



Highfields Independent School and Day Nursery

Equality and Diversity Policy

Last Reviewed:	March 2019	Approved on:	26.03.2019
Committee Responsible:	P&P		
Approved by:	Full Govs	Next Review:	30.06.2020

Equality & Diversity Policy

Principles

Highfields actively welcome diversity and are committed to fostering an environment of equality of opportunity, ensuring all our stakeholders including employees, job applicants, parents, pupils and other third parties with whom we deal are treated fairly and are not subjected to unfair or unlawful discrimination.

We appreciate that an effective equality and diversity policy helps everyone to develop to their full potential, which is clearly in the best interests of both our staff and our School. We strive to ensure that we not only observe the relevant legislation but also do whatever is necessary to provide genuine equality of opportunity.

Our goal is to provide a working environment free from harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form that may affect the dignity of the individual.

Policy

The aim of our policy is to ensure that current and future workers are offered the same opportunities regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, age, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, domestic circumstances, disability, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, gender reassignment, civil partnership or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job. We aim to ensure that no one suffers, either directly or indirectly, as a result of unlawful discrimination. This extends beyond the individual's own characteristics, to cover discrimination by association and by perception.

All employees are expected to uphold this policy in every respect. Any breach of this policy will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. Disciplinary action, including dismissal, will be taken against any employee found guilty of unfair discrimination or harassment.

This policy is not contractual, but aims to set out the way in which we aim to manage equality and diversity. This policy applies to all employees and workers.

Practices

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We expect everyone who works for us to be treated, and to treat others, with respect.

We will make reasonable adjustments wherever possible and proportionate to prevent employees and candidates who are disabled from being at a disadvantage in comparison with those who are not disabled.

For the avoidance of doubt, discrimination may be direct or indirect, and can take different forms, for example:

- treating any individual less favourably than others on grounds of a protected characteristic (sex, race, marital status, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, age, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, gender reassignment or civil partnership)

- expecting a person, solely on the grounds stated above, to comply with requirements that are different to the requirements for others, for any reason whatsoever
- imposing on an individual, requirements that are in effect more onerous than they are on others. This would include applying a condition (which is not warranted by the requirements of the position) which makes it more difficult for members of a particular group to comply than others not of that group
- harassment i.e. unwanted conduct which has "the purpose, intentionally or unintentionally, of violating dignity, or which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment" for the individual
- victimisation – i.e. treating a person less favourably because he or she has committed a "protected act". "Protected acts" include previous legal proceedings brought against the employer or the perpetrator, or the giving of evidence at a disciplinary or grievance hearing or at tribunal, or making complaints about the perpetrator or the employer or their alleged discriminatory practices.
- discrimination by association, i.e. someone is discriminated against because he/she associates with someone who possesses a protected characteristic
- discrimination by perception, i.e. discrimination on the grounds that the person is perceived as belonging to a particular group, e.g. sexual orientation, religion or belief, irrespective of whether or not this is correct
- harassment – i.e. unwanted conduct that either violates a person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. It may be related to any personal characteristic of the individual (whether perceived or real), or by association (i.e. related to the individual's relationship or dealings with others who have that personal characteristic). It may be persistent, or an isolated incident and can take many forms, from relatively mild banter to actual physical violence.
- any other act or omission of an act, which has the effect of disadvantaging one person against another, purely on the above grounds.

Managers have a crucial role to play in promoting equality of opportunity in their own areas of responsibility. They must ensure their employees are aware of this policy, lead by example and give guidance to support a positive working environment for all. Management decisions in relation to employees will be considered as objectively as possible.

All staff will be made aware of this policy. Employees must take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour in relation to this policy.

We aim to ensure that all staff who are responsible for recruitment and selection are familiar with this policy; selecting candidates on an objective basis, focusing on the applicants' suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the job requirements.

Any opportunities for promotion and training will be communicated and made available to all staff on a fair and equal basis in line with School priorities.

We will ensure that all of our policies including compensation, benefits and any other relevant issues associated with terms and conditions of employment, are formulated and applied without regard to race, religion or belief, nationality, ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, domestic circumstances, disability or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job.

These will be reviewed regularly to ensure there is no discrimination. Length of service as a qualifying criterion for benefits will not exceed five years unless for a clearly justifiable reason.

Any member of staff who believes they have been discriminated against and have not been able to resolve this informally is advised to use our internal grievance procedure. An employee who brings a complaint of discrimination will not be less favourably treated.

Harassment or bullying will not be tolerated, and any individual employee who feels that they have been subjected to harassment or any employee who witnesses incidents of harassment or bullying should report this to their manager or an appropriate senior member of staff.

When dealing with general disciplinary matters, care is to be taken that employees who have, are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic are not dismissed or disciplined for performance or behaviour which could be overlooked or condoned in other employees.

Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed biennially and updated to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Any queries regarding this policy, or comments, should be addressed to the Head Teacher.