

Pickwick Academy Trust



Equal Opportunities Policy

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Responsible Reviewing Officer and Job Title:	Louise Skittrall, HR Consultant
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1. Introduction

- a. It is the right of all human beings regardless of religion, belief, culture, class, race, gender, sexuality, disability, social economic background, or age to be treated with respect and total fairness. The Trust believes in supporting personal and cultural identities and in preparing its pupils for full and positive participation in society, and these are fundamental values in education.
- b. We see equal opportunities as a tool to provide an environment in which both staff and children feel secure, valued, supported and free from intimidation.

2. Purpose and Scope

- a. Our aim is:
 - To ensure that the curriculum is free from bias of access, delivery and content.
 - To value and respect the protected characteristics and cultural heritage of others and to raise awareness of the ways in which discrimination can take place.
 - To foster harmony through valuing diversity and inclusion, and the development of full potential regardless of race, creed, gender, age, social economic background, hours of work, trade union affiliation or disability through effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - To actively promote effective practice for countering all aspects of direct and indirect discrimination.
 - To ensure fairness in all recruitment and selection procedures.
 - To ensure fairness in providing access to training, professional development, mentoring and promotion opportunities.
 - To promote fundamental values of democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance.
- b. All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously. Equality forms an integral part of every aspect of school life.
- c. Trustees have made a commitment to ensure that non-English-speaking Governors and Trustees can access support as and when it is deemed necessary.

3. Responsibilities and Accountabilities

- a. All staff, Governors and Trustees will:
 - Abide by current rules of conduct (refer to Professional Expectations and Standards Policy and LGC Handbook).
 - Eliminate any policy, practice or attitude which seeks to discriminate.
 - Encourage positive action to enhance opportunities for all.
 - Condemn and take steps to prevent all forms of abuse, harassment or intimidation.

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- Be actively seen taking action to avoid any form of abuse, harassment or intimidation.
 - Contribute to a pluralistic society and assist all pupils in preparing for the same.
- b. The Trust Board is responsible for:
- Implementing and reviewing this policy.
 - Ensuring adequate resources are available to promote appropriate behaviour across the Trust and deal effectively with any issues raised.
 - Promptly responding to any complaints at central team level and offering guidance to the CEO/Executive team.
- c. The Local Governance Committee (LGC) is responsible for:
- Ensuring that the pastoral framework regarding admission, induction, and class placement is adhered (see below)
 - Clear procedures are in place to deal with reporting and recording racial incidents.
 - Ensuring adequate resources are available to promote appropriate behaviour across each school and deal effectively with any issues raised.
 - Offering guidance to the Head of School/Headteacher.
- d. The CEO, Executive team and School Leaders are responsible for:
- Communicating the policy to staff and ensuring arrangements are in place for its promulgation.
 - Supporting staff who have suffered racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobia or other forms of personal verbal or physical abuse or intimidation and anyone who has committed such offences will be appropriately dealt with including action in accordance with the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Policy. In the case of pupils, this may include exclusion from the Trust; for staff, disciplinary action and governors/trustees, removal from their Boards.
 - Strengthening home/Trust community liaison and ensuring that the general pastoral framework regarding admission, induction, and class placement takes full account of issues of race, language, culture, religion, gender and disability.
 - Explaining this policy to all employees, ensuring that are aware of expected behaviours.
 - Setting a good example to other staff by promoting a respectful attitude.
 - Being alert to unacceptable behaviour amongst staff members.
- e. Employees are responsible for:
- Ensuring that their behaviour is in line with this policy and the Code of Conduct expected by the Trust.
 - Conducting themselves in a professional manner at all times.
 - Creating an inclusive environment which is free from inequality.
 - Informing the Head of School/Headteacher of any behaviour that they believe is unacceptable in the workplace where these relate to school-based staff, and to the CEO where these relate to central team staff, and/or Headteachers/Heads of School.
 - Strengthening home/school community liaison.

4. Definitions

- a. All staff and pupils are encouraged to value differences, including dual language, as an asset and learning opportunity. Any prejudice will be challenged, wherever it occurs, to recognise the 'normality of difference' in the cultures within the Trust.
- b. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. 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.

5. Appointments

- a. The Trust is committed to ensure that no job applicant or employee is discriminated against either directly or indirectly. Those involved in making appointments will ensure that any recruitment procedures – advertisement, shortlisting, interviews, and selection decisions will not be influenced by perceived prejudices. Interview questions will be related to the requirement of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature. All applicants will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job. Shortlisting and interviewing will be carried out by more than one individual to further remove any indirect or subconscious prejudices.
- b. Promotion and advancement will be on merit and all decisions related to these will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

6. Staff Behaviours and Training

- a. Staff should treat each other and all pupils and parents and carers with respect. Disrespect for any individual will not be ignored or tolerated. All forms of discrimination by any person within the Trust's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable and may lead to disciplinary action.
- b. Staff will ensure that pupils (and other staff) feel safe and free to learn by following guidelines and regulations described in our Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Conduct.
- c. Policies, displays, notices, meals, uniform in the Trust will reflect the entire pupil and staff population in terms of ethnicity, language, race, gender, sexuality and disability.
- d. Staff at all levels will seek to develop strong positive links with the homes and communities from which pupils and staff come. The Trust values the fact that many pupils and adults in our community are bilingual and will encourage the teaching and use of community languages. Staff training and development on inclusion and equal opportunities will be a priority. Through this training, staff will make every effort to understand the origins and nature of discrimination of all kinds and to recognise their own prejudices.
- e. The Trust is committed to provide an environment in which staff and governors feel safe enough to express and question views. Staff are expected to support and value each other. Any forms of harassment and bullying amongst staff will not be tolerated and should be reported immediately to the Headteacher/Head of School, Chair of Governors or CEO depending on staff role. The systems and structures are in place to support staff needs and to ensure that all new staff are inducted and able to be effective in their role. On-going development and training are an entitlement for all members of staff.

7. Equal Opportunities

- a. When writing and reviewing this policy staff have completed an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment to ensure it complies with equality obligations outlined in anti-discrimination legislation. We believe the policy positively reflects the aims and ambitions of Pickwick Academy Trust.

8. Monitoring and Review

- a. Pickwick Academy Trust will use Equality Impact Assessments to monitor and review its policies and procedures.
- b. To ensure the active implementation of the policy throughout the Trust the following reviews will take place as a minimum every three years.
- c. Monitoring will include:

- The collection and classification of information regarding ethnic and national origin, gender, and disability of employees.
 - Monitoring of applicants to ensure that the principles of this policy are being applied, and to respond to any complaints from unsuccessful candidates.
 - The use of resources, facilities and language.
 - Review of cases and updates to procedures for dealing with harassment and abuse, acknowledgement of cultural/religious requirements, training, promotion of staff and the induction of staff and children to their school.
- d. On completion of the review, the CEO will inform the Board of Trustees if any remedial action needs to be taken to ensure the policy remains up to date and relevant.

9. References, Acknowledgements and Associated Documents

- a. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with other Pickwick Academy Trust policies in the same group of policies.
- b. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:
- Equality Act 2010.
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
 - The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
 - Data Protection Act 2018.
- c. This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:
- Data Protection and Secure Data Handling Policy.
 - Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
 - Grievance Policy.
 - Whistleblowing Policy.
 - Professional Expectations and Standards.