

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Executive Summary

At Bird College, we recognise that excellence in dance and musical theatre education can be achieved with a foundational commitment to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Our EDI policy and statement serve as the cornerstone of this commitment, outlining our collective responsibility to foster an environment where every individual—regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, socioeconomic status, or any other characteristic—is valued, respected and provided with equal opportunities to thrive. This statement encompasses all aspects of our college life, from admissions and recruitment to curriculum development, campus culture and community engagement. By setting forth an EDI statement, we adhere to standards and embrace our role in shaping a more inclusive and equitable future for the performing arts industry.

The key components of our EDI statement are designed to address systemic barriers to inclusion and the day-to-day experiences of our college community. Our objectives include implementing transparent and equitable recruitment and admissions processes, developing a curriculum that reflects the diversity of human experiences and creating a campus environment where every member feels a sense of belonging and empowerment. Furthermore, we commit to providing ongoing training and development opportunities for our staff and students, ensuring that our community can contribute to and benefit from a diverse and inclusive learning environment. Through regular monitoring, evaluation and engagement with our community, we aim to continually improve our approach, ensuring that Bird College meets and exceeds the standards of equity and inclusion in education.

Vision and Mission

Bird College aspires to be at the forefront of fostering a diverse, inclusive and equitable community within the arts education sector. Our vision is to create a space where diversity is recognised and celebrated as the foundation of creativity, innovation and excellence.

We envision a college where everyone, regardless of background or identity, is empowered to explore and express their artistic talents in a supportive and enriching environment. This vision reflects our belief in the transformative power of the arts to challenge perceptions, bridge cultural divides, and catalyse social change. By integrating equality, diversity and inclusion into the DNA of our practices, Bird College aims to lead by example, shaping the

future of performing arts education and the wider cultural landscape to be more reflective of the world's rich human experiences.

Our mission, grounded in this vision, is to endorse definite change within our community and the broader arts education sector. Bird College commits to implementing comprehensive strategies to eliminate barriers to access, participation and success. This involves ensuring equitable admissions processes, fostering a curriculum that respects and reflects global cultures and perspectives, and creating a campus culture where every voice is heard and every story is valued. We aim to equip our students and staff with the knowledge, skills and sensitivities to act as champions of diversity and inclusion within the arts and their wider communities.

To realise our vision, we are committed to implementing a multidimensional approach through specific actions and initiatives that address the core aspects of our mission:

- **We will continue to develop partnerships with diverse communities and organisations.** Bird College seeks to partner with various organisations, including local arts groups, cultural institutions and social justice organisations. These partnerships will facilitate cross-cultural dialogues, joint projects and community outreach programs that enrich our curriculum and provide our students with real-world experiences in diversity and inclusion. Through these collaborations, we also seek to create pathways for diverse talents to access the resources and opportunities available at our college, thus ensuring a more diverse student and staff body.
- **We actively work to identify and remove other barriers to access and success.** We will establish a mentorship program and continue providing extensive academic support and career guidance tailored to these students' needs.
- **We continuously train our faculty members and staff on issues of equity and inclusion.** Commitment to EDI is an ongoing process that requires commitment and adaptability as social understandings and challenges evolve. Recognising this dynamic, Bird College institutes regular, training sessions for all faculty and staff, covering a wide range of topics such as unconscious bias, generic EDI topics, race and bias and inclusive teaching methods. These training programs ensure they reflect the latest research and best practices in the field.
- **We are actively seeking out and strengthening marginalised voices within the performing arts.** Bird College is dedicated to creating a platform where marginalised voices are heard but celebrated. This commitment will manifest in various aspects of our operations, from curriculum development to performance programming and community engagement. We will organise events and workshops that spotlight works by artists from historically marginalised groups, challenging conventional narratives and showcasing the rich diversity of human experience. Additionally, the college encourage and support students and staff in initiating projects that explore themes of social justice, equity and inclusion, providing them with the resources and platforms necessary to bring their visions to life.

Core Principles and Values

Equality

At Bird College, our commitment to equality means actively working to ensure that every community member has access to the same opportunities, resources and rights. This involves identifying and dismantling systemic barriers that may set back participation and success for individuals from various backgrounds. Through policies, practices, and initiatives designed to promote fair treatment, we aim to create an environment where everyone's starting point, regardless of their identity, is on equal footing. *Equality in our context is about levelling the playing field so that each student and staff member can pursue excellence without disadvantage.*

Equity

Equity goes a step beyond equality by acknowledging that different people have different needs and circumstances and, thus, may require different types of support to achieve fairness in outcomes. *At Bird College, equity means tailoring our resources, support and opportunities to meet the specific needs of our community members.* This includes providing additional support for students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds, offering flexible working arrangements for staff with caregiving responsibilities and ensuring campus facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. Our goal is to recognise and address the unique challenges faced by individuals so that we can empower everyone to reach their full potential.

