

**EQUALITY & GOOD RELATIONS (STAFF & STUDENTS)**

Process Area	Human Resources
Reference Number	HRS/001
Directorate	Client Services

Issue No	Date	Details	Author	Approved	Next Review
001	Apr 2021	Merger of HRS/025 Equality & Good Relations (Staff) and STS/011 Equality & Diversity (Students)	RS	Governing Body	Feb 2024
002	Feb 2024	Minor spelling changes and update to policy titles	RS	Governing Body	Feb 2027

If requested, the College will make the policy available in alternative formats to accommodate visual impairments. The policy can also be downloaded from the College website and made available in alternative languages upon request.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Southern Regional College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, good relations and fair participation. It is the intention of the College to ensure that equity and respect for difference are placed at the heart of the College's structures, systems and culture; and to go beyond complying with legislation by ensuring commitment to the principles and practices of equity, diversity and interdependence. Emphasis is placed on promoting equality of opportunity and not merely preventing discrimination.

Within this policy statement the College specifically refers to policies and practices it has in place to embed equality of opportunity and good relations.

Section 75 (1) states that a public authority shall in carrying out its functions have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without or any condition not justified in law or relevant to the performance of our work.

The College will seek to promote a working environment in which all persons are treated with respect where the emphasis is the prevention of occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment, selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

Section 75 (2) states that without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1), a public authority shall have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The College will continue to mainstream good relations by placing it at the heart of policy decision-making. The promotion of good relations will be central to the functions of the College and an integral part of policy development and service delivery in an organisational wide approach. This approach will include incorporating specific objectives, targets and performance measures into corporate, business, and/or operational plans.

The College in implementing the fair employment and race equality legislation, will promote a working environment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity, where no-one feels threatened or intimidated because of their religious belief, political opinion or racial group. The College will create shared space in the workplace which can help to develop respect for, and understanding of, the needs and concerns of diverse communities; laying the foundations for the development of good relations, and creating the momentum for change elsewhere in society. The College will put in place lawful affirmative or positive action measures, as necessary.

The College recognises that some individuals and groups are disadvantaged and fully supports all the relevant Orders, Acts and Statements, including those referring to community background, disabled persons, sex discrimination, equal pay, sexual orientation and race relations. The College will seek to ensure equality of opportunities and treatment for all its students in the provision of education and will not tolerate harassment or intimidation of any individual or group. The College will provide reasonable assistance, resources and support to students.

It is the intention of the College to provide a neutral and harmonious environment. All staff and students are required to comply with the College's policy of not permitting the display of

flags, emblems, posters or other similar material, the circulation of literature or the articulation of songs, the wearing of clothing, slogans or banter which may give offence or cause apprehension among particular groups of staff, students or the public.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and students of the College.

3. DEFINITIONS

Direct Discrimination	This consists of treating a person less favourably than others would be treated in the same circumstances. It should be noted that the intention or motive of the respondent to discriminate is not a necessary condition to liability.
Indirect Discrimination	This consists of applying a requirement or condition which is not relevant in the circumstances and which, even without intent, adversely affects considerably more of one group than another.
Discrimination by means of Victimisation	This consists of treating a person less favourably than others would be treated in the same circumstances because the person may have made a complaint or allegation of discrimination or acted as a witness or informant in connection with proceedings under the law or the College's Disciplinary and/or Harassment Policies.
Harassment	Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of people in the workplace or any other behaviour which affects the dignity of a person and which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
Disability	A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Good Relations	The growth of relationships and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 Governing Body and Chief Executive

The Governing Body and Chief Executive have overall responsibility for the effective communication, implementation, monitoring and reviewing of this policy on a continuing basis.

4.2 All Staff

Staff must:

- be familiar with, and comply with College policies, procedures and schemes relating to equality and good relations;
- co-operate with measures introduced to embed equality of opportunity and to prevent discrimination;
- undertake any training provided on equality and/or good relations;
- promote a working environment where all are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment is acceptable.

4.3 All Students

Students must:

- co-operate with measures introduced to ensure equal opportunities and prevent discrimination;
- not harass, abuse or intimidate fellow learners, staff or potential learners;
- carry out their duties in accordance with this policy.

4.4 Managers

Managers have responsibility for the effective communication and implementation of the policy and for ensuring that all staff and students for which they have responsibility are aware of the College policies on equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations.

4.5 Human Resources/ Student Services

Human Resources/ Student Services staff will:

- provide advice to line managers, employees and students
- ensure provision of appropriate training for managers, employees and students
- ensure consistent application of this policy.
- report to the Senior Management Team and/or Governing Body as required.

5. DISTRIBUTION

- Policy Centre, SharePoint
- SRC VLE
- SRC Website
- Employee Handbook

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Admissions Policy & Admissions Criteria
- Complaints and Compliments Policy
- Data Protection (UK GDPR) Policy
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Disability Policy - All Staff
- Disciplinary Policy – Students
- Disciplinary Procedure - Lecturing Staff
- Disciplinary Procedure - Support Staff
- DfE Circulars
- Education [Student Support] (Eligibility) Regulations (NI) 2012
- Equality Act Regulations (NI) 2006
- Equality Scheme
- Harassment Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Management and Employee Standards Policy
- Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Race Relations (NI) Order 1997
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding, Care & Welfare Policy
- SENDO (NI) 2005
- Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976
- Student Charter

7. REVIEW

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years.

8. FLOWCHART

None.