



Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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At Keystone Academy Trust, our policies are shaped by our shared vision of a flourishing, open minded and resilient family of schools, inspired by others to live life in all its fullness. This vision is drawn from John 10:10 - “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” Rooted in the values of integrity, service, resilience and compassion, our policies reflect our commitment to enabling Stronger Futures for All and to nurturing the academic, personal and spiritual development of every child and adult in our care. Strengthened by our partnerships with families and communities, each policy provides clarity, consistency and care - supporting inclusive practice, protecting the vulnerable, championing staff wellbeing, and ensuring strong, ethical leadership across our schools. Together, these policies create a transparent and principled framework that honours the dignity and potential of those we serve while upholding our educational mission and ethos.

Statement of Intent

Keystone Academy Trust is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. The trust aims to create a 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. Keystone Academy Trust is committed to supporting staff and applicants to be their authentic selves in the workplace without judgement and ensuring that diverse communities are celebrated.

The trust does not discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender identity and/or reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics), amended in line with the Equality Act 2010. More detail on each of the protected characteristics can be found in Appendix 1.

The trust is also mindful of intersecting identities within the trust's environment and will work with communities to better understand the experience of multiple minority identities for individuals.

All staff 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. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat pupils, parents, governors, third party organisations and former staff members.

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

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, both within the central teams and individual schools.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) Article 9(2)(b)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

This policy operates in conjunction with the following trust policies:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Support Staff Appraisal Policy
- Teacher Appraisal Policy

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

Principles underlying this policy

In accordance with this policy, the trust commits to:

- Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- Promoting dignity and respect for all.
- Training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

This policy applies to all aspects of the trust's 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.

Instances of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination will be dealt with as misconduct, in line with the trust's Grievance Policy and/or Disciplinary Procedure Policy, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective operation of this policy.
- Ensuring compliance with discrimination law.
- Monitoring the composition of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability.
- Monitoring how the composition of the workforce encourages equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, and meets the aims and commitments set out in this policy.
- Assessing how this policy, and any supporting action plans, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Senior Leaders will be responsible for:

- Setting an appropriate standard of behaviour and leading by example.
- Ensuring that those they manage adhere to this policy and promote the trust's aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities.
- Taking appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities, in line with the trust's Flexible Working Policy.
- Making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff.
- Ensuring staff are helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Making staff progression decisions based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act 2010).

- Reviewing employment practices and procedures where necessary to ensure fairness.
- Updating employment practices and procedures, and this policy, to take account of changes in the law.

The Chief Operations Manager will be responsible for:

- The day-to-day operational responsibility of this policy.
- Reviewing this policy regularly.
- Organising equal opportunities training, including for those involved in management and recruitment.
- Answering questions about the content or application of this policy.

Line managers will be responsible for:

- Participating in appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection good practice.

All staff will be responsible for:

- Conducting themselves to help the trust provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- Understanding that 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 their colleagues, customers, suppliers, visitors and the public.
- Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by their colleagues, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the trust's work activities.

Forms of Discrimination

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.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics outlined in Appendix 1. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not “fit in” would be direct discrimination.

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.

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.

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.

Sexual Harassment Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of behaviour and can include verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct. The perception of the person experiencing the behaviour is central, and conduct may constitute sexual harassment even if it was not intended to cause offence.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

Keystone Academy Trust recognises its statutory duty under section 40A of the Equality Act 2010 (as inserted by the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023) to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their employment.

- **Preventative approach**

The trust adopts a proactive and preventative approach to sexual harassment and does not rely solely on responding to incidents after they occur. In fulfilling its statutory duty, the trust will take reasonable steps to:

- Promote a culture of dignity, respect and professional behaviour across all schools and central services.
- Clearly communicate expected standards of conduct to all staff, leaders, trustees, governors, volunteers and third parties.
- Ensure that all staff understand what constitutes sexual harassment and how concerns can be raised.
- Provide appropriate training and guidance, particularly for leaders and managers, on preventing, identifying and responding to sexual harassment.
- Maintain clear, accessible reporting routes and ensure that concerns are taken seriously, handled sensitively and addressed promptly.

