



NTC EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Purpose

Nazarene Theological College (NTC) aspires to be a learning community reflecting the love of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. NTC intentionally fosters character formation within contexts that are both practical and reflective. NTC has a firm commitment to equality and diversity and will not tolerate unfair discrimination or harassment of one member of its community by another or others.

The purpose of this Policy is to promote the development of a working and learning environment in which inequality and discrimination against diversity are known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to complain about unacceptable inequality and discrimination against diversity, should they arise, in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with appropriately and fairly. The Policy outlines procedures to be followed if anyone feels they are being unfairly treated or discriminated against during their time at NTC.

The College recognises the value of equal opportunities and seeks, wherever possible, to follow the guidelines drawn up by the relevant statutory body.

Approach

The College will take all reasonable steps to provide an environment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity and that is free of harassment based upon race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, marital or civil partnership status or disability. The College will not condone any form of harassment, whether engaged in by employees/students/volunteers or by outside third parties who do business with the College.

Employees/students/volunteers have a duty to co-operate with the College to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under the appropriate College disciplinary procedures against anyone, or any group, either employee/student/volunteer who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this Equality and Diversity Policy will be treated as gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal or the student/volunteer being removed from the College. Employees/students/volunteers should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination, and those who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

Employees/students/volunteers must not victimise or retaliate against the person who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as gross misconduct in accordance with the College's disciplinary procedure.

Informal approach to dealing with allegations of inequality

It is hoped that cases of alleged unfair discrimination will be resolved, and reconciliation enabled quickly. However, NTC will not tolerate unfair discrimination or harassment of one member of its community by another or others and a record of an incident with dates should be kept as soon as possible after the incident by the students concerned and by any confidante.

With cases of harassment, while the College encourages employees/students/volunteers who believe they are being harassed to notify the offender (by words or by conduct) that his or her behaviour is unwelcome. The College recognises that actual or

perceived power and status disparities may make such discussion impractical. If no success is achieved through direct communication, or if that was impossible, an employee/student/volunteer may wish to talk to someone in order to obtain another perspective on the situation and to ensure that someone else knows about it and can take supportive action with them to ensure that it stops.

Once the facts about the incident and the context of the action or behaviour that caused concern are established, there are a number of informal options available to the advisor to facilitate resolution of the matter. For example, the person who has experienced unfair discrimination could be encouraged to talk to the alleged discriminator on his/her own or with a friend, who should be a member of NTC, accompanying him/her. The purpose of the conversation would be to make the perpetrator aware of the way their behaviour has been perceived and ask them not to repeat it. Alternatively, the advisor could facilitate a meeting between both parties to give the complainant the opportunity to talk to the alleged harasser and explain their view of the offending behaviour. Normally, the advisor should not take action following an informal approach concerning unfair discrimination without the agreement of the individual concerned.

As well as aiming to resolve matters informally, advisors should consider appropriate action to facilitate the restoration of working relationships after the event.

The action outlined above will be appropriate in many cases and will often be sufficient to resolve the matter. If, however, this does not result in a satisfactory resolution to the matter, an employee/student/volunteer may wish to enter a formal complaint.

Formal approach to dealing with allegations of inequality or discrimination

Students

Formal action may be considered where informal action proves ineffective, or where a student feels that an informal approach is not appropriate. A formal complaint must be registered in writing by completing the form in Appendix 1, as soon as possible after the incident concerned. It is, however, recognised that complaints of this nature may relate to cumulative actions taking place over a period of time.

A formal complaint of discrimination should include the nature of the complaint, with reference to dates, times and places (where possible) in relation to a specific incident(s). The names of any witness(es) to the incident(s) should also be included.

If a student's complaint concerns perceived discrimination on the part of a member or members of NTC staff or faculty member, or on the part of another NTC student or students, the formal complaint should be addressed to the Vice Principal (Operations) (who may take the matter to the Senior Leadership Team).

The Vice Principal (Operations) will acknowledge receipt of the Allegation of Discrimination form within five (5) working days and will start the process to appoint an External to lead the complaint. The Vice Principal (Operations) will inform the student once an appointment has been made.

The person dealing with the formal complaint (hereafter referred to as the "Investigator" will undertake an investigation into the substance of the complaint using whatever means they feel appropriate. If a meeting with the student takes place, the student may be accompanied by a fellow student, a Students' Union officer or a member of staff. The Investigator will attempt resolution of the complaint by a means appropriate to its nature and circumstances. Such means may include

- (a) Correspondence between the parties;
- (b) Negotiation between the parties;
- (c) Facilitation of a conciliation meeting between the parties;
- (d) If both parties agree, referral for mediation.

It is expected that the formal procedure should normally be completed by the Investigator and a written report submitted to the Principal within fifteen (15) working days of the appointment as Investigator. Where, for reasons of complexity or for other good reason, it is not possible to complete the formal procedure within this time scale the parties will be kept informed.

On receipt of the Investigator's report, the Principal will have five (5) working days to provide a written response to the student. The possible outcomes may include:

- (a) specific action to resolve the matter – this could be mediation, training, mentoring or disciplinary sanctions. This is not an exhaustive list;
- (b) dismissal of the complaint as being without foundation, with reasons given to the student in writing;
- (c) the Principal will also consider whether further action should be taken under the College's 'Conduct and Discipline of Students Policy' or the Conduct and Disciplinary procedure for faculty/staff and whether or not the police should be informed. Please refer to the relevant policy or procedure to see the range of possible outcomes.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint and believes that their complaint has not been handled properly or fairly according to these procedures, or if the student has new evidence which they were unable (for credible and compelling reasons) to provide with the formal complaint, the student may appeal the decision. The student must appeal by writing to the Chair of Governors, c/o Nazarene Theological College within ten (10) days of receipt of the formal response.

The appeal should include details of why the student remains dissatisfied and what resolution the student is seeking, and should include copies of correspondence exchanged during the preceding stages and any other relevant evidence.

Following the review of the appeal by the Chair of Governors, the student will be informed of the decision and the reasons for it, in writing. The Chair of Governor's decision will be final.

Formal complaints about the Vice Principal (Operations), Vice Principal (Academics) and Learning & Teaching Lead should be referred to the Principal.

Formal complaints about the Principal should be referred to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

Employees/volunteers

Employees wishing to make a complaint of discrimination or harassment should follow the Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work procedure set out in the Employee Handbook.

Alternatively, they may wish to use the College's grievance procedure to make a complaint.

Volunteers wishing to make a complaint of discrimination or harassment should complete the Allegation of Discrimination Form (see Appendix 1)

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Lead contact:	Vice Principal (Operations)

APPENDIX 1

Allegation of Discrimination Form

Your full name	
Student ID number or state that you are a Volunteer	
Date	
Please contact me via (either put phone number or email address)	
Date of incident	
Location of incident	
Brief summary of incident including persons involved (and witnesses, if any)	

Please email completed form to either the Vice Principal (Operations) (pmckendrick@nazarene.ac.uk) or the Vice Principal (Academics) (jlett@nazarene.ac.uk)