

Equality and Diversity Policy

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Equality and Diversity Statement	2
3. Aims and Objectives	2
4. Responsibilities	4
5. Discrimination	4
6. Recruitment & Selection	5
7. Part Time & Fixed Term Work	6
8. Family Friendly Policies	6
9. Breaches of the Policy	6
10. Monitoring Equality & Diversity	6
11. Confidentiality	7
12. General Principles	7

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to all members of the Trust/school community i.e. directors (sometimes referred to as Trustees), governors, employees, casual workers, volunteers, agency workers, consultants/3rd parties engaged by the Trust/schools, and they are responsible for promoting the Equality & Diversity Policy and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

1.2 This policy is designed to help and encourage staff to achieve and maintain the appropriate standards of conduct. It aims to ensure consistent and fair treatment, without discrimination, for all staff. It applies to all aspects of employment with WMAT, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion/progression, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2. Equality & Diversity Statement

2.1 Wellsway Multi Academy Trust (WMAT) is committed to a policy of equality and diversity and aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, student/pupil or other member of the Trust/school community is treated less favourably on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

2.2 Any behaviour, comments or attitudes that threaten or deliberately undermine an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated. We aim to provide equal access to high quality educational opportunities and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the Trust/school community. We seek to provide a safe and happy environment where all can flourish and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

2.3 We aim to empower our students/pupils to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the Trust/school community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the Trust's ethos and values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all staff is crucial in the delivery of the objectives of the policy.

3. Aims & Objectives

3.1 The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to

as protected characteristics). Under the Act, WMAT is expected to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires us to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

WMAT is committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality and diversity in all of its employment practices and aims to establish a culture which is free from discrimination and based on the values of fairness, dignity and respect. WMAT will support and develop its staff by providing everyone with access to employment and personal/professional career development opportunities. This will be on an equal basis regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3.2 WMAT values diversity and recognises the value of having employees with a different range of backgrounds, experiences, views, beliefs and cultures.

3.3 WMAT aims to:

- Carry out its legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010
- Reinforce the Trust's position as a provider of high quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities
- Ensure that equality remains high on the Trust's strategic agenda
- Establish good people management practice and to set out a proactive agenda in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response
- Ensure all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every student/pupil
- Ensure all staff work together to achieve the strategic aims of WMAT and other business objectives
- Ensure that staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals
- Ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the Trust's Equality & Diversity Policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure (e.g. complaints relating to staff may be investigated either under the disciplinary or grievance procedure). All forms of discrimination by any person within the Trust's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The WMAT Business Director is responsible for monitoring and updating the policy whilst Principals/Headteachers and WMAT central support services managers are responsible for implementing the policy.

4.2 The Trust CPLD Co-ordinator is responsible for the provision of appropriate training and support for the Trust as required.

4.3 Staff are expected to behave in line with the principles of this policy. They should treat colleagues and students/pupils fairly and with respect, Staff should actively encourage non-discriminatory practices and challenge any incidences of behaviour that fail to comply with this policy. All staff should undertake appropriate equality and diversity training as required.

4.4 WMAT encourages individuals to inform us of any disabilities or if they become disabled, so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

4.5 This policy will be kept under review in order to take account of changes to law and/or practice and changes to WMAT circumstances.

5. Discrimination

5.1 Staff must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts, and on work-related trips or events including social events).

5.2 Discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics is illegal. The nine protected characteristics are:-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage/Civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

5.3 The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in the same circumstances because of their protected characteristics.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when a condition or requirement is applied equally but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination is unlawful unless there is a justifiable reason.

Harassment

Harassment occurs when there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civic partnership or pregnancy and maternity) that has the effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as a denied training opportunity or promotion because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance or are suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

Genuine occupational requirement

Discrimination is permitted in cases where a person's sex, race, religion or sexual orientation is a genuine occupational requirement for the job. Examples from the sex discrimination legislation are - where a job had to be held by a man and not a woman or vice versa to preserve decency or privacy, such as where the job involved visiting changing rooms while they are in use.

6. Recruitment and Selection

6.1 WMAT has a legal responsibility to demonstrate that it treats all groups of staff fairly in its employment practices. With this in mind recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination.

6.2 Job advertisements will be advertised using the appropriate medium to reach the candidate market capable of producing the best pool of candidates

6.3 Job advertisements, job descriptions and person specifications will be written on the basis of the essential and desirable requirements of the position

6.4 Shortlisting, appointment and rejection decisions will be transparent and justifiable and supported by written documentation/scorecards.

6.5 In the recruitment process job applicants will:

- Not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic
- Not be asked about health before a job offer is made (subject to limited exceptions);
- Not be asked about disability before a job offer is made (subject to limited exceptions)
- Where successful, be offered the role which will be conditional on a satisfactory medical check, receipt of satisfactory references, satisfactory DBS check and Children's Barred List check and confirmation of the Right to Work in the UK.

6.6 Interview panels will be diversely balanced and ensure no unconscious bias.

6.7 In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria as detailed in the job description/person specification.

6.8 WMAT will require confirmation of the Right to Work in the UK. This will be sought from all employees and potential employees. WMAT will not make assumptions about immigration status or a person's right to work in the UK based on race, colour or national origin and will treat all applicants equally.

7. Part-time and Fixed-term work

7.1 Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified to secure parity.

8. Family-friendly policies

8.1 Within the framework and model of the provision of education to students/pupils WMAT aims to be a family friendly employer. WMAT will do its best, over time, to develop and implement schemes designed to support employees in combining work and other responsibilities e.g. Childcare Voucher Scheme, Carer's Leave provision, Flexible Working, Job share

9. Breaches of the Policy

9.1 WMAT will not tolerate behaviour contrary to the equal opportunities policy and will treat deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination as disciplinary offences. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the WMAT Disciplinary Procedure; serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

9.2 Where an employee believes that they have suffered discrimination, refer to the Grievance procedure.

10. Monitoring Equality & Diversity

10.1 This policy will be monitored by WMAT Business Director for its effectiveness and use across the Trust.

10.2 WMAT HR will monitor the diversity and composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs, advising the Business Director in accordance with this data on a regular basis. Seeking and implementing changes if required.

10.3 As a public organisation WMAT will publish information to show compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty by working to objectives that are specific and measurable. These are:

- To use data as described at 10.2,
- To raise awareness and skills of staff,
- To provide an environment that welcomes, protects and respects diversity,
- To ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to make a positive, contribution,
- To address cultural knowledge and understanding across the WMAT.

11. Confidentiality

11.1 WMAT treats personal data collected for reviewing equality and diversity in accordance with GDPR compliance.

12. General Principles

12.1 The Equality & Diversity Policy will be implemented in accordance with ACAS advice and guidance, the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.