



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY FOR SCHOOL STAFF

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1. Policy

- 1.1 The Governing Body of Henlow Church of England Academy is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive 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.
- 1.2 We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age; race; sex; disability; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion, faith or belief. (Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics). The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff and Governors treat visitors, volunteers, contractors and former staff members.
- 1.3 All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status.
- 1.4 Our Statement under Public Sector Equality Duty is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2. Who is covered by the policy?

- 2.1 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, employees, trainees, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, casual workers, agency staff and governors (collectively referred to as **staff** in this policy).

3. Who is responsible for this policy?

- 3.1 The Governing Body has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy and the Headteacher with responsibility for equalities issues has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. The Personnel Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy. Day-to-day operational responsibility, including regular review of this policy, has been delegated to the Headteacher.
- 3.2 All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training. All members of staff are personally responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives

with regard to equal opportunities. In certain circumstances the Governing Body could be held to be vicariously liable for actions of their staff. Staff should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst in school or on school-related business.

- 3.3 If anyone has any questions about the content or application of this policy, they should contact the Headteacher.

4. Scope and purpose of the policy

- 4.1 This policy applies to all aspects of our 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.
- 4.2 We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

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5. Forms of discrimination

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. The Equality Act gives definitions of the different types of Discrimination:

- 5.1 **Direct Discrimination:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- 5.2 **Discrimination by Association:** This applies to race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
- 5.3 **Perception Discrimination:** This applies to race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.
- 5.4 **Indirect Discrimination:** This applies to race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and sex. Indirect discrimination can occur when there is a condition, rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if the

organisation can show that it has acted reasonably and that it is a “proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”.

- 5.5 **Harassment:** This is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”. Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them and the complainant need not possess the relevant protected characteristic themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association (see above).
- 5.6 **Third Party Harassment:** This applies to race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, and sex. The Equality Act 2010 makes employers potentially liable for harassment of employees by third parties who are not employees themselves such as customers or clients. Employers will be liable when harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions, the employer is aware that it has taken place and has taken no reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.
- 5.7 **Victimisation:** This occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint. [Return to contents](#)

6. Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

- 6.1 Staff training needs will be identified through annual staff appraisals, if appropriate. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit. [Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.]
- 6.2 Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are 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.

7. Discipline and Termination of Employment

- 7.1 We will ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

- 7.2 We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory. [Return to contents](#)

8. Disability discrimination

- 8.1 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.
- 8.2 If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you should speak to the Headteacher to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The Headteacher may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 8.3 We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff. [Return to contents](#)

9. Fixed-term employees, Casual and Agency Workers

- 9.1 We monitor our use of fixed-term employees, casual and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

10. Part-time work

- 10.1 We 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. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately. [Return to contents](#)

11. Breaches of this policy

- 11.1 If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment or bullying you are encouraged to raise the matter with the Headteacher (or Deputy Heads).

- 11.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 11.3 Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

12. Monitoring and review of the policy

- 12.1 This policy is reviewed every 3 years by the Personnel Committee.
- 12.2 We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives.
- 12.3 Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Headteacher. [Return to contents](#)

Appendix A

Public Sector Equality Duty Statement (under 150 Employees)

1. Introduction

1.1 This document describes how the Governing Body of Henlow Church of England Academy intends to fulfill its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty with regard to its workforce. The Equality Objectives will be part of the School Improvement Plan and information will be published on the the school website.

1.2 We will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

1.3 We will collect and use equality information to help us to:

Identify key issues

- Understand the impact of our policies, practices and decisions on people with different protected characteristics, and thereby plan them more effectively.
- Assess whether you are discriminating unlawfully when carrying out any of our functions.
- Identify what the key equality issues are for our organisation.

Assess performance

- Benchmark our performance and processes against those of similar organisations, nationally or locally.

Take action

- Consider taking steps to meet the needs of staff who share relevant protected characteristics.
- Identify if there are any actions we can take to avoid discrimination and harassment, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.
- Make informed decisions about policies and practices which are based on evidence about the impact of our activities on equality.
- Develop equality objectives to meet the specific duties.
- Have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty by ensuring that staff have appropriate information for decision-making.

1.4 We will work towards developing an equality profile of staff to help us to understand key equality issues in our workforce, including any evidence of pay gaps or 'occupational segregation' i.e. staff with certain protected characteristics being over-represented in particular roles, for example, women as cleaners, or at certain grades. In addition, we note that it is likely to be useful to collect and consider information, appropriately disaggregated, about:

- recruitment and promotion
- numbers of part-time and full-time staff
- pay and remuneration
- training
- return to work of women on maternity leave
- return to work of disabled employees following sick leave relating to their disability
- appraisals
- grievances (including about harassment)

- disciplinary action (including for harassment)
- dismissals and other reasons for leaving.