



Tudhoe Learning Trust

Equality & Diversity Policy

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1. Introduction

The community of County Durham consist of various groups, each with specific differences and values. These groups form the diverse community in which we all live and work.

The Trust wants to develop an organisational culture which is:

- Inclusive - reflecting the community we serve.
- Innovative - adapting and changing in a positive way.
- Trusting- developing good relations between employees and external stakeholders.
- Developing and learning - becoming an employer and service provider of choice.

No-one should be discriminated against in the employment relationship. The Trust is committed to promoting a culture that gives everyone an equal chance to learn, work and live free from discrimination and prejudice and although aware of our legal obligations, we want to develop a culture of celebrating diversity regardless of legislation and valuing the differences we all have and the tremendous contribution we can all make to the organisation

As an employer we do not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other ground on which it is or becomes unlawful to discriminate under the laws of England and Wales (referred to as Protected Characteristics).

Our intention is to enable all our staff to work in an environment which allows them to fulfil their potential without fear of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. The Trust's commitment to equal opportunities extends to all aspects of the working relationship including:

- Recruitment and selection procedures;
- Terms of employment, including pay, conditions and benefits;
- Training, appraisals, career development and promotion;
- Work practices, conduct issues, allocation of tasks, discipline and grievances;
- Work related social events;
- Termination of employment and matters after termination of employment, including references.

This policy is intended to help the Trust to achieve its diversity and anti-discrimination aims by clarifying the responsibilities and its duties of all staff in respect of equal opportunities and discrimination.

The principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors and former staff members and any deliberate actions, which are contrary to this policy, may lead to disciplinary action.

Who is responsible for equal opportunities?

Achieving an equal opportunities workplace is everyone's responsibility and the rules contained in this policy apply to all Trust staff.

All staff have a personal responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy to treat colleagues with dignity at all times and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff and visitors. In addition, staff who take part in management, recruitment, selection, promotion, training and other aspects of career development have special responsibility for leading by example and ensuring compliance.

Head Teachers and Line Managers must take all necessary steps to;

- Promote the objectives and values set out in this policy;
- Ensure that their own behaviour and other staff they manage to complies in full with this policy;
- Ensure that any complaints of discrimination, victimisation or harassment are dealt with appropriately and are not suppressed or disregarded.

2. The Trust's Commitment;

- to value and celebrate diversity.
- to include diversity targets when developing our policies and plans.
- to develop an inclusive organisational culture which reflects the local community.
- to act on any form of discrimination.
- to monitor employment and service provision and audit our progress by self-assessment, scrutiny and audit mechanisms, using performance indicators.
- to systematic representative consultation.
- to fair recruitment, employment and equal pay.
- to monitor progress and revise targets set to develop equalities in all areas of the Trust.

3. Equality and Diversity - A Definition

Equality

Equality of opportunity can be defined as the provision of choice and fairness to every person; being treated with respect and recognising that as individuals, we are different and have different needs. We should have equal opportunities to enable choice and pursuance of our own lifestyles and goals without prejudice.

In order to avoid discrimination, practices or actions must be applied in such a way that they treat all people equitably and fairly in line with legislative guidelines.

Diversity

Diversity can be defined as the various differences we all have as individuals, and the contribution we make within society. Differences can range from age to religion to geographical location and the list is never exhaustive. However, we should celebrate these differences and learn from each other, harnessing the talents and qualities of everyone, both within the workplace and the community.

Open mindedness is required and we should never presume we know what other people's needs are. Remember that if something is OK for you it may not be OK for another person!

Diversity covers every difference that we can have and therefore is not always bound by legislation, however morally it is a positive way of respecting ones differences and promoting professional organisational values to everyone.

4. Principles of Equity

The principles of equity require the making of an adjustment or provision to give any individual from an underrepresented group, the opportunity to function on equal terms.

Equity is not treating everyone the same, but ensuring that appropriate adjustments are made to give all individuals equal choice and fairness thus preventing discrimination.

5. Legislation

The school recognise the legal obligations and know that if any legal requirements are contravened, both the employer and the individual employee concerned will be liable to legal proceedings.

We are committed to taking all of the necessary steps to prevent acts of discrimination.

We also wish to promote anti-discriminatory practice in all areas of diversity and not only because there is legislation to protect certain minority groups.

6. Discrimination

The Trust is committed to ensuring that there is no discrimination against parts of the community either in access to employment, employment practices or service delivery. This policy forms an integral part of this overall strategy.

Discrimination covers direct and indirect discrimination.

Direct Discrimination takes place where one person is treated less favourably than others in the same circumstances, e.g.

- Refusing to offer a job to a person with the required skills because they belong to a particular ethnic group.
- Refusing to offer employment to a pregnant woman.
- Not considering wheelchair users for a position, which requires regular travel.

Indirect Discrimination means applying a condition or requirement of employment which adversely affects, or favours, one particular group over another and which cannot be justified in terms of the requirements of the job, e.g.

- Refusing without justification to allow a person to work part-time or job-share for family reasons.
- A policy directive not to advertise vacancies in certain parts of a city where a high percentage of ethnic minority communities live.

Discrimination can take many forms including bullying harassment, segregation, victimisation and stereotyping. There is a separate Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy for more information in this area.

