



Inspire Education Trust

Together we achieve, individually we grow

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy (Trust)

Policy Date: January 2025

Review Date: January 2028

Document History

Version	Status		Date	Author	Summary Changes
1	Draft		December 2021	Josh Smith	New Policy (adapted from Blue Coat CE School policy). References to 'School' changed to 'Trust'. Changes made to ensure language is inclusive and sensitive to all protected characteristics. Public sector equality duty section added. Reference to prejudice-related incident procedures added (staff and pupils). Changes to recruitment of ex-offenders policy in line with KCSIE 2021 revisions.
v2			April 2022	Josh Smith	Section 11 added – Review of Policy
V3			November 2024	Josh Smith	Pg 4-5 Public sector equality duty replaced with trust's equality aims 7.2 – added Phase Leader 11.1 – amended from staff representatives to JNCC

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Equality Objectives: Aims

Inspire Education Trust is committed to embracing diversity and improving the quality of life across our communities by making educational, and other facilities and opportunities, openly accessible and welcoming for everyone.

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Trust and its academies general duties, with regards to equality, are to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, by encouraging people from protected groups to participate fully
- work ethically and with integrity, civility and respect

As a consequence, we will:

- treat all individuals with equal value, abiding by the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- do all in our powers to eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation of a pupil or potential pupil or employee
- ensure equality of opportunity of pupils and staff who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- promote positive attitudes and good relationships between all pupils and staff
- take reasonable steps to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by all pupils or staff who have protected characteristics, including special educational needs or a disability
- consider equality implications when developing policy and/or practice
- carry out equality impact assessments regularly to assess the effectiveness of our policies and procedures
- contribute positively to the communities our academies serve
- provide all our children and young people with the highest levels of expectation, educational provision and care

The act places a duty on academies to have “due regard” to equality considerations, for example, when significant decisions are being made, or policies are being developed. There is emphasis on transparency – i.e. making information available.

As a consequence, we will:

- publish information which shows compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- publish Equality Objectives for 2023 - 2026
- publish our annual gender pay gap with supporting commentary
- publish attainment data for each school each academic year showing how learners with different characteristics are performing
- analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic and transphobic bullying)

1 Scope and Purpose

- 1.1** The Trust is committed to promoting and achieving equality of opportunity for all pupils, parents, staff, governors, visitors and job applicants. This is reflected in the vision and values of the Trust and its schools.
- 1.2** The Trust aims to create a 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.
- 1.3** The Trust does not discriminate against staff because of sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, disability or age (the protected characteristics).
- 1.4** The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat pupils, parents, visitors, suppliers and former staff members.
- 1.5** All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status.
- 1.6** Prejudice-related incidents, discrimination, bullying and harassment will be dealt with by the Anti-bullying and Dignity at Work Policy (Staff) or Anti-Bullying Policy - Primary or Secondary - whichever applicable (Pupils).
- 1.7** This policy does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions of employment and is not intended to have contractual effect. It is provided for guidance to all members of staff at the Trust who are required to familiarise themselves and comply with its contents. The Trust reserves the right to amend its content at any time.
- 1.8** This Policy applies to the Trust's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff

and consultants and volunteers who are not employees but who work at the Trust (collectively referred to as “Staff” in this policy).

- 1.9** All staff must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the Trust’s aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Staff will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.
- 1.10** Any questions about the content or application of this policy should be referred to the appropriate manager in the first instance.
- 1.11** This policy applies to all aspects of the Trust’s relationship with staff and to relations between staff 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.
- 1.12** The Trust will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

2 Forms of Discrimination

- 2.1** Discrimination by or against a member of staff is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- 2.2** 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.
- 2.3** Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. 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.
- 2.4** 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.

- 2.5** Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who had complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.
- 2.6** Discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation are dealt with further in the Anti-bullying and Dignity at Work Policy (Staff) or Anti-bullying Policy (Pupils).

3 Recruitment and Selection

- 3.1** The Trust aims to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above. The Trust's recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate.
- 3.2** Job advertisements will avoid using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. A short policy statement on equal opportunities and a copy of this policy shall be sent on request to those who enquire about vacancies.
- 3.3** The Trust will take steps to ensure that its vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market and, where relevant, to particular groups that have been identified as disadvantaged or underrepresented in the Trust.
- 3.4** Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which the Trust may use, for example:
- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments);
 - Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment;
 - Positive action to recruit disabled persons;
 - Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).
- 3.5** Applicants will not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants will not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment without first considering whether such matters are relevant and may lawfully be taken into account.
- 3.6** The Trust is required by law to ensure that all members of staff are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status will not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective members of staff, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts,

to satisfy current immigration legislation. A list of acceptable documents is available from the HR team.

