



Equality and Diversity Policy

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Author Initials	RC
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(This policy supersedes all previous Equality and Diversity policies)

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Amendments

Policy Date	New Version Number	Summary of change	Comments
08/10/2020	V1.1	Inclusion of equalities in relation to pupils	
October 2021	V1.2	No Change	
October 2022	V1.3	No Change	
January 2024	V1.4	No Change	
February 2025	V1.5	No Change	

Union Consultation

Date	Action (meeting, email etc)	Comments	Attendance
10/07/17	Meeting with Union Reps		UNISON, GMB, NASUWT, ATL, NUT

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We recognise that every person has the right to be treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, disability, age, culture, religion; nationality or caring responsibilities. Where necessary we will implement reasonable adjustments, or additional support, to ensure equality of access to an education and suitable working environment.
- 1.2 Our staff, Trustees and governors will recognise the importance of diversity and demonstrate a proactive approach in their day-to-day work. They will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, recognising special needs and understanding differences. Behaviour will reach our high standards of conduct (staff and students) and the learning environment we provide will be safe and accessible for all children, young people and adults who study or work within the Trust.
- 1.3 The Trust will adhere to statutory Government legislation and give consideration to other relevant guidance, which aim to make sure that everyone is treated with equity. We will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behavior against members of the Trust community Education South West believes that our success is a direct result of the experience and quality of our employees. We are therefore, committed to focusing our employment procedures and practices on maximising the potential of each unique individual. We believe this is best achieved by developing our employee's talents, whilst recognising their differences. By treating people fairly and equally and by accepting and embracing their diversity, we can also improve our competitiveness, foster innovation, enhance our corporate social responsibility and create an inclusive and positive working environment for all employees.

It is the policy of the Trust that no person acting on our behalf shall discriminate in any situation against another individual or group, directly, indirectly, because of age, sex, disability, gender re- assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

The Trust also endorses the principle that the workforce at each location should reflect, as far as is reasonably possible, the community within which it operates.

These principles apply to recruitment selection, training, promotion, transfer, pay and benefits, permanence appraisal procedures, in addition to all terms and condition of employment.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all Trust employees, regardless of position or status, and to contractors and subcontractors.
- 2.2 The policy has been implemented following consultation with staff and recognised trade unions. It has been formally adopted by the Trust.
- 2.3 This policy is contractual and forms part of any employee's contract of employment but does not affect terms and conditions of employment of those staff who TUPE transferred on January 2017.

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3. Aim

- To ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and community
- To offer fair treatment in every aspect of working life in the Trust, from our written procedures through to every decision made.
- To promote a culture where each employee is treated with respect and dignity and recognises the value that a diverse workforce can bring.

4. To achieve these aims, the Trust commits to the following:

- Ensure that the principles of this Policy are embedded in HR strategy and all policies and procedures are regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Provide awareness training and guidance to all employees and managers to ensure the Trusts commitment to diversity is known and understood.
- Monitor and measure diversity at every state of employment to remove any direct, indirect, associative and perceptive discrimination
- Challenge and investigate discriminatory behaviour and enforce the disciplinary procedure, when this is considered necessary.
- Communicate and regularly review the positive initiatives that have been implements and ensure ever-wider access to them.
- Support the communities in which we live and work to ensure that we are involved, accessible and socially responsible.
- Work with external groups and advisory bodies to keep up to date with market practice and how issues are dealt with.

5. Recruitment

- 5.1 The Trust's recruitment and selection procedure is based solely on the necessary and justifiable job requirements and the individual's suitability.
- 5.2 Job description and person specifications are drawn up for every post to be filled. Where posts are advertised externally, consideration is given to the most appropriate outlets to ensure that a wide range of potentially suitable applicants have the opportunity to apply.
- 5.3 Selection methods, including interviews, are conducted in accordance with documented and standardised procedures and checklists, designed to ensure that discrimination forms no part of the recruitment process. The objective is to make each appointment on the grounds of selecting the most suitable candidate for the post.

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6. Training and Development

- 6.1 Through its performance management procedure, the Trust ensures that all staff are given an opportunity to take part in both job specific training and have an individual Performance Plan designed to promote their opportunities and career advancement within the Trust. The appraisal process is carried out in accordance with clear and laid down criteria to ensure that its application is free from discrimination at every stage.

7. Selection Processes for Promotion

- 7.1 Whenever undertaking processes to select between groups of staff, for instance for promotion or in redundancy situations, the Trust undertakes to ensure that a fair and consistent procedure is applied and that the selection criteria applied are free of discrimination and based on objective assessments of competence. Promotion opportunities are available to all of our employees on an equal basis.

8. Flexible Working

- 8.1 The Trust recognises the benefits of flexibility in working arrangements. Furthermore, we recognise the rights of all employees working under such arrangements to be treated fairly and consistently in comparison to full time, permanent employees and to be given the same opportunities for development. The treatment of pay and benefits for employees on flexible working arrangements is consistent with full time entitlements, where possible, these are provided on a pro rata basis.

9. Diversity and Particular Requirements

- 9.1 When a disabled person or anyone with particular requirements applies for a job the Trust, we always consider application based on relevant skills, experience and knowledge. If you are disabled or have particular requirements, the Trust will do its best to adapt the job and the workplace to meet the needs of individuals.

