



Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy

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HISP Multi Academy Trust

Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy

Our Trust's Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy

From 2024 we write our policies through a particular lens: these documents are vital to the underpinning for our Trust to be one Trust. References to “you” are intended to explain the important role you, the reader, have in our Trust and references to “we” refer to the responsibilities we recognise HISP has as an employer. Together we are One Trust.

1. Our Key Principles

Our ambition

We are committed to creating a Trust where every individual, staff, pupils and the wider community, can thrive. We recognise that people start from different places, and we take an equitable approach to ensure everyone has fair access to opportunities, support and success.

What this means in practice:

- We treat people fairly, recognising that different individuals may need different support
- We actively identify and remove barriers to participation and achievement
- We create safe, inclusive and respectful environments across all our schools
- We model high standards of behaviour and challenge discrimination

Who this applies to:

This policy applies to all staff, trustees, governors, volunteers, pupils, families, contractors and partners connected to the Trust.

Our expectations:

- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Act in ways that promote inclusion and belonging
- Speak up where behaviour falls short.

What you can expect from us:

- Fair, transparent and inclusive practices
- Support where barriers are identified
- Prompt and appropriate action where concerns are raised
- Ongoing review and improvement.

Our position:

We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation in any form.

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2. Introduction

This policy sets out our commitment to equity, inclusion and belonging across all areas of the Trust's work.

It applies to all aspects of employment and engagement, including recruitment, pay, learning and development, promotion, performance management, and the way we work with pupils, families, partners and the wider community.

This policy is intended to:

- Explain our approach to equity, inclusion and diversity
- Set out our legal responsibilities
- Define the behaviours and standards we expect
- Support the creation of an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive

We recognise the important role that inclusive environments play in supporting both staff experience and pupil outcomes. Every individual within the Trust has a role to play in building and sustaining this culture. Expectations in this policy align with our behaviour and conduct standards across the Trust.

We apply these principles to both employment and education, including how we design learning environments, support pupil participation and ensure fair access to opportunities.

3. What is Equity, Inclusion and Diversity?

- **Equity** means recognising that individuals have different experiences, starting points and needs. We take this into account to remove barriers and enable everyone to succeed.
- **Equality** is the outcome we aim to achieve - fair access, experience and outcomes for all.
- **Diversity** reflects the range of backgrounds, identities and experiences within our Trust community.
- **Inclusion** means creating an environment where everyone feels respected, valued and able to participate fully.
- **Belonging** means people feel safe, accepted and able to be themselves.

Equality is the goal, equity is how we achieve it.

4. Our commitment

We are committed to creating an environment where everyone within our Trust is treated fairly and has the opportunity to achieve their potential.

We will:

- Foster a culture of respect, inclusion and belonging
- Actively identify and address barriers to participation and progression. This may include taking positive action to support underrepresented or disadvantaged

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- groups where appropriate.
- Ensure fair and transparent processes across all areas of our work
- Take appropriate action where behaviour falls below expected standards
- Support individuals to raise concerns and be confident they will be taken seriously.

5. Why people may be treated unfairly?

We recognise that unfair treatment can arise in different ways, including conscious and unconscious behaviours, policies or practices that disadvantage certain individuals or groups.

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We also recognise that discrimination can occur based on perception or association.

Our approach goes beyond legal compliance. We are committed to identifying and addressing the underlying barriers that may lead to unequal experiences or outcomes.

Our legal duties

In line with the Equality Act 2010, the Trust meets its Public Sector Equality Duty by:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups
- Fostering good relations between people from different groups

6. Types of discrimination

Discrimination refers to unfair treatment linked to a protected characteristic. It can take a number of forms and may be intentional or unintentional.

We do not tolerate any form of discrimination.

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Direct discrimination - This occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Example: not appointing someone because of their race or not promoting someone because they are pregnant.

Indirect discrimination - This occurs when a policy, process or way of working applies to everyone but disproportionately disadvantages a particular group, and cannot be justified.

Example: requiring all staff to work specific hours that disadvantage those with caring responsibilities, without a clear business need.

Harassment - Unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment, or violates a person's dignity.

Examples: inappropriate jokes, exclusion, offensive comments or unwanted conduct.

Victimisation - Treating someone unfairly because they have raised a concern about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else to do so.

Example: excluding or disadvantaging someone because they were involved in a complaint.

Additional protections relating to disability

Failure to make reasonable adjustments - Where appropriate adjustments are not made to remove or reduce disadvantage for a disabled person.

Example: not adapting working arrangements where this would help remove a barrier.

Discrimination arising from disability - Treating someone less favourably because of something related to their disability, without justification.

Example: taking action against someone for disability-related absence without considering appropriate support

7. Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities

Creating an inclusive and equitable environment is a shared responsibility. We recognise that everyone has a role to play in creating and sustaining an inclusive culture through their behaviours and actions.

All staff, pupils and members of the Trust community are expected to:

- Treat others with respect and dignity
- Act in ways that support inclusion and belonging
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour where it is safe to do so
- Raise concerns where standards are not being met.

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Leaders, trustees and governors are responsible for:

- Modelling inclusive behaviours and setting expectations
- Creating psychologically safe environments
- Identifying and addressing barriers within their areas
- Using data and feedback to improve outcomes
- Ensuring this policy is actively implemented in practice.

8. Recruitment, Training, Development and Time-off

Fair and inclusive practices

We are committed to ensuring that all processes relating to recruitment, development and progression are fair, transparent and inclusive.

We will:

- Base decisions on merit while recognising and addressing potential barriers
- Ensure recruitment and selection processes are inclusive and accessible
- Provide access to learning and development opportunities for all
- Provide reasonable adjustments for staff, pupils and others where needed
- Consider flexibility and inclusion in the way work is organised.

We will also ensure that those involved in decision-making are supported to understand inclusive practices.

9. Raising concerns, complaints and enforcement

We take all concerns relating to discrimination, harassment or exclusion seriously. Individuals are encouraged to raise concerns through their line manager or through the appropriate formal policies, including the Grievance Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, or Whistleblowing Policy, where relevant.

Concerns will be:

- Taken seriously
- Handled sensitively and appropriately
- Investigated in a timely manner.

Where breaches of this policy are identified, appropriate action will be taken. This may include disciplinary action where necessary.

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We are committed to ensuring that individuals who raise concerns in good faith are supported and protected.

10. Monitoring

Monitoring and continuous improvement

We are committed to regularly reviewing how effectively this policy is working in practice.

We will use a combination of:

- Workforce and recruitment data
- Feedback from staff, pupils and the wider community
- Insights from complaints and casework
- Regular policy and practice reviews.

Information will be used to:

- Identify any disparities or barriers
- Inform action and improvement plans
- Strengthen inclusive practices across the Trust.

All data will be handled in line with data protection legislation. Where appropriate, we will publish equality-related information and use this to demonstrate progress and accountability.

Our commitment to ongoing progress

We recognise that building an inclusive and equitable organisation is an ongoing process. We are committed to learning, improving and taking action to ensure that all members of our Trust community feel supported, respected and able to succeed.

11. Useful links

The following internal policies are referred to in this Policy and are currently in existence or being produced at the time of this Policy's refresh. They will provide additional information:

- Dignity at Work Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Model Pay Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy.

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12. Administration of the Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy

This policy will be administered by the One Trust Services People team and will be subject to review initially after one year and then every three years unless there is an earlier statutory change and/or significant feedback necessitating an earlier review. Any feedback on the policy should be emailed to HR@hispmat.org.

One Trust Services People team
May 2026