Diversity

Valuing and celebrating diversity are intrinsic to the ethos of Bird College. We understand that a rich combination of backgrounds, perspectives and talents strengthens our community, enriches creativity and adopts a more dynamic learning environment. *Diversity in our college is not just about numbers but about ensuring all voices are heard, respected and included.* Through recruitment practices and community engagement, we strive to reflect and honour the diversity of the wider world within our college. *Celebrating diversity at Bird College means creating spaces where differences are seen as a source of communal strength and inspiration.*

Inclusion

Inclusion at Bird College is about creating a culture where everyone feels valued, respected and integral to the college community regardless of their background or identity. It's about nurturing an environment where diversity is present and actively engaged, contributing to a sense of belonging for all members. *To us, inclusion means ensuring that all students and staff can participate fully in the academic and social life of the college, with their identities and experiences recognised and valued.* This involves fostering respectful interactions, promoting understanding across differences, ensuring that decision-making processes are transparent, and involving input from diverse groups within the college. *We aim for every member of Bird College to feel that they are a vital part of our collective journey towards excellence in the arts.*

Governance and Leadership

To effectively embed EDI within Bird College's governance and leadership, we established clear structures and roles dedicated to EDI leadership. We ensured that EDI considerations are considered in decision-making processes and college governance.

Structures and Roles for EDI Initiatives within the College

Our EDI Committee is the central body overseeing and guiding the college's EDI strategy. This committee includes:

- Chairperson: senior leader in the college who demonstrates the institution's commitment to EDI at the highest level.
- Faculty Representatives: from each department, who ensure that EDI considerations are integrated across all areas of academic life.
- Student Representatives: including members of student unions and societies, who voice student concerns and suggestions related to EDI.
- HR Representative: who aligns EDI efforts with employment practices and staff development.
- External Community Advisors are people from local community groups and/or organisations specialised in EDI who provide outside perspectives and expertise.
- EDI Officer: Dr Serap Keles reports directly to the college's senior leadership to ensure EDI is prioritised at the executive level. She coordinates with the EDI Committee and various departments to implement EDI initiatives and serves as the primary contact for EDI-related inquiries and concerns from both within and outside the college.
- EDI Champions among staff and EDI Ambassadors from students who are passionate about EDI and wish to contribute to creating a more inclusive campus.

Integration of EDI Considerations in Decision-Making Processes and College Governance

To ensure that EDI considerations are integral to the college's decision-making processes, Bird College implements an EDI policy requiring that all new policies, programs and initiatives undergo an EDI impact assessment. This assessment will measure the potential effects of decisions on different groups within the college community and confirm that any adverse impacts are addressed before implementation.

The college's governance bodies, including the Board of Trustees and the Senior Management Team, include EDI objectives as a standard agenda item in their meetings, ensuring continuous focus on progress and challenges in achieving EDI goals. Regular training on EDI issues will also be provided to these bodies, enhancing their understanding and commitment to EDI principles.

Furthermore, the college will establish transparent mechanisms for the college community to provide input on EDI matters. This could include regular forums, surveys, and suggestion boxes that allow students and staff to voice concerns, offer suggestions, and participate actively in the college's EDI efforts. By embedding EDI into its governance structures and

leadership roles, Bird College commits to creating a culture that values EDI and actively works to realise these principles in every aspect of college life.

Strategic Areas

Recruitment and Admissions

At Bird College we effectively attract and support a diverse student body and staff, particularly focusing on outreach and engagement with underrepresented groups. The college implements comprehensive and strategic approaches in recruitment and admissions practices. These strategies aim to diversify the campus community and to ensure equity and inclusion at every step of the recruitment and admissions process.

Strategies for Attracting and Supporting a Diverse Student Body and Staff

- Bird college develops targeted outreach programs aimed at underrepresented groups by collaborating with schools, community organisations and educational foundations that serve these populations. Such programs include college awareness workshops, talent search programs and campus visit opportunities tailored to introduce Bird College to prospective students and staff from diverse backgrounds.
- The college ensures that all recruitment materials reflect the diversity of the college community and the inclusive nature of the institution, which includes promotional videos, brochures and the college website. The messaging emphasises Bird College's commitment to EDI and the support systems available for students from diverse backgrounds.
- For staff recruitment, Bird College seeks partnerships with job boards and recruitment platforms that focus on diversity in higher education and performing arts to reach a wider pool of candidates and to showcase the college's commitment to building an inclusive workforce.

Development of an Inclusive Curriculum

Bird College is committed to creating an educational experience that reflects and respects the richness of human culture, identity and perspective. Our curriculum is designed to broaden horizons, challenge preconceptions and encourage critical thinking about the world and the diverse societies within it. To achieve this, we:

- Incorporate diverse perspectives by integrating texts, case studies and artistic works from a wide range of cultures, ethnicities and viewpoints across all courses. This includes historical contributions and contemporary works that reflect current social issues and diverse voices.
- Foster an interdisciplinary approach to learning, where students can appreciate how different disciplines intersect and impact various cultures and societies. This help students understand the complexity of issues such as race, gender and socioeconomic status.
- Embed global awareness and international perspectives into the curriculum, preparing students to think and act as informed global citizens. This includes

opportunities for exchange programs, collaborations with international artists and scholars and projects that address global challenges.

