



**PATHFINDER
SCHOOLS**
Inspiring greatness

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

| Document control | | | |
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| Document Suite: | Human Resources | Document Title: | Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy & Procedure |
| Document Type: | Policy (Internal) | Version number: | 1 |
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| Date Formally approved: | 24 th November 2021 | Formal Approval by: | Trust Board PPP Committee |
| Review information: | Scheduled | Next Review Due By 28th February 2024 | |
| Document History | | | |
| Version | Date | Reviewer | Note of revisions |
| 1 | 01/03/2022 | n/a | Implementation |
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1. Terms of Reference

1.1 This policy applies to all members of the Pathfinder Schools community, including:

- All members of staff
- Workers employed through the agencies
- Trainees on placements
- Volunteers including Governors and Trustees
- Visitors, including external persons or agencies using Trust/School premises, facilities or services;
- Contractors;
- Individuals and organisations working or acting on the Trust's behalf, including suppliers of goods and services;
- Applicants for employment

1.2 All policies and guidance referred to in Pathfinder Schools policies are available upon request from the School/Academy HR Representative.

2. Purpose

2.1 The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness, and respect for all members of our community
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training, or other developmental opportunities

3 Expectations

3.1 All members of the Pathfinder Schools community are expected to act in accordance with this policy and to treat each other with respect at all times, and in all forms of communication, including online and via social media.

4 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion statement

4.1 Pathfinder Schools is passionate about its values of collaboration, humanity, and independence, we believe that when people feel respected and included they can be more creative, innovative, and successful.

We are committed to an inclusive workforce and community that represents many different cultures, backgrounds, and viewpoints. Our policies and procedures are designed to prevent discrimination, regardless of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, ethnicity, age, disability status, or any other aspect which makes them unique.

While we have more work to do to advance diversity and inclusion, we're committed to moving our Trust and the education sector forward.

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 when 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 is where there is a provision, criterion, or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, a requirement to work full time adversely affects women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement shall be discriminatory unless it is 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.

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.

5.6 Disability discrimination; this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

6. The Trust's commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

6.1 Pathfinder Schools will;

6.1.1 Seek to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion in all its activities;

6.1.2 Have regard to its obligations under relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011;

6.1.3 Promote awareness and understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion

- 6.1.4 Create environments free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of individuals are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers, and the public

- 6.1.5 Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public, and any others in the course of the Trust's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the Trust's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

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.

- 6.1.6 Make opportunities for training, development, and progress, individuals will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Trust and the quality of education delivered to our pupils.
- 6.1.7 Make staffing decisions based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- 6.1.8 Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- 6.1.9 Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and acting to address any issues.

- 6.1.10 Use an evidence-based approach to inform its activities to increase equality and to measure the impact of any changes;

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The Pathfinder Schools Trust Board and CEO have ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy.

6.2 The Headteacher/Principal and/or Senior Manager with responsibility for equalities issues has responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law at the School or Central Team level.

6.3 All people managers/supervisors must set an appropriate standard of behaviour and should lead by example to ensure equality is embedded in the work of their team. Managers will promote inclusive working and promote a culture of dignity and respect where concerns and issues can be raised without fear of reprisal.

6.4 All members of the Pathfinder Schools community have a responsibility to:

- understand and observe this policy
- treat others with dignity and respect; and
- respect the Trust's commitment to promote good relations, advance equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.

7. Breaches of this policy

7.1 If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through the appropriate procedure, as outlined below;

7.1.1 **Applicants for employment**-Applicants for employment who have reasonable grounds to believe that they have been unlawfully discriminated against based on their protected characteristic(s) should refer any concerns in writing to the chair of the recruitment panel, addressed to the contact specified in the relevant job advertisement, in the first instance.

7.1.2 **Current staff**-Complaints should be addressed via the Pathfinder Schools Grievance Policy. Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to claim an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

7.1.3 **Volunteers, visitors, parents, and members of the public**-Complaints should be made via the Complaints Policy; each School and the Trust has a Complaints Policy which is available on the website of the organisation

7.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy shall be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith must not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

7.3 Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment shall 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.

7. General Data Protection 2018 (GDPR)

7.1 Our Privacy Notice describes how Pathfinder Schools collects and uses personal information about their employees during and after employment, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. If you require further details as to how your personal data is processed, we ask that you refer to the Privacy Notice, which is incorporated into this policy by reference only.