

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

### **RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR**

Chief Executive Officer

### **RATIFIED BY BOARD**

October 2023

### **REVIEW DATE**

September 2025

### **Our Vision**

“Our vision is to provide all of our pupils with a first-class academic education comparable with the very best schools nationally. We also aim to develop those skills and qualities in our pupils’ character which, hand-in-hand with exam qualifications, will deliver success and resilience in later life”.

### **1. Background**

- 1.1. The Bedford College Academies Trust (BCAT) celebrates and values the diversity of its learners and employees and is committed to equality of opportunity for all.
- 1.2. BCAT resolves to eliminate discrimination or other unfair treatment against any of its staff, potential staff or users of its services. This is regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, marital status, family circumstances and responsibility for dependants, physical ability, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or offending background that does not create risk to children and vulnerable adults.
- 1.3. Subject to the overriding consideration of protecting children and vulnerable people, we will make every effort to prevent unfair discrimination against those with criminal records.

### **2. Demonstrating our commitment to learners and employees (meeting our duties).**

- 2.1. Marketing and Access to Learning: BCAT publicity and learner recruitment procedures will be designed to encourage applications from all sections of the community and from all levels of ability.
- 2.2. BCAT will ensure that admission procedures are user friendly and avoid unnecessary barriers to access for intending learners.
- 2.3. BCAT will continue to identify and respond to learning needs within the community and will encourage widening participation from under-represented, disadvantaged or excluded groups.
- 2.4. Equal opportunities data will be collected, analysed and used to inform the planning and decision-making process of our Admissions and Marketing policies.

### **3. The learning environment**

- 3.1. BCAT is committed to the development of learning environments that are welcoming and safe for all learners.
- 3.2. BCAT will continue to develop its facilities and accommodation to improve access for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

#### **4. Teaching and learning**

- 4.1. Subject staff and Learning Area Managers will ensure that course delivery is free from bias, stereotyping and discrimination.
- 4.2. Subject staff and mentors will encourage learners to explore issues of equal opportunities and diversity where such an opportunity exists within the curriculum. Raising awareness of equality and diversity issues will be a part of the induction programme for new pupils.
- 4.3. Within its available resources, BCAT will ensure that learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate additional support to meet individual learner needs.
- 4.4. Curriculum teams will regularly review course design and delivery to meet the various learning needs and styles of learners and to improve access to learning.
- 4.5. BCAT will ensure that the views and perceptions of learners are included in the process of curriculum review and self-assessment and also curriculum development.

#### **5. Staff recruitment, training and development**

- 5.1. BCAT embraces equal opportunities and diversity in all its aspects, and aims to employ a workforce, that reflects, at every level, the community it serves by ensuring job advertisements are targeted at both mainstream and minority communities.
- 5.2. BCAT will treat all employees with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a working environment free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation. BCAT will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour against its employees, either from other employees, pupils or members of the public.
- 5.3. Through the provision of regular staff training and development to staff involved in recruitment and selection, BCAT will ensure that staff recruitment and selection procedures are open, consistently applied and free from bias, stereotyping and discrimination. Additionally, BCAT will endeavour to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to arrangements and premises to ensure both current and potential staff with disabilities have equality of access.
- 5.4. BCAT employees will have the opportunity for a performance management review and will have access to opportunities for training and development.
- 5.5. BCAT will ensure that, with regards to employment strategies, equality and diversity monitoring and analysis is carried out and informs BCAT's planning and decision-making process, whereby initiatives such as positive action will be utilised where necessary.
- 5.6. We will treat all employees and job applicants fairly in relation to all our employment policies and procedures and to meet any reasonable and appropriate additional needs they may have.

5.7. We will give employees and job applicants access to the complaint procedures if they feel unfairly treated.

## **6. Implementation**

6.1. As part of the implementation of this policy, diversity and equal opportunities awareness will be an essential part of staff induction, in-service training and ongoing development.

6.2. Responsibility for implementing the policy.

6.3. The Principal/Headteacher and Trust Board have lead responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy.

6.4. The Principal/Headteacher has responsibility for the strategic and operational development of this policy and for monitoring and regularly assessing how effectively it is being implemented across BCAT.

6.5. All employees have a responsibility to promote and adhere to the policy; therefore, BCAT has a range of additional policies to assist staff to embed the principles of diversity and equality of opportunity into all aspects of BCAT life.

## **7. To make our equality and diversity policy fully effective we will:**

7.1. Actively promote it via all BCAT's established communication links.

7.2. Ensure the Equality and Diversity Policy is a working document.

7.3. Regularly monitor and review all our job selection procedures and criteria and making changes to ensure unfair discrimination does not take place.

7.4. Take appropriate action, using agreed procedures, if employees breach this policy.

7.5. Provide training and guidance, particularly for Staff Support Services and line managers, to ensure they understand this policy and their legal responsibilities.

7.6. Monitor recruitment and employment statistics to identify under-representation.

8. In order to successfully implement this policy, equality and diversity awareness will be an essential part of staff induction, in-service training and staff ongoing professional development.