- Encourage projects and coursework that involve engagement with local communities, allowing students to apply their learning in real-world contexts, gain diverse perspectives and contribute positively to society.

Campus Culture and Community Engagement

Bird College's commitment to EDI extends into our culture and community engagement. We believe that a vibrant college life, enriched by diverse cultures, perspectives and experiences, plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging among all members of our community. To this end, our EDI policy outlines specific initiatives designed to celebrate diversity and promote inclusive community engagement.

- **Programs and Events that Celebrate Diversity:** Bird College is dedicated to hosting a wide array of programs and events that celebrate the diverse backgrounds of our community. This includes cultural festivals, art exhibitions, speaker series and performances that highlight the traditions, arts and narratives of different cultures and communities. By showcasing the fullness of human experience, these events aim to educate and inspire appreciation and respect for the multitude of identities and experiences that make up our society.
- In addition to annual celebrations of global cultural events, we also spotlight underrepresented cultures and histories that are often overlooked, providing a platform for voices and stories that are rarely heard. These events are developed in collaboration with student groups and external community organisations, ensuring authenticity and fostering deeper community ties.
- **Promoting a Sense of Belonging:** Creating an environment where every individual feels a sense of belonging is our top priority. To achieve this, Bird College will implement mentorship and buddy programs that connect students from diverse backgrounds, facilitating mutual support and understanding among students of different cultures, religions, and life experiences. These programs not only help new students navigate the challenges of college life but also build lasting relationships that enrich the college community.

Furthermore, Bird College is committed to supporting student-led initiatives and societies that represent and celebrate diversity. Financial and logistical support for these groups will be prioritized, empowering students to take an active role in shaping campus culture. This includes support for events, discussions, workshops, and other activities that foster an inclusive environment.

Community Engagement

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion extends beyond the boundaries of our college. Bird College actively engage with the local and broader community through outreach programs, community service and partnerships with local schools, charities and non-profit organisations. These initiatives aim to make a positive impact on our surrounding community while providing our students and staff with opportunities to learn from and contribute to a diverse range of communities.

Training and Development

Integrating the concepts of mandatory EDI training and ongoing professional development opportunities into Bird College's EDI Statement adds another layer of commitment to creating a truly inclusive community. We will elaborate these initiatives within the strategy framework by;

- **Enhancing EDI education and professional development.** Bird College is committed to fostering an environment where every member of the college community is equipped with the knowledge and skills to contribute positively to our inclusive culture. To achieve this, we are introducing comprehensive EDI education initiatives and professional development opportunities.
- **EDI training for all college members.** We will implement further EDI training initiatives for all students, faculty and staff as part of their orientation and onboarding process. This training will cover key concepts of equality, diversity and inclusion, our policy, strategy, action plan and their implications and practical guidance on creating an inclusive environment for all.
- **Annual Refreshers.** To ensure that EDI principles remain at the forefront of our community's actions and decision-making, annual refresher training will be put in place for all members of the college community. These sessions will include updates on legislation, policy changes and evolving best practices in EDI.
- To complement our internal expertise, **we will invite external experts in EDI to share their knowledge and experiences**, providing fresh perspectives and innovative approaches to inclusion.
- **Recognition and Reward System** through achievements and contributions to enhancing EDI within the college community will be recognized and rewarded. This includes integrating EDI contributions into the criteria for staff and faculty performance evaluations and advancement opportunities.

Feedback Mechanisms

We will establish robust mechanisms for collecting feedback on the effectiveness of our EDI training and professional development initiatives. This feedback will be instrumental in continuously refining and improving our programs.

Impact Assessment

The impact of EDI training and ongoing development opportunities on the college's culture and practices will be regularly assessed. We are committed to making data-driven adjustments to ensure these initiatives meet the evolving needs of our community.

Conclusion

In crafting our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) statement, Bird College embraces a fundamental truth: ***excellence in dance and musical theatre education can only be achieved through a loyal commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment.*** Our EDI policy, strategy and action plan serve as a guiding light for our college and a testament to our

collective dedication to ensuring every individual—regardless of their background or identity—feels valued, respected and empowered to thrive within our community.

By outlining clear objectives and strategies across recruitment, curriculum development, campus culture, community engagement and training, Bird College is laying the groundwork for meaningful change. We are actively dismantling systemic barriers and biases, celebrating diversity in all its forms and creating pathways for every member of our community to contribute to and benefit from a truly inclusive learning environment.

As we board on this journey, we recognise that our work is ongoing. We are committed to regular evaluation, reflection and adaptation, ensuring that our EDI initiatives remain responsive to the evolving needs of our community. By fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability and continuous improvement, Bird College is poised to lead by example, inspiring positive change within our college and beyond. Together, we will strive towards a future where every individual is welcomed and celebrated for their unique contributions to our collective tapestry of creativity and excellence.