



New Forest Small School

EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY POLICY

Member of Staff Responsible	School Owner
Regularity of Review	Every 2 Years

1. Introduction

The school recognises its responsibilities in the employment of staff in the school. In accordance with those responsibilities, it wishes to ensure the fair and equal treatment of its entire staff, all those who are applicants to work in the school and those individuals who undertake work on school premises. This policy sets out the principles under which the school will operate to meet these aims.

The policy is available to all staff in the school and to any prospective applicant. The School welcomes any comments or contributions to the policy document.

2. Statement of Intent

The school is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of the school. This policy focuses specifically on the employment of staff in the school. The School recognises the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce. The School and leaders of the school will operate at all times within the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation and will promote equality positively in its staffing decisions. All decisions, including advertising of vacancies, shortlisting, selection, induction, appraisal, training, development, promotion, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal and pay will be based on an objective and fair assessment of school requirements. The only personal characteristics, which will be taken into account, will be those which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved. There will be no generalised concepts or assumptions about the characteristics of groups.

All staff will have a right, through the agreed procedures, to challenge any decision or action which they believe to be in breach of these principles. Any member of staff who deliberately and knowingly contravenes the policy will be liable to formal disciplinary action.

3. Statutory requirements

The School is bound by law not to discriminate on certain grounds. The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the “protected characteristics” that qualify for protection from discrimination as: -

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

The School will give sympathetic consideration to requests for time off for religious observance from staff who are active members of particular religions or beliefs, although absences of longer than one day will be unpaid and will be considered only subject to the operational requirements of the school.

The School will wherever possible make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment, including terms and conditions of employment, to help overcome practical difficulties created by applicants or members of staff who have a disability. More details are available in the Accessibility Policy.

(Where applicable) The School operates a policy of automatic entitlement to interview for any disabled applicant who meets the essential criteria for a vacant post. In any event, although there may be practical difficulties in the appointment of some disabled people to the school, this will not be a factor in preventing their full and proper consideration and reasonable adjustments will be considered as required.

The School acknowledges these areas of regulation and confirms its commitment to enforce these statutory requirements in the school.

The over-riding premise that will be adhered to in matters of equality, by staff in the school, is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect whatever their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

4. Advertising of vacancies

Vacancies will be advertised openly and will normally be available for members of staff in the school to apply. In most cases vacancies will be advertised externally unless there are exceptional reasons why this should not occur, for example in situations of potential redundancy.

5. Selection for appointment or promotion

All decisions relating to appointments or promotions will be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- a detailed job description will be drawn up which accurately describes the duties of the post
- an objective and sufficiently detailed person specification will be defined from the role profile
- role profiles and person specifications be available to all candidates
- at least one person on the interview panels must have in-date Safer Recruitment a written record of the interview notes will be retained.
- reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment and selection process where necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled to compete for appointments in the school

6. Specific Issues

Age

The School is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on age.

Disability

The School is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination against people with disabilities based on assumptions of their ability or otherwise to carry out the duties of a post in the school. (*Where applicable* -- All candidates with disabilities who meet the basic essential criteria for a post will be interviewed.) Where a candidate who has a disability is appointed to a post in the school, reasonable provision will be made for adjustments to the working conditions or environment where this is practicable.

Gender reassignment / gender confirmation

The School is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination as a result of a person proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process or part of a process for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex (as described in the Equality Act 2010) or, as the transgender community would more commonly describe it, for the purpose of confirming the gender with which they identify. Our understanding of such 'processes' is not limited to medical procedures, but also includes social transition, e.g. change of name, pronouns, title, and/or appearance.

Marital status or civil partnership

The School is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination against employees who are married or in a civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

The School is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination against a person because of their pregnancy and/or maternity leave.

Race

The School is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on race, colour, ethnic or national origin. There may be situations in the school which require special consideration and where an occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of one particular race or ethnic origin. However, these

situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance.

Religion or Belief

The School is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on religion or belief, or the lack of it.

Sex or Gender

The School is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on sex or gender. There may be situations in the school which require special consideration and where a genuine and determining occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of a particular gender. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance.

