



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

**2025/26
Academic Year**

SLT Owner	Emma Brannen
Department Area	Quality & Curriculum
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Context

The diversity within our organisation reflects the communities we serve. The Sandwell Colleges' vision places it in the heart of Sandwell, Birmingham and the West Midlands. Our ambitions for learners and the empowerment of our people are central to our corporate strategic ambitions and values.

We are driven by incredible people. Our talented workforce is made up of people with a wide range of backgrounds and beliefs, encouraging everyone to bring their diverse experiences to the richness of our environment.

We are fortunate to work across communities that we are rich in cultural diversity, and our Colleges have a tangible and lasting impact upon individuals and communities

Our mission and vision is about creating a culture where our employees, learners, and wider stakeholders feel they are an integral part of the Sandwell Colleges.

Our Colleges actively support a range of religious and cultural events through the curriculum and enrichment programs. Our annual 'One World' event, for example, features diverse cultural foods, traditional dances, and local crafts. Our staff and students participated, showcasing their cultural heritage through performances and traditional attire.

We celebrate our diverse student body through an annual equality and diversity calendar, integrating events, experiences and dialogue into teaching and learning. This year's celebrations included Black History Month, Dyslexia Awareness Week, Eid-ul-Adha, Diwali, LGBT History Month, Chinese New Year, Remembrance Day, International Women's Day, and more.

We are proud to create an environment where everyone can embrace other cultures, customs and challenges, where we treat each other with professionalism, respect and kindness and where no learners are left behind and everyone can contribute, grow and thrive.

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College Values

We listen to every voice, we support and challenge, we collaborate, inspire and celebrate. We break down barriers. We never give up on our learners.

We Care:

C - Connect and collaborate

A - Ambitious

R - Respect

E - Empower

Connect and Collaborate:

Together is better. We form strong effective and thoughtful connections enabling and maximising collective impact

Ambitious:

We aim high, work hard and focus on our goals. We are aspirational, committed to releasing the maximum potential of ourselves and others.

Respect:

We take time to listen and celebrate our rich diversity. We are considerate, inclusive and we take pride in all we do. We take responsibility for our actions.

Empower:

We nurture and support, and we are determined and strong. We encourage each other to be inspiring, resilient and bold. We create opportunities for change and growth, enabling ownership, trust and lasting impact.

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College Commitment to Inclusion

The Sandwell Colleges, authenticity and a genuine commitment to inclusivity are at the core of our values. We are fully committed to the principles of **FREDIE**—Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Engagement. These values are the foundation of our culture and guide how we treat every member of our workplace.

Our key initiatives include:

- Continuous Improvement:** Our workplace culture to meet the highest standards of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). We actively the *Investors in Diversity* accreditation framework, to assess our progress with embedding *FREDIE* in every part of our organisation and build on our strong foundation of putting the necessary policies and practices in place.
- Engaging with Communities:** We are committed to deepening our engagement with the diverse communities we aim to attract. By building stronger connections with these groups, we not only support our current staff but also enhance our appeal as an inclusive employer of choice.
- Celebrating Diversity Through Events:** Our involvement in events that celebrate diversity, such as cultural fairs and workshops, demonstrates our commitment to inclusivity. A holistic approach is taken by collaborating with student-led initiatives, including our annual 'One World' event, which showcases the rich diversity of our college community.
- Enhancing Recruitment Diversity:** We aim to actively attract and recruit staff from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, and abilities. To achieve this, we will: Strengthen the College's employer brand to reflect our inclusive ethos. Develop culturally sensitive marketing campaigns that resonate with diverse audiences. Tailor our recruitment strategies to highlight our commitment to ED&I and the unique benefits we offer.
- Educating and Empowering Staff:** Ongoing education on diversity, equality, and inclusion will remain a priority. This includes tailored training for all staff, managers, and individuals to foster a deeper understanding of these critical principles in the workplace.
- Amplifying the Staff and Student Voice:** Promoting ED&I through active listening and learning to capture valuable insights and drive meaningful change across the College; working to close identified gaps. Be open to discussion for change and reflection.
- Improving Data-Driven Insights:** We will encourage staff to provide ED&I-related information to enhance our people data analysis. These insights will inform strategic decisions in areas such as CPD, retention, and recruitment, ensuring our initiatives remain impactful and inclusive.

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8. **Removing barriers:** Physical, social, digital and economic barriers to access are minimised and our environments are welcoming and supportive.
9. **Flexible Reasonable Adjustments:** implementing a College response to the Council for Disabled Children document 'Disabled students and the Equality Act 2010: What colleges need to know and do (July 2025).

The above will support our obligations to review and update our policies/procedures to ensure they align with best practices in ED&I. These initiatives and obligations, reinforce our commitment to a fair and equitable college environment and ensure The Sandwell Colleges will continue to grow as an inclusive, diverse, and equitable institution that values the contributions of all individuals.

Reflecting our duties and obligations in our curriculum - an equality of opportunity from learner recruitment, curriculum design and enrichment activities around provision we deliver.

