



Academy Equality & Diversity Policy

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Contents		Page
1	Introduction	3
2	Policy Outcomes	3
3	Roles and Responsibilities	4
4	Procedure	4
5	Non- compliance with the Equality & Diversity Policy	5
	Contacts	6

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As the employer of staff in our Academies, Northern Education Trust (NET) recognises the statutory responsibilities related to employment and is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and potential staff. NET recognises, respects and values diversity in the workforce and is committed to promoting and achieving equality of opportunity. Day to day management of staff is delegated to the *Principal (or nominated representative) and Line Managers in each Academy. Throughout this document reference is made to the responsibilities held by the Governing Body / *Principal for operational purposes. Ultimate responsibility rests with the Trust.
- 1.2 NET will base all employment decisions on merit and the legitimate business needs of the organisation. NET does **not** discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin), religion or belief (including philosophical belief), sex or sexual orientation or any other ground on which it is, or becomes, unlawful to discriminate under the laws of England and Wales (hereinafter referred to as “**Protected Characteristics**”).
- 1.3 The principles of equality and diversity also apply to the ways in which staff treat colleagues, pupils, students, parents and carers and key stakeholders such as Governors and partners.
- 1.4 This policy was ratified by the Trustees on 6th October 2017 following consultation with Trade Unions. It will be reviewed from time to time in full consultation with Trade Unions.

2 Policy Outcomes

- 2.1 The aims of the policy are to;
 - create an organisation which provides equality for all and encourages diversity
 - ensure that all employment decisions are based on objective, transparent and non-discriminatory criteria
 - ensure that conditions of service are applied fairly and do not discriminate against employees
 - ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and with respect
 - ensure that behaviour or actions are not accepted that do not adhere to our values.
- 2.2 It is the intention of NET to enable all 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 equality and diversity extends to all aspects of the working relationship, including:
 - recruitment and selection procedures;
 - terms and conditions of employment, including pay and benefits;
 - training, appraisal, career development and promotion;
 - work practices, conduct issues, discipline, grievances and allocation of work;
 - termination of employment and post-employment matters, including references.
- 2.3 This policy is intended to help the Trust achieve its equality and diversity aims by clarifying the responsibilities and duties of all staff in respect of equality and diversity.

NET will promote effective communication and consultation with and between staff by any and all means it deems appropriate.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Achieving an equal opportunities workplace is a collective task, shared between the Trust Board, Governors, *Principals, and staff. This policy, and the rules contained in it, therefore apply to all staff irrespective of seniority, contractual status, tenure and working hours.
- 3.2 All staff have a personal responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy, to treat colleagues with dignity and respect at all times and not to discriminate against, or harass, colleagues, pupils, students, parents and carers and key stakeholders. In addition, managers who take part in, recruitment, selection, promotion, training and other aspects of career development have an enhanced responsibility to lead by example and ensure compliance.
- 3.3 The Principal must take all necessary steps to:
 - promote the objectives of equality and diversity and the values set out in this policy;
 - ensure that their own behaviour, and the behaviour of those they manage, complies fully with this policy;
 - ensure that any claims of discrimination, victimisation or harassment (including against themselves) are dealt with appropriately, in keeping with all relevant Trust policies and procedures and are not suppressed or disregarded.

4 Procedure

- 4.1 Staff will have recourse to the Academy's Grievance Procedure, Dignity at Work Policy or Whistleblowing Policy (Confidential Reporting) if they believe they have been discriminated against. It is advisable for employees to contact their Trade Union Representative or the Trust HR department for support.
- 4.2 All staff have a responsibility to combat discrimination if they encounter it and should report such incidents to management.
- 4.3 Any report of discrimination will be treated sensitively. In exceptional circumstances it may sometimes be necessary and/or justified to disclose the complaint and/or take action even if this is not in line with the complainant's wishes; in such cases, every effort will be made to protect the individual from victimisation and, if requested, to also protect his/her identity.
- 4.4 Staff who raise issues in good faith will be protected from victimisation or retaliation and, as long as the disclosure is made in good faith, their position within the Trust will not be affected even if, ultimately, the complaint is not upheld.
- 4.5 Allegations made in bad faith, or which are found to be deliberately false or malicious, will be considered as misconduct and subject to the Academy's Disciplinary Procedures.
- 4.6 Staff who attempt to retaliate against or victimise a complainant may also be subject to disciplinary action.

- 4.7 The Trust and Governing bodies will actively review processes to ensure compliance with equalities legislation, including but not limited to monitoring all appointments, pay progression, flexible working requests, and capability and disciplinary procedures.

5 Non-compliance with the Equality & Diversity Policy

- 5.1 Any breach of or non-compliance with this policy will be treated with the utmost seriousness and is likely to result in disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal if deemed to be gross misconduct.
- 5.2 Staff should also note that in some cases, they may be personally liable for their acts of discrimination and that legal action may be taken directly against them by the victim and that it may be a criminal offence to intentionally harass another employee.

CONTACTS

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Employees are also encouraged to contact their trade union representative for advice and support where appropriate.