Sexual Orientation

The School is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on perceived or actual sexual orientation.

Harassment or bullying

The School is opposed to any conduct relating to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. The School is further opposed to any act of victimisation, harassment or bullying against any member of staff either by an employee or third party based on assumptions about their status in the above categories or any other grounds, or based on their association with a person who has a protected characteristic. Such action will be investigated in accordance with the school's procedure and may lead to formal disciplinary action.

Non-statutory aspects

Although there is no statutory requirement not to discriminate against other groups, or characteristics of staff, the School wishes to state that it will not in any way discriminate against members of staff or applicants for posts on the grounds of their political affiliation. In addition, above and beyond the provisions of Equality Act with respect to gender, the School recognises the validity of non-binary gender identities and seeks to provide a supportive and affirming environment for non-binary people, including the acceptance of gender-neutral pronouns and titles where applicable.

7. Positive Action

The School recognises that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the school. The School will therefore give full consideration to measures of positive action which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. This is action designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of minority or disadvantaged groups.

The School will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination), but it will take positive action, which enables members of those groups to compete on an equal basis.

8. Harassment and grievance procedures

Harassment has the effect of destroying dignity and undermining the confidence of employees. It can take many forms including physical contact, bullying, threatening or ignoring someone. It can be a series of offensive remarks or a single incident. It can be behaviour that staff find offensive even if not directed at them, or harassment because of perception or association.

The School is committed to the principles of dignity at work for its entire staff in the school. This includes the right to be treated with respect by all managers and colleagues. The School will consider any acts of harassment including those on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment (gender confirmation), marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, as totally unacceptable and outside the ethos and culture of the school. Any such act by a member of staff against any adult or child will be treated as a disciplinary offence, and action taken accordingly.

The school has procedures to resolve grievances and for the handling of complaints of harassment and bullying at work. The School is committed to investigate any such complaint. These procedures will be followed carefully and promptly in response to any such complaint. The first point of contact for any such complaint should be the Headteacher. In addition, staff have the right to approach their professional association or trade union representative for support.

9. Monitoring the Policy

An Equality policy can only be shown to be effective if its implementation is properly monitored. Given the scope of our policy, this means voluntary monitoring both the existing staff of the school and all applications from outside of the school. The school will therefore keep records of existing staff and new applicants which can be analysed to provide data to assess whether this policy is working in practice.

The School will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy by the following methods:

- Data is collected on the composition of the staff group.
- All applicants for posts will be invited to indicate whether they have any special requirements or require reasonable adjustments to enable them to submit an application, attend an interview or carry out the duties of that post. Responses to this question and appropriate actions taken by the school to accommodate people with disabilities will also be monitored as part of this process.
- Staff will be invited to give feedback from time to time, and to make suggestions for improvements.
- The incidence of complaints under the above procedures and any other aspect of this policy will also be monitored, and figures published on a regular basis.
- The School will ensure that information is stored in an appropriate and confidential format in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations

2018. Information relating to race/ethnicity, religion or belief, gender reassignment / gender confirmation, and sexual orientation will be treated as 'sensitive data' for the purposes of data protection.

10. Non-employment aspects of equality

This policy relates only to the employment aspects of the activities of the school. The principles outlined here by the School of fair and equal treatment apply equally to our approach to pupils and parents of the school and to our dealings with members of the local community and all outside agencies. The school's policy on equality in the curriculum and the treatment of pupils is set out in a separate policy document.

11. Training

The principles outlined above in relation to fair and equal treatment will also apply to selection for training. Requests for training will be considered in accordance with the school's operational priorities, based on the school's overall development plan and budget allocations.

Similarly, the training of the school managers in issues of equality and discrimination is an essential part of our Equality policy.

Where training is scheduled to take place on site, the school will, where possible, adapt the methods of training delivery if current arrangements disadvantage particular individuals or groups of staff.

12. General statement

The Equality policy will be reviewed and updated by the School on a bi-annual basis. The policy will then be given to all staff through normal management meeting mechanisms and managers/supervisors will ensure that it is known and understood by all staff. The policy will also be made available to potential applicants for vacant positions in the school.