



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

1 Introduction

The college actively promotes and celebrates the cultural diversity of the college community.

In order to promote this positive culture, the college aims to:

1. **Promote equality** – treat each member of the college community fairly and appropriately, according to their individual needs
2. **Celebrate diversity** – recognise, value and celebrate differences
3. **Enable inclusion** – remove barriers and ensure equal access to facilities and opportunities
4. **Raise awareness** - create a culture in which unfair discrimination is challenged, prejudice is reduced and understanding between different groups of people is increased

2 Policy statement

King Edward VI College is committed to creating and promoting an inclusive learning community in which diversity is celebrated, where inequality and stereotypes are challenged and where all people are treated with dignity and respect. This involves the conscious efforts of all members of this community: staff, students, and governors. Advancing equality of opportunity is at the core of the college mission statement and its ethos permeates the college values.

The college is also committed to fulfilling its obligations under Equality and Diversity legislation and mindful that the Equality Act 2010 requires us to have due regard of the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This commitment covers the nine protected areas of the Equality Act 2010:

1. Race
2. Disability
3. Sex
4. Gender reassignment
5. Age
6. Sexual orientation
7. Religion/belief
8. Pregnancy/maternity
9. Marriage/civil partnerships

The College commitment to equality extends to other areas, including socio-economic disadvantage, student carers and looked-after learners.

3 Roles and responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities are aimed at ensuring that all members of the college community adhere to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy:

1. The **Heart of Mercia Trust Board** has overall responsibility for ensuring the college meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010;
2. The **Senior Leadership Team** will take an active and visible lead in all matters pertaining to equality, diversity and inclusion;
3. The **Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality)** has overall responsibility for equality and diversity issues and will report annually to the LGB on progress made towards the college's statutory equality objectives;
4. The **link governor** for EDI, will also make verbal reports to the LGB to provide assurances that the College's operational procedures are in-line with statutory equality objectives;
5. The **EDI Lead**, will drive the college's aims of EDI through support, training and organising events. The Lead will also consult regularly with representatives from staff and student groups and make strategic recommendations to the **senior leadership team**.
6. All **staff and students** will abide by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. All **staff and students** are encouraged and will be supported in reporting any instances or suspicions of discrimination or harassment; the **Principal** will ensure all allegations are fully investigated with due regard to confidentiality.
7. **Training** will be provided to raise awareness of national, local and college specific EDI issues, and their impact on staff and students.

4 Monitoring of equality information

The college will monitor the following data and work actively to reduce identified gaps to ensure effective implementation of the policy:

1. Student data relating to achievement, retention, recruitment and satisfaction
2. Staff data relating to recruitment and satisfaction

This information is monitored regularly by the senior leadership team and informs quality improvement planning with the aim of reducing attainment and awarding gaps.

5 Examinations

- 5.1 King Edward VI College delivers qualifications, as required by the awarding body, in accordance with relevant equality legislation. This includes but is not limited to ensuring that qualifications are made available to all candidates capable of undertaking them and seeking reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities.
- 5.2 The head of centre/senior leadership team recognises its duties towards candidates with disabilities, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010, particularly Section 20 (7). This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to candidates with disabilities. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre must not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.

6 Links with other college policies

EDI permeates all college activities and this policy specifically is closely aligned to the following policies:

1. Learning Support
2. Bullying and harassment (staff and students)
3. Complaints and concerns
4. Staff Wellbeing and Work life Balance
5. Health & safety
6. Financial support for students
7. Recruitment of staff (support and teaching)
8. Student code of conduct
9. Student Attendance
10. Student Behaviour
11. Staff code of conduct
12. Trips & Visits
13. Child protection - safeguarding

Specific guidance for the wearing of a Kirpan can be found in annex 1 of this policy.

Equality objectives are published on the College website. These objectives provide further information about the steps the college is taking to promote EDI.

For further information about EDI legislation and the Equality Act 2010, please refer to the Equality and Human Rights Commission website: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>

7 Equality Impact

The College's equality, diversity and inclusion policy has been taken into account when considering this policy.

Date of review	Date agreed	JCC	Governors	Review date	Comments
April 2024	September 2024	20/05/2024	LGB 12 June 2024 LGB 18 Sept 2024	April 2025	

Annex 1: Guidelines for the authorisation of wearing a Kirpan

Introduction

The College respects the rights of those that are observers of Khalsa Sikhism and those who observe the Sikh religion to wear a kirpan as a part of their religious beliefs. The purpose of this guidance is to provide an appropriate structure for authorising the safe wearing of the kirpan on college grounds and monitoring compliance with the guidelines.

This guidance applies to all members of the college community.

Background

Guru Gobind Singh, the founder of the Khalsa (community of Sikhs), instructed its members to wear five special signs to show that they were Sikhs. Known as the five Ks these signs are:

- Kesh (uncut hair) - a symbol of spiritual strength and power and an acceptance of 'good will',
- Kangha (comb) - a symbol of cleanliness and of a well-ordered life.
- Kara (steel wristband) - a symbol of strength, unity, equality and justice and is worn by any child of a Sikh family.
- Kaccha (short trousers or underpants) - a symbol of high moral character, modesty and sexual morality
- Kirpan (sword) - a symbol of respect, justice and authority; it is a reminder that Sikhs are warriors. However, the Kirpan is never used for offensive purposes.
- Some Sikhs regard the Keski (Turban) as being one of Ks.

It is not generally considered appropriate to wear a Kirpan without wearing the other four Ks. All members of the college community need to be aware of the significance and importance of these signs of an initiated Sikh.

Guidelines:

1. There should be no objection to the practice of wearing the five Ks on College grounds.
2. It is the responsibility of staff to have read and understood these guidelines.
3. A letter from parents or religious leaders should be submitted to authorise the wearing of the Kirpan by confirming that a young person has been through the Amrit ceremony of initiation and is therefore expected to wear the five Ks at all times.
4. In relation to health and safety, the Kirpan should:
 - a. not be more than 15cm in length including the blade and handle
 - b. not have a blade of more than 7.5cm in length
 - c. always be sheathed and worn out of sight.
 - d. Should be sufficiently secured to render removal difficult, but not impossible
5. Anyone found wearing a Kirpan without the other four Ks, should expect to have it removed from their possession.
6. Modifications to a student's programme may be necessary, depending on the nature of the programme, where wearing the kirpan could inadvertently cause physical harm to the wearer or another individual during program activities or off campus college authorised activities.
7. The right to wear the Kirpan may be suspended if the guidelines are broken. Failure to comply with the guidelines will be dealt with through the Student Behaviour policy or Staff Code of Conduct as appropriate.

The College reserves the right to periodically, in a private and sensitive manner, seek to verify that the limitations with regard to size, concealment and security of the Kirpan are being adhered to.