- Alignment of the college values to learner engagement and support *in and around the curriculum offer*
- An offer that is inclusive of a person's individual needs, and we educate and advocate for those people who need to upskill to find work or who require moderate learning support to access opportunities.
- We will ensure that high-quality, impartial and relevant information, advice and guidance is available to all students of the College.
- Relevant programmes of study will be offered which are responsive to learner need and enables learners to study at the appropriate level and by increasing the breadth of our curriculum, will secure good prospects for success and progression from all entry points.
- Familiarise learners with our commitments to equality and diversity via tutorial programmes and cross-College activities.
- The provision of additional learning support will be determined based on the assessment of each learner's support requirements and will have due consideration to the application of flexible reasonable adjustments. Support to students may take the form of, but not limited to, in-class support (guided by EHCP), Mentoring, and Counselling.
- Specific support will be provided and/or barriers removed where reasonably practicable; with oversight of decisions by a SLT member before we refuse to engage in considering the adaptation of reasonable adjustments.

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Meeting our legal duty or meeting our statutory requirements.

The Sandwell Colleges will continue to meet its core statutory responsibilities. This statement meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives
- This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 advice for schools](#). This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.
- These two legal duties also support the College's statutory duty under the Children and Family Act 2014 as specified in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice for 0-25 year olds \(2015\)](#). This SEND Code of Practice relates to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabled children and young people (up to 25 years of age) and provides guidance on the statutory duties which apply to Further Education Colleges to identify, assess and provide support for young people with SEN.

The Equality Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The Sandwell Colleges does not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment, which includes incidents of hate, harassment, bullying, threatening or intimidating behaviour including, but not limited to: homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, sexual harassment, disablism, racism, islamophobia, anti-Semitism and other religious hatred.

The characteristics that are protected in relation to the public sector equality duty are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- We will ensure:

Our internal policies and procedures remain up to date, are compliant with the law and are reflective of best practices; where achievable, there are clear, well-communicated procedures in place explaining how to raise concerns or complaints. Our Equality and Diversity Policy for the 2025/2026 Academic Year is available [here](#)

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All issues will be acted upon with a focus on independence, timeliness and impartiality. Appropriate support is in place for those who raise complaints.

We will report our gender pay gap on an annual basis and will act to address disparities.

We will comply with the public sector equality duty which requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out in the Equality Act to:

- eliminate discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

We commit to:

- report on this duty and review our objectives to the Board on an annual basis in our yearly Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report
- promote equality in recruiting, employing and encouraging members of staff
- promote equality when recruiting our students and communicating with all our stakeholders
- promote equality when we procure goods and services

Objectives

- To develop and review new approaches to staff and student recruitment to ensure any barriers to individual progression are removed.
- To ensure attainment gaps for all 'protected groups' are minimised.
- To continue to ensure Equality Diversity, Inclusion and British Values are fully and explicitly embedded within the culture of The Sandwell Colleges. To ensure that appropriate strategies, processes, publications, and professional development activities are in place so that all employees are able to promote a positive ethos of Equality, Diversity and Inclusive practice.

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Representation of people with different protected characteristics from our students and employees

Ethnicity

The 2021 Census shows that Sandwell's population is about 57.2% White, with the remaining 42.8% from ethnically diverse groups.

Of that diversity in Sandwell, 25.8% identify as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh, 8.7% as Black, Black British, Caribbean or African, 4.3% as Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups, and 4.0% as "Other" ethnic groups.

In Birmingham, the 2021 Census indicates that 48.6% of residents identify as White, while 51.4% are from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Within that diversity in Birmingham, 31.0% are Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh; about 11.0% are Black, Black British, Caribbean or African; 4.8% are Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups; and 4.5% are in the other ethnic groups category.

Learners who identify as being from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds account for 74% of our student population

The Sandwell Colleges employees identify themselves as: 52.5% White and 37.24% Ethnically Diverse, leaving 10.26% of employees who have not identified their ethnicity.

Our managers identify as: 64.71% White British, and 33.37% as Ethnically Diverse, leaving 1.92% of our L&M team who have decided not to provide us with this information.

Gender

In Sandwell, males make up about 49.2% of the population and females 50.8%

In Birmingham, males account for 49.2% and females 50.8% of the population

Our learner population is 51% female amongst 16-18-year olds, rising to 66% for those aged 19+

In line with the sector, the college's workforce is predominantly female. Females made up 67.48% of the workforce at the Sandwell Colleges. In the UK, the FE workforce is predominantly female, with women comprising 65.2% of the workforce in 2022/23. This trend is consistent across all role types, particularly in administrative and support positions. Among teaching staff, 59.6% are female (FE Workforce, 2022/23). The proportion of female staff was highest amongst teaching support staff representing 80.95%.

Please also see our Gender Pay Gap Report [here](#).

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Disability

In Sandwell, the data from the 2021 Census shows that 20.0% of residents are disabled under the Equality Act; this is down from 24.4% in 2011.

In Birmingham, the 2021 Census shows 19.9% of residents are disabled under the Equality Act, compared to 23.4% in 2011.

In Sandwell, a Healthwatch report notes that 17.4 % of pupils are recorded as having a statutory SEND plan (EHCP) or receiving SEN support.

In Birmingham, the SEND self-evaluation and recent statistics report that 14.3 % of pupils receive SEN Support (i.e. SEND without an EHCP) in the school census data

c21% of students declare they had a learning disability/disability

In 2022/23, 7.3% of the FE workforce reported having a disability, up from 6.5% in 2021/22. Support staff reported a higher incidence of disability (8.9%) compared to leadership roles(4.5%). Of our staff, 5.64% disclosed whether they had a disability; of these, the majority of staff having made a positive disclosure have specified a 'physical Impairment.

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