- **Risk awareness and monitoring**

Keystone Academy Trust will remain alert to circumstances where sexual harassment may be more likely to occur and will take reasonable steps to mitigate such risks. This may include:

- Reviewing workplace practices, environments and activities.
- Monitoring patterns, concerns or complaints that may indicate underlying risk.
- Learning from incidents, complaints or feedback to improve preventative measures.

- **Reporting and consequences**

Any form of sexual harassment is unacceptable and may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct. Allegations will be managed in accordance with the trust's Grievance Policy and Disciplinary Procedure Policy.

Staff who raise concerns or complaints in good faith will be protected from victimisation. Any retaliation against an individual for raising or supporting a concern will be treated as a serious breach of this policy.

Recruitment and Selection

Keystone Academy Trust will aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics. The trust's recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to the job and not disproportionate. The shortlisting of applicants will be done by more than one person wherever possible. The trust will apply safer recruitment guidance.

Job advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. The trust will take steps to ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which will only be used with the Chief Operations Manager approval, such as:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments)
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons

- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process)

Keystone Academy Trust is required by law to ensure that all staff are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status will not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, will be expected to produce original documents, e.g. a passport, before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in the organisation, the trust will monitor applicants' ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information will be voluntary and will not adversely affect an applicant's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information will be removed from applications before the shortlisting process and will be kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps the trust take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

Staff training needs and associated development opportunities will be identified through regular staff appraisals, in line with the trust's Teacher Pay Policy, Support Staff Pay Policy, Executive Pay Policy and the Appraisal and Capability Policy. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit. The trust will adopt good practice in terms of data collection and use this data to monitor and measure the attraction, recruitment, retention and progression of staff.

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 needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

The trust's conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they ensure equal opportunities for all.

Termination of Employment

Keystone Academy Trust will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

The trust will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action, in line with the trust's Disciplinary Procedure Policy.

Disability Discrimination

The trust will encourage staff who are disabled or become disabled to inform the headteacher or their line manager about their condition so that the trust can support them as appropriate.

Staff experiencing difficulties at work because of their disability (physical or otherwise) may wish to contact their line manager or the Chief Operations Manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Their line manager or the Chief Operations Manager may wish to consult with the staff member and a medical adviser about possible adjustments.

The governing board will monitor the physical environment of the school premises to consider whether certain features place physically disabled staff, job applicants, service users, or other stakeholders at a substantial disadvantage compared to others. Where reasonable, the school will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

Part-time, zero hours, and fixed-term employees and agency workers

The trust will 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. The trust will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the Flexible Working Policy.

The trust will monitor its use of zero hours and fixed-term employees 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. The trust will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

Breaches of this policy

If a member of staff believes that they may have been discriminated against, they will be encouraged to raise the matter through the trust's Grievance Policy. If they believe that they may have been subject to harassment, they will be encouraged to raise the matter with their line manager and/or Chief Operations Manager.

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 the Disciplinary Procedure Policy.

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. The trust takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

Monitoring and Review

The trust will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives. As part of this process, the trust will monitor the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of staff. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Chief Operations Manager.

Appendix 1

Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

The definitions used in this appendix are based on the Equality Act 2010, the full text of which is available [here](#).

Age: The Act protects people of all ages; however, differential treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if it can be justified, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.

Disability: The Act protects people who are disabled; the Act defines this as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender identity and/or reassignment: The Act protects transgender people. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected, so a person who does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered by these protections.

Marriage and civil partnership: The Act protects people who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.

Pregnancy and maternity: The Act protects people against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of their pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which they are entitled.

Race: The Act protects people of all races; the Act's definition of race includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief: The Act protects people of any religion, including specific denominations or sects, as well as a lack of religion, i.e. employees or jobseekers who do not follow a certain religion or do not follow any religion are protected. The Act protects people of any belief; this is defined as any religious or philosophical belief, or a lack of such belief, that is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

Sex: The Act protects men and women.

Sexual orientation: The Act protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual staff.