Equal Opportunities in Employment

Anyone who feels that they have been discriminated against or witnessed discrimination can and should discuss it informally with any of the following people;

- Head Teacher and/or Line Manager
- Trade Union Representatives
- Human Resources
- The Trust Chief Executive Officer

The Confidential Reporting Code is also a method of raising a concern, which provides appropriate protection when concerns are raised.

By raising an issue, you will be in a position to positively identify a way forward which is suitable for yourself either formally or informally.

There is also a confidential external counselling service for all employees which is accessible via the Employee Assist Programme. This is a free phone telephone counselling service and can be accessed by telephoning 0800 0305182 quoting. 'Durham County Council'.

Consultation

The Trust is committed to undertaking a consultation process regarding any proposals relating to change that may impact upon our diverse workforce.

Equal Pay

Tudhoe Learning Trust is a multi academy trust with many diverse jobs, different types of staffing structures and many different functions. Jobs will be carefully considered within those structures and organisation of the schools within our Trust with cross-check to ensure consistency as appropriate.

The comparative consideration of jobs will ensure we achieve equal pay for men and women doing work of equal value in different jobs.

Formal Procedures

Any instance where there is an allegation of discrimination, victimisation or harassment can be referred through the formal grievance procedure and/or the Trust Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.

The school will take prompt action to investigate any employee grievance concerning discrimination, victimisation or harassment.

Any employee who brings such a concern will retain the right to bring a case concerning discrimination or victimisation to an Employment Tribunal.

An employee who has, in good faith, complained via this procedure will not receive less favourable treatment than any other employee.

All actions, which are intentionally contrary to this policy, may be dealt with under the Disciplinary procedure.

Recruitment, Promotion and Training

Any applicant or employee of the Trust will be treated equitably in all aspects of the employment and training relationship.

Recruitment and promotion will be determined on the basis of individual merit as described in the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

All recruitment and selection criteria and documentation will be reviewed periodically to ensure discrimination does not occur.

Training and equality of access training will be provided to enable all employees to perform their jobs effectively and to pursue career developmental opportunities in line with organisational objectives.

All staff have equal access to training. Every effort will be made to accommodate training in the contracted hours worked. All employees will be considered for promotion and career developments, regardless of hours worked.

In cases of employees returning to work from a long-term absence, discussions should take place with the Head Teacher and HR Manager, with a view to identifying any appropriate re-training.

Training course venues will be accessible for all.

Responsibilities

Everyone has responsibility for the successful implementation of Equality of Opportunity. The main responsibility for achieving and providing equality of opportunity rests with employers, however, employees at every level have a responsibility to own and promote this policy.

It must be emphasised that it is the responsibility of every employee to provide professional, fair treatment and respect to both colleagues and service user's individual rights. This will be achieved by;

- All interactions will be made respectfully and with courtesy and taking due regard of individual dignity and privacy.
- Employees should promote a friendly and helpful approach at all times.
- Staff will have the opportunity to attend training to maintain awareness and improve knowledge of equality and diversity.

All Employees

It is your responsibility;

- To treat all colleagues with equal respect and fairness, taking care not to offend, embarrass or discriminate for any reason.
- To co-operate with and give support to measures introduced to ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination.
- Not to discriminate for any reason or attempt to induce other employees to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Not to harass, abuse, victimise, intimidate or bully other employees for whatever reason
- To oppose any form of harassment or discrimination, which you may suffer or observe around you.
- To report any instance to your Head Teacher/Line Manager, Trade Union Representativeness or Human Resources.

Head Teacher/Line Manager

In addition to accepting the above responsibilities and ensuring that your staff do too, you must also;

- Develop Equality of Opportunity knowledge, demonstrating competency in promoting equality issues, by appraisal review and establishing equality objectives within departments.
- Ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities, the law and policies on equal opportunities issues.
- Ensure grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.
- Ensure that proper records of employment decisions are maintained and that regular reviews are carried out regarding employment practices.
- Guard against possible prejudice or preconceptions.

Head Teachers/Line Managers should also consider the following questions;

- Are staff from ethnic minorities, women and staff with disabilities fairly represented in all grades in your school/team.
- Are posts/ special tasks and training/development opportunities apportioned fairly?
- Do you encourage appropriately qualified staff, from under-represented groups to apply for promotion and career development?
- Do part-time or job share staff get the same opportunities as those available to staff?
- Have you fully considered accommodating alternative working patterns, including job-sharing and part-time working?
- Have you obtained all the necessary equipment or other facilities for any members of staff with disabilities?
- Do you assess performance and potential only on merit and without regard to assumptions or stereotypes?
- Are you alert to the need to identify and put a stop to any behaviour within your area of responsibility, which could cause offence or create an atmosphere for harassment?
- Do you deal promptly and thoroughly, taking advice when necessary, with any complaints of discrimination or harassment, or any other offensive behaviour?
- Do you encourage your staff to contribute to monitoring exercises, which collect data about equality of opportunity issues i.e. ethnic origin or disability questionnaires?

If the answer to any of these is no, you should consider, in consultation with the Trust HR Manager what you can do to carry out these responsibilities effectively.