



EQUALITIES POLICY

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HISP Multi Academy Trust

Equalities Policy

1. Introduction

The Board of Trustees recognises its responsibilities in the employment of staff across the Trust. In accordance with those responsibilities, it wishes to ensure the fair and equal treatment of all of its staff, all those who are applicants to work in our schools and those individuals who undertake work on school premises. This policy sets out the principles under which the Board of Trustees will operate to meet these aims.

This policy is available to all staff in the Trust and to any prospective applicant. This policy focuses specifically on the employment of staff but the principles outlined here of fair and equal treatment apply equally to our approach to pupils and parents and to our dealings with members of the local community and all outside agencies. The school's policy on equality in the curriculum and the treatment of pupils is set out in a separate policy document.

2. Statement of Intent

The Board of Trustees is committed to equality for all in the appointment, training, development, and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents in schools across the Trust. The Board of Trustees recognises the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce and managers and leaders within the Trust will operate at all times within the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation and will promote equality positively in its staffing decisions.

All decisions, including advertising of vacancies, shortlisting, selection, induction, appraisal, training, development, promotion, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal and pay will be based on an objective and fair assessment of school requirements. The only personal characteristics, which will be taken into account, will be those which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved. There will be no generalised concepts or assumptions about the characteristics of groups.

All staff will have a right, through the agreed procedures, to challenge any decision or action which they believe to be in breach of these principles. Any member of staff who deliberately and knowingly contravenes the policy may be subject to formal disciplinary action.

3. Statutory requirements

The Board of Trustees is bound by law not to discriminate on certain grounds. The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the "protected characteristics" that qualify for protection from discrimination as: -

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

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- Sex; and
- Sexual orientation

There are some exemptions from this legislation in situations where the essential nature of a job calls for a man, woman, or a person from a particular religion or racial group. We will not normally seek to use exemptions from the above Act unless it is absolutely necessary for the effective performance of a particular role. If you are unsure whether an exemption may apply you should seek advice from HR as soon as possible.

Sympathetic consideration will be given to requests for time off or for religious observance from staff who are active members of particular religions or beliefs. Such time off will be unpaid and will be considered only subject to the operational requirements of the school.

Wherever possible, reasonable adjustments will be made to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment, including terms and conditions of employment, to help overcome practical difficulties created by applicants or members of staff who have a disability.

The over-riding premise that will be adhered to in matters of equality is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect whatever their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. The Board of Trustees is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.

4. Advertising of vacancies

Vacancies will be advertised openly and will normally be available for existing members of staff to apply. In most cases vacancies will be advertised externally unless there are exceptional reasons why this should not occur, for example in situations of potential redundancy.

5. Selection for appointment or promotion

All decisions relating to appointments or promotions will be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- A detailed job description will be drawn up which accurately describes the duties of the post
- An objective and sufficiently detailed person specification will be defined from the job description
- From these documents a list of objectively assessed selection criteria will be drawn up
- Job descriptions, person specifications and selection criteria will be available to all candidates
- Shortlisting will be carried out against the selection criteria and a written record retained of the assessment of each candidate
- All interview panel members should be trained in selection techniques

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- At least one person on each panel will be trained in equality and the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation
- Selection decisions will be made against the agreed criteria and no other criteria will be used
- A written record of the selection decision relating to the agreed criteria will be retained
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment and selection process where necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are able to compete for appointments in the school

6. Positive Action

The avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the school and full consideration will be given to measures of positive action which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. This is action designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of minority or disadvantaged groups.

We will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination), but will take positive action which enables members of those groups to compete on an equal basis. Positive action measures may include:

- Encouraging applications from specific groups which are under-represented in our schools whilst making it clear that selection will be on merit
- Encouraging people with disabilities to apply for posts
- Promoting the use of job shares and flexible working where operational factors make this possible
- Language/literacy training
- Supporting training measure for under-represented groups
- Assistance with applications for candidates with language problems
- Exploring the possibility of career breaks for staff to assist with family commitments
- Encouraging staff to become representatives of trade unions/associations

7. Harassment and grievance procedures

Harassment has the effect of destroying dignity and undermining the confidence of employees. It can take many forms including physical contact, bullying, threatening or ignoring someone. It can be a series of offensive remarks or a single incident. It can be behaviour that staff find offensive even if not directed at them or harassment because of perception or association.

The Board of Trustees is committed to the principles of dignity at work for all of its staff in the school. This includes the right to be treated with respect by all managers and colleagues. Any acts of harassment including those on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, are totally unacceptable and outside the ethos and culture of the Trust. Any such act by a member of staff against any adult or child will be treated as a disciplinary offence, and action taken accordingly.

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The Trust has procedures to resolve grievances and for the handling of complaints of harassment and bullying at work and any such complaint will be fully investigated. These procedures will be followed carefully and promptly in response to any such complaint. In addition, all staff have the right to approach their professional association or trade union representative for support.

8. Monitoring the Policy

An Equalities policy can only be shown to be effective if its implementation is properly monitored. Given the scope of our policy, this means monitoring both existing staff as well as all external applications. The Trust will therefore keep records of existing staff and new applicants which can be analysed to provide data to assess whether this policy is working in practice.

We will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy by the following methods:

- The existing workforce will be asked to complete an online self-reported monitoring form so that data is available on the composition of the staff across the Trust.
- All applicants for posts will be asked to complete a monitoring form to enable monitoring of our selection decisions against the principles of this policy.
- All applicants for posts will be invited to indicate whether they have any special requirements or require reasonable adjustments to enable them to submit an application, attend an interview or carry out the duties of that post. Responses to this question and appropriate actions taken by the school to accommodate people with disabilities will also be monitored as part of this process.
- Information arising from this data collection process will be published on an annual basis and will be available to all staff and governors.
- Staff will be invited to give feedback from time to time, and to make suggestions for improvements.
- The incidence of complaints under the above procedures and any other aspect of this policy will also be monitored, and figures published on a regular basis.
- All information gathered in relation to this policy is stored in an appropriate and confidential format in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

9. Training

The principles outlined above in relation to fair and equal treatment will also apply to selection for training. Requests for training will be considered in accordance with the Trust's operational priorities, based on the overall development plan and budget allocations.

Similarly, the training of the school managers and trustees in issues of equality and discrimination, is an essential part of our Equality policy.

Where training is scheduled to take place on site, we will, where possible, adapt the methods of training delivery if current arrangements disadvantage particular individuals or groups of staff.