make claims of discrimination or harassment.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or abuse on the grounds of sexual orientation will be treated as a serious matter.

Learners who feel they are being discriminated against on the grounds of their sexual orientation by other learners or members of staff should raise the matter with their Personal tutor, which will, if the accusation is upheld, be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

If, in the course of work placements, learners suffer sexual orientation discrimination, the College will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support.

8 General

This policy should not be read in isolation, but cross-referenced with all relevant College policies.

Date	Author	Impact Ass.	Issue	Review Date	Quality App	Section	Page
Dec 08	Ian Mathers/Sarah-Louise Neesam	Dec 08	2	Dec 10		1	4 of 4