- 3.7** To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in the Trust, the Trust will monitor applicants' race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information will be removed from applications before shortlisting and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us to take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

4 Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

- 4.1** The Trust undertakes not to discriminate unlawfully against any candidate who is required to provide criminal record information during the recruitment process. Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent a candidate from working with the Trust. Whether or not it does will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences. Further information about the recruitment and selection procedures of the Trust can be found in the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

5 Staff Training, Promotions and Conditions of Service

- 5.1** All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the Trust and all promotion decisions will be on the basis of merit.
- 5.2** The composition and movement of staff at different levels will be reviewed regularly to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation.
- 5.3** Where appropriate the Trust will take steps to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.
- 5.4** The Trust's conditions of service, benefits and facilities will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

6 Termination of Employment

- 6.1** The Trust will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

- 6.2** The Trust will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties applied are without discrimination, and are carried out fairly and uniformly for all staff, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

7 Termination of Employment

- 7.1** If a member of staff is disabled, or becomes disabled, in the course of their employment with the Trust, they are encouraged to tell us about their condition. This is to enable us to support the member of staff as much as possible.
- 7.2** If a member of staff experiences difficulties at work because of their disability, they should contact their Line Manager/Head of Department/Phase Leader in the first instance to discuss any reasonable adjustments to their working conditions or duties which they consider to be reasonable and necessary or which would assist in the performance of their duties. Support will also be sought from HR/Senior Leadership team where appropriate.
- 7.3** With Senior Leadership Team/HR support, the Line Manager/Head of Department should consult with the member of staff and their medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where reasonable, practicable and proportionate in all the circumstances of the case.
- 7.4** Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it would not be reasonable for the Trust to accommodate a particular adjustment and in such circumstances, it will ensure that it provides the member of staff with its reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 7.5** The Trust will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled staff, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonably practicable and proportionate the Trust will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

8 Fixed Term Employees and Agency/Temporary Workers

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

9 Part-Time Workers

- 9.1** 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. It will also ensure that requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the Trust's Flexible Working Policy.

10 Complaints of Discrimination, Victimisation, Harassment or Prejudice-Related Incidents on the Protected Characteristics

- 10.1** The Trust will treat seriously and will take action where appropriate concerning all complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation on any of the protected characteristics made by any of its staff, students or other third parties.
- 10.2** Any member of staff who considers that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, victimised, harassed or subjected to a prejudice-related incident within the meaning of this policy, they should discuss the matter in the first instance with their Line Manager/Head of Department or, if inappropriate under the circumstances of the case, with the Headteacher or member of the HR team. If the incident(s) were by another member of staff or third-party (pupils, parents, suppliers, governors or visitors), the member of staff should refer to the anti-bullying and dignity at work policy. In some cases, it may be possible to resolve the matter informally and reach a satisfactory resolution.
- 10.3** If a member of staff wishes to make a formal complaint then they should follow the Trust's Grievance Policy and Procedure.
- 10.4** If an employee is accused of unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment, the Trust will investigate the matter fully. In the course of the investigation the employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation for their actions.
- 10.5** If the Trust concludes that the claim is false or malicious then the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 10.6** If on the other hand the Trust concludes that the employee's action amounts to unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment they may be subject to disciplinary action under the Trust's disciplinary Policy and Procedure, up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

11 Review of Policy

- 11.1** This policy is reviewed and amended every 3 years by Inspire Education Trust in consultation with JNCC. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.
- 11.2** The policy will be monitored to ensure consistency of application and adherence to equalities legislation, to ensure the policy operates in accordance with duties to promote

equality, to eliminate discrimination and to promote good relations between staff with protected characteristics as required under the Equality Act 2010.

Reviewed by:

Josh Smith

November 2024

Next Review Date:

January 2028

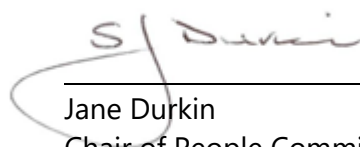
Approved by Directors:

5 February 2025

Signed:



Lois Whitehouse
CEO



Jane Durkin
Chair of People Committee