



Equality & Diversity Staff Policy

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| Policy Name | Equality and Diversity Staff Policy |
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| Owner | HR/CFO |
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| Authorisation | FAR Trustees to ratify |

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Terms of Reference

For all employees, trustees and volunteers employed or appointed by the Trust Board of Guilsborough Multi Academy Trust.

Definitions:

“Principal” also refers to any other title used to identify the Principal, where appropriate, or other senior manager delegated to deal with the matter by the Principal.

“Companion” refers to a person chosen by the employee to accompany them, who shall be a trade union representative or a workplace colleague.

1. Policy

- 1.1 The Directors of Guilsborough Multi Academy Trust are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all employees and job applicants. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.
- 1.2 The Trust Board will take allegations of discrimination seriously and address them promptly and confidentially, where possible.
- 1.3 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, employees, trainees, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, casual workers, agency staff and trustees (collectively referred to as employees in this policy). All employees have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, as well as a duty not to discriminate against or harass other employees, regardless of their status. Details of this are in the Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- 1.4 The Trust does not discriminate on the basis of age; race; sex; disability; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion, faith or belief. (Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics). The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff and trustees treat visitors, volunteers, contractors and former staff members.
- 1.5 All employees are personally responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the policy and promote the Trust's aims and objectives with regard to equal

opportunities. In certain circumstances, the Trust Board could be held to be vicariously liable for the actions of their employees. Employees should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst in the Academy or on Academy-related business.

- 1.6 This policy has been agreed following consultation with the trade unions and staff representatives. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time following consultation. Elements of this procedure may be varied as appropriate in any case.
- 1.7 The Trust's Statement under Public Sector Equality Duty is included in the Equality Plan 2023-27 and duty workbook.

2 Who is responsible for this

- 2.1 The Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy and the senior manager with responsibility for equalities issues has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law.

The Finance & Staffing Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy, and reporting on the progress made in achieving targets set by the Directors.

Day-to-day operational responsibility, including regular review of this policy, has been delegated to the Chief Finance Officer and Human Resources Manager.

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities.

SLT will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

The Principal has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training.

All members of staff are personally responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the policy and promote the Trust's aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities.

In certain circumstances the Trustees could be held to be vicariously liable for actions of their staff. Staff should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst in Academy or on Academy-related business.

2.2 If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Clerk to Trust Board to request training or further information.

3 Scope & Purpose of the Policy

3.1 This policy applies to all aspects of the Trust's relationship with employees and to relations between employees members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

3.2 The Trust will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

4 Protected Characteristics

4.1 Discrimination is being treated unfairly for one of the following reasons:

- Age
- Disability
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment

4.2 These are called protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Discrimination based on any of these protected characteristics is against the law.

5 Forms of discrimination

5.1 Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

5.2 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

- 5.3 Indirect discrimination is where there is a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.
- 5.4 Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- 5.5 Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

6. Staff training, promotion and conditions of service

- 6.1 Employee training needs will be identified through regular appraisals. All employees will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit. Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. This information is available upon request. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.
- 6.2 All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. The Senior Manager has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training.
- 6.3 The Trust's conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all employees who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

7. Discipline and Termination of Employment

- 7.1 The Trust will ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.
- 7.2 The Trust will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

8. Disability discrimination

8.1 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell the Trust about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

8.2 If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you should speak to your line manager and the HR Manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager and HR Manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. The Trust will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If the Trust considers a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, the reasons will be explained and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

8.3 The Trust will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff.

9. Fixed-term employees, Casual and Agency Workers

The Trust will monitor our use of fixed-term employees, casual and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. The Trust will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

10. Part-time work

The Trust will monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under our Flexible Working Policy.

11. Breaches of this policy

11.1 If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through the Grievance Procedure. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment or bullying you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy.

11.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Employees who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably



as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

- 11.3 An employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

12. Monitoring and review of the policy

- 12.1 This policy is reviewed annually by the Finance and Staffing Committee.
- 12.2 The Trust will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives.
- 12.3 Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Clerk to Trust Board.