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The Westminster
Specialist College

2025/26

Equality and Diversity Policy

Approved by Board of Governors on:	**8/7/2025**
Signed by Chair of Governors:	P Coldicott
Head of College:	O Flowers
Lead Personnel:	**B Taylor**
Date of Review:	8/7/2026

Policies and Procedures

Introduction

This policy also reflects our commitment to ensuring equality and inclusion across all education, training and employment preparation pathways including those delivered through DFN Project SEARCH, where learners with learning disabilities and autism engage in supported internships hosted by partner employers. The College recognises the importance of proactively addressing barriers faced by underrepresented and disabled groups in both educational and workplace environments.

The Westminster Specialist College is committed to providing services that embrace diversity and provide equality of opportunity. We recognise, value and promote the positive contributions that are made by our students in contributing to the direction of the service they receive and the college itself.

The College fully complies with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (as amended) and the Public Sector Equality Duty. We take active steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. We also reference and align to statutory guidance under the SEND Code of Practice and the Children and Families Act 2014.

The College recognises the value of a diverse workforce and the benefits that this can bring to the service delivery to our young people and the operation of the college.

The College is determined to ensure that these values underpin our everyday practice; our support to young people; our respect for colleagues; and our presence and work within the local community.

The College will not tolerate discrimination of any sort directed at our students, staff or volunteers. Direct or indirect behaviours that are intended to bully, harass, isolate or victimise others for reasons associated with individual differences will not be tolerated.

Principles

- We will listen to the varying views of staff and seek to understand their perspectives.
- We will respond promptly where concerns relating to the values of this policy are raised.
- We will be respectful, honest and open in all our interactions with staff and students
- We will be honest and open about the diversity of our workforce.
- We will involve staff and students in resolving issues; always encouraging informal resolution where appropriate in order to maintain engagement and positive working relationships.
- We will continue to promote a positive culture throughout, where opinions are welcomed; differences embraced; and where equality,

diversity and respect are core values placed at the centre of all our activities.
- We will ensure the highest possible standards are achieved in service delivery and employment practices.
- A commitment to this policy and its principles is expected from everyone who works for us; alongside us; or is engaged with us in any way.

Promoting Equality & Diversity

In the context of DFN Project SEARCH, the College works closely with host employers and job coaches to ensure that inclusive practice and reasonable adjustments are embedded across internship placements. This includes supporting the development of inclusive recruitment, ensuring access to workplace adjustments, and challenging ableism or stigma where it arises.

We will ensure that no person or groups of people suffer detriment in recruitment; promotion; development; exit from the College; with access to training, facilities or other benefits, or will endure discriminatory behaviour in their everyday work or learning.

We will work towards a culture where discriminatory behaviour is routinely challenged in a respectful and constructive manner so that the person displaying such behaviour has an opportunity to correct this. If they are unwilling to correct their behaviour or if the behaviour is considered to be of a serious or detrimental nature, then disciplinary action should result.

All complaints of discrimination; bullying; harassment; victimisation; intolerance; or lack of respect for individuals will be fully investigated.

General Standards of Behaviour

Everyone is expected to conduct themselves in a considerate manner at all times. We will not tolerate behaviour such as:

- Bullying; harassment or victimisation
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Physical violence
- Shouting or swearing
- Rudeness
- Isolating, ignoring or refusing to work or communicate with certain individuals – whether intentional or otherwise
- Telling offensive or potentially offensive jokes or name calling
- The display of offensive material such as pornography or sexist/racist cartoons
- Lewd gestures or remarks
- Distribution of offensive or potentially offensive material by any means including email or text messaging

We are all responsible for our own behaviours and therefore, for considering the impact that our behaviours may have on others. It is the impact of the behaviour (i.e. how your behaviour affects someone else) rather than the intent that is of paramount importance. It is not acceptable to justify our actions by either denying; inferring others are overly sensitive or by saying we did not intend any offence to be caused.

Responsibilities

Staff supporting DFN Project SEARCH are expected to uphold these responsibilities not only on campus but also when operating in employer environments, advocating for inclusive practice and accessible workplace cultures. Host employers are briefed on these responsibilities through partnership agreements and inclusion training.

We believe it is the responsibility of everyone involved with The Westminster Specialist College to uphold strong working practices.

Everyone involved with us has a duty to:

- Promote equality & diversity in the delivery of services
- Undertake training or development about equality & diversity issues
- Ensure that everyone associated with us is treated in a non-discriminatory manner
- Promote a welcoming environment in which individuals from all backgrounds feel welcome, valued and respected
- Act in a respectful and tolerant manner at all times
- Challenge any behaviour that could be considered as unfair or discriminatory, or raise such issues with your line manager if you feel unable to challenge it
- Be clear about what is expected of us in terms of our behaviour and conduct towards others
- Be a positive role model and set positive examples in everything we do
- Listen to and respect others, and do not dismiss their concerns as trivial

What to do if you are concerned or feel you have been discriminated against

If you believe that you have been subject to bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation of any kind then you should discuss this with Vice Principal, Ben Taylor, to try to resolve the matter. If this does not resolve the issues (or you don't feel you can approach them) then you should discuss it with the Principal, Oliver Flowers.

If the issues are unable to be resolved informally then you should raise your concerns as a grievance, referring to the Grievance procedure.

Where we have formed a reasonable belief that this policy has been breached and/or acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation have occurred then such issues will be managed by the College's Disciplinary Policy

Curriculum and Learner Empowerment

As part of our commitment to equality and diversity, the DFN Project SEARCH curriculum includes structured modules that help learners understand their rights and responsibilities in the workplace. Through topics such as workplace behaviour, respecting differences, and understanding discrimination, students are taught to recognise when they or others may not have been treated fairly or equally. These modules use accessible language, relatable scenarios, and role-play activities to help students identify signs of unfair treatment—such as being excluded, spoken to disrespectfully, or denied opportunities based on disability, background, or protected characteristics. Learners are also supported in knowing how to report concerns and who to speak to if they feel their rights have not been respected.

Related Policies

Well-Being and Positive Behaviour Policy

Review Date – July 2026

Person responsible: Ben Taylor