10. Pay Awards

- 10.1 The Trust's arrangements for determining employees' salaries are based on the principle of providing equality of pay and reward for all employees.
- 10.2 We operate a variety of pay review mechanisms, some of which incorporate union involvement and/or participation of staff consultative forums, these arrangements are designed to ensure that the pay awards are based on objective criteria, free from discrimination and have due regard to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

11. Grievance and Harassment

- 11.1 While it is hoped and intended that most problems relating to employment within the Trust can be resolved on an informal basis, the Grievance Procedure exists so that caused of genuine concern can be dealt with equitably.

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- 11.2 Any employee who believes he/she has been discriminated against should raise the matter under the Grievance Procedure, or where appropriate or by using the Open Door Policy (where any employee can discuss any matter with their Manager/Headteacher/ or another manager or Executive Principal, in complete confidence).
- 11.3 By having clear and well-publicised grievance procedures in place, the Trust ensures that every opportunity is given to address any area or situation where discrimination is perceived to have arisen.

12. Disciplinary Procedure

- 12.1 The Trust takes a serious view of any and all discrimination and breaches of this Policy are deemed as misconduct. Any such actions will be investigated as possible disciplinary offences and dealt with in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary procedures. All staff have a shared responsibility to ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy is adhered to and to promote dignity and equality of opportunity and outcome at work.

13. Responsibilities

- 13.1 Whilst we all have a collective responsibility to ensure this Policy is successfully adopted, there are specific responsibilities with this area:

The Trust Board

The Board fully endorses this Policy and hold ultimate responsibility for reviewing and achieving its aims.

The Board recognises its role in being responsible and accountable for the development of diversity awareness in the Trust and, as such will lead by example.

Managers/Principals/Headteachers

All leaders are responsible for implementing and enforcing this Policy and ensuring that their teams and employees are aware of their responsibilities

Managers/Principals/Headteachers should promote, respect and encourage each employee to reach their full potential and deal appropriately with any breach of this Policy.

All leaders will ensure all employees are trained and made aware of their responsibilities under this Policy.

Employees

All employees of the Trust, at every level, have an individual responsibility for ensuring equality of opportunity and adherence to this policy.

This can be achieved by respecting the right to work in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination, exhibiting the correct behaviours and challenging colleagues who fall short of these expectations.

Pupils

We will take reasonable and necessary steps to meet pupils' needs by using a variety of approaches and planning

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reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, enabling our pupils to take as full a part as possible in all the activities of the school. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the school environment and its activities are as accessible and welcoming as possible for pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

We will actively encourage positive attitudes towards pupils and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.

We will regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curricula will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action. We will regularly consider the ways in which our teaching and the curriculum provision will support high standards of attainment, promote common values, and help students understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.

We will monitor the progress and achievement of pupils by the relevant and appropriate protected characteristics. This information will help the school to ensure that individual pupils are achieving their potential, the school is being inclusive in practice, and trends are identified.

We will collect and analyse information about protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities and promotions to ensure all staff have equality of opportunity. We will not ask health-related questions to job applicants before offering a job, unless it relates to an intrinsic function of the work they do. We will make reasonable adjustments such as providing auxiliary aids for our disabled staff.

We will ensure the curriculum is accessible to all pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or those for whom English is not their first language. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided for them, where reasonable adjustments are required. By planning ahead, we will ensure that all pupils are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and we will monitor the uptake of these to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

We will seek the views of advisory staff and outside agencies and partnerships with other schools where this is needed. In planning the curriculum and resources we will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.

Bullying and Prejudice Related Incidents will be carefully monitored and dealt with effectively. Regular training will be given to both existing and new staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of bullying and prejudice/hate incidents (<https://www.devon.gov.uk/equality/reportincidents/schools/report-staff>).

We expect that all staff will be role-models for equal opportunities, deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping. Throughout the year, we will plan on-going events to raise awareness of equality and diversity. This may include a focus on disability, respect for other cultures, religions and beliefs, anti-homophobia/gay pride, gender equality, developing community cohesion and an understanding of the effects of discrimination.

We will ensure pupil/parent/staff consultation is regularly sought in the development and review of this policy. We will regularly seek the views of pupils, parents, advisory staff and visitors to the school, to ensure that the school

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environment is as safe and accessible as possible to all school users. We will regularly review our accessibility plans.

We welcome a diverse range of candidates and encourage those who are currently underrepresented to join. We will ensure that all staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the different forms of discrimination and what 'reasonable adjustments' mean in practice.

We will set out training and awareness sessions in the school improvement plan. We will consult with stakeholders, i.e., pupils, parents/carers, staff and relevant community groups, to establish equality objectives and draw up a plan based on information collected on protected groups and accessibility planning. These equality objectives will be reviewed and reported on annually.

We will maintain and update an equality page on the school website to show how it we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the Equality Act 2010 and advancing equality of opportunity.

When drawing up policies, we will carry out an equality impact assessment (EIA) to ensure a policy does not, even inadvertently, disadvantage groups of pupils with protected characteristics. We will consider to what extent a new/revised policy, practice or plan meets the Public Sector Equality Duties (eliminates discrimination, advances equality and fosters good relations for all the protected characteristics) and recommend changes/mitigations where necessary.

14. Review of policy

15. The policy will be reviewed annually and the Board will monitor its effectiveness in line with the equality objectives set.