

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities Policy</b>
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**To be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:**

Grievance Policy	Whistleblowing Policy
Capability Procedure	Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Professional Code of Conduct	Staff Handbook
Probationary Policy	Dignity at Work Policy
Recruitment and Selection Policy	Equal opportunities is applied to all NST policies

**Relevant legislation and guidance:**

Equality Act 2010 (replaced these Acts *)	<i>Race Relations Act 1976 and 2000*</i>
<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005*</i>	<i>Equal Pay Act 1970*</i>
<i>Employment Equality Regulations 2006*</i>	<i>Sex Discrimination Act 1975*</i>
<i>Civil Partnership Act 2004*</i>	<i>Gender Recognition Act 2004*</i>
Employment Relations Act 1999	Data Protection Act 1998
Employment Act 2002 and 2008	Human Rights Act 1998
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001	Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
Harassment Act 1997	Employment Rights Act 1996
Education Act 1996	Education Order 2003
Health & Safety at Work Act 1974	Children's Act 1989 and 2004
Written in line with ACAS guidance on Equality and Discrimination	

**Document Review Control Information**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Equal Opportunities Policy is reviewed on a regular basis by The Governing Bodies (GB) of the Northern Schools Trust (NST) schools.
- 1.2 At all stages within this policy, and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, provision will be made for any reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of individuals.
- 1.3 Throughout this document the term Principal refers to the Principal or Head of Academy/School. The terms Trust and Schools refer to all Academies, Schools as well as the central team
- 1.4 The Trust recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Trust and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the Trust to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".
- 1.5 Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.
- 1.6 We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment. All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect.
- 1.7 Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- 1.8 Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass pupils, parents, carers, visitors or colleagues because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage/civil partnership and sexual orientation in the provision of the Trust's goods and services.
- 1.9 This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

## 2. OUR COMMITMENT

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by senior management.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually

## 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Principals/Directors/ Managers who will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Each manager will ensure that:

- all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained.

HR will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants, including periodic departmental audits.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

4.1 Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

## 5. THIRD PARTIES

5.1 Third-party harassment occurs where a Trust employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. The Trust will not tolerate such actions against staff. The employee concerned should inform their manager / supervisor immediately that this has occurred. The Trust will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure any harassment does not happen again.

## 6. ALL TRUST POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

6.1 All employment policies and procedures have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Trust policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

## 7. RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY OR IMPAIRMENT

7.1 The Trust attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people.

Under the terms of this policy, managers are required to:

- make reasonable adjustments to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);
- include disabled people in training/development programmes;
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

## 8. EQUALITY TRAINING

8.1 A series of regular briefing sessions will be held for staff on equality issues. These will be repeated as necessary. Equality information is also included in induction programmes.

8.2 Training will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. All managers who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive specialist training.

## 9. MONITORING

- 9.1 The Trust deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.
- 9.2 The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.
- 9.3 There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.
- 9.4 We will maintain information on staff who have been involved in certain key policies: Disciplinary, Grievance and Dignity at Work.
- 9.5 Where appropriate, equality impact assessments will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect the Trust policies may have on those who experience them. The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.
- 9.6 If monitoring shows that the Trust, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the Trust, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues.

## 10. GRIEVANCES AND DISCIPLINE

- 10.1 Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning bullying, harassment, unlawful discrimination or victimisation via the Trusts Grievance Procedure.
- 10.2 Such acts will be treated as disciplinary offences (misconduct) and they will be dealt with under the Trusts Disciplinary and Capability Policy and Procedure. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- 10.3 Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence