

# **THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST**

## **THE NEALE-WADE ACADEMY**

### **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY FOR ACADEMY STAFF**

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## **1 Policy**

- 1.1 The Active Learning Trust and the Local Governing Bodies of our schools & academies are 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 Directors and members of the Trust, all staff in our schools & academies and all Governors treat visitors, volunteers, contractors and former staff members.
- 1.3 All of the above persons connected with and/or employed by the Trust 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. [Your attention is drawn to our separate Bullying and Harassment policy.]
- 1.4 This policy as it applies in schools/academies where there are recognised representation rights will be agreed following consultation with the trade unions and staff representatives
- 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).In addition the policy equally applies to the Directors and members of the Active Learning Trust, its central employees and consultancy/advisory staff engaged by the Trust. (collectively referred to as **staff** in this policy

## **3 Who is responsible for this policy?**

- 3.1 Within the school/academy the Local Governing Body has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy and the Senior Manager with responsibility for equalities issues has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. The Local Governing Body or a panel/committee nominated by them is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and reporting on the progress made in achieving targets set by the Local Governing Body to the Board of Directors of the Trust. Within the individual school/academy the day-to-day operational responsibility, including regular review of this policy, is delegated to the SLT.

- 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. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. The Senior Leadership team has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training. All members of staff of the school/academy and/or of the Trust 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 Local Governing Body and the Trust could be held to be vicariously liable for actions of the 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 you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact a member of the SLT of the school/academy in which you are based to request training or further information. Members of staff or members/directors of the Active Learning Trust should contact the Head of HR of the Active Learning Trust.

#### **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.

#### **5. Forms of discrimination**

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

- 5.3 Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.
- 5.4 Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- 5.5 Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

## **6. Staff training and promotion and conditions of service**

- 6.1 Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals and performance reviews/meetings. 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 will be 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.

## **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 your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager 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 or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

## **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 under our Flexible Working Policy.

## **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 through our Harassment and Bullying Policy.
- 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 annually by the Local Governing Body of the school/academy with input and advice from the HR Service Provider for the school/academy and/or the Head of HR of the Active Learning Trust.
- 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 Business Manager of the school/academy in which they are based or for central Trust members/staff by contacting the Head of HR for the Active Learning Trust. .