

Mercia Primary Academy Trust

Lark Hall Infant & Nursery Academy
Flax Hill Junior Academy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Equality statement

Mercia Primary Academy Trust is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in all that we do. This policy is a statement of how we intend to tackle discrimination and harassment and promote equality. We consider it important for the Trust to have an Equality of Opportunity Policy because we recognise that, oppression, disadvantage and discrimination still exists in society. This policy demonstrates our commitment to address these issues and take action to seek to put this imbalance right. It will also help us to make sure that everyone has equal access to services and employment and to raise the quality of life of everyone who live in Staffordshire.

We aim to ensure that all groups and individuals within our community and workforce have equal opportunity to benefit from services and employment opportunities we provide and that existing and potential customer are not unlawfully discriminated against due to their protected characteristic.

The extent of the policy

This policy applies to all Trust employees and services, and services delivered by third parties on behalf of the county, including volunteers. We will work towards tackling discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of the following characteristics:

- Age
- Race
- Religion/Belief
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

Legislative framework

The Trust recognises its statutory equality duty under legislation in terms of service provision and employment and is committed to meet them by complying with this policy. Elected members, managers and employees will help to change the way we work so that equality is at the heart of all our activities. We will improve equality practice at a corporate and service level to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) by having “due regard” to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

We will ensure that we assess how our policies, procedures and services impact on disadvantaged groups and take steps to remedy any adverse implications.

Service delivery

We are committed to ensuring our services are open, fair and accessible by taking into consideration the needs and requirements of all customers, potential and existing. We will ensure that;

- Customers and staff have the opportunity to engage with and participate in the planning of services.

- Provide clear information about our services and where necessary in accessible formats
- Provide training for all our employees and elected members to ensure they have a good understanding of our diverse communities and their needs
- Assess the impact and monitoring of our services to ensure they do not discriminate
- Monitor take up of services across the protected characteristics
- Conduct Community Impact Assessments (CIAs) when developing new services and or policies and when reviewing these, taking into account the relevance to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Commissioning and Procurement

The Equality Act 2010 commits the Trust to ensure that contractors, suppliers and funded service providers also abide by the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. We will ensure that our contractors and those providing a service on our behalf provide, that;

- This policy is communicated to all potential contractors and service providers.
- Contractors and service providers have equality and diversity policies. procedures and practices in place.
- Those acting on our behalf will develop and deliver goods, facilities and services are appropriate and accessible.
- We will provide opportunities for all to bid for county contracts
- We will check whether contracts and service arrangements meet equality and diversity commitments. As an employer, we are committed to ensuring that we provide equality of opportunity to all in employment. We are also committed to employing a diverse workforce, to help us to understand and relate to the community we serve. Through our recruitment policies and practices we will aim to eliminate barriers and encourage applicants from all sections of the community. We will achieve this by;
- Ensuring that our recruitment and selection policies and procedures are fair and equitable so that the best people are appointed to deliver our services
- Only consider applicants for jobs on the basis of their relevant experience, skills and abilities unless a Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ) exists for specific posts;
- Use appropriate lawful methods, including positive action, to address the underrepresentation of any group which the county identifies as being under-represented in particular types of jobs
- Shortlist and interview all disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria of the post in line with our commitment to the 'Positive about Disabled People' initiative.
- Ensure that all employees receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their
- employment regardless of whether they are part-time, full-time or employed on a temporary basis.
- Take appropriate action against incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination, and offer support and advice to victims or witnesses to incidents
- Take disciplinary action against employees who discriminate against people who work or seek employment with the county.

Workforce data

In order to assess the impact of our policies and practices and comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we will monitor by the Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 for the following;

- the number of part-time/full-time staff by protected group
- recruitment, training, performance assessment, promotion, redundancy, and leavers
- the rates of return to work of women on maternity leave
- the results of staff satisfaction surveys by protected group
- Public office holders such as the members of our Board or committees.

Those involved in recruitment and selection will be required to follow the county's policy guidelines as set out in the recruitment and selection procedure.

Accountability

The Chief Executive with senior management teams are responsible for providing leadership in the implementation of this policy and for ensuring that service planning and performance management systems take account of equality. However all staff have responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Elected members have overall responsibility for the direction and scrutiny of this policy and will ensure that principles of fairness and equality guide the decision making process.

Communication

All managers will be responsible for ensuring that those they manage are made aware of this policy and that it is brought to the attention of all those who join the county as part of employee induction processes.

The policy will also be made available to members of the community and all those who provide services on behalf of the county will be made aware of the policy and the need for them to comply with its provisions.

Breach of policy

Breaches of this policy will be managed through the county’s Complaints and

Disciplinary procedures, depending on the nature of the breach. Legal action may also be considered where appropriate.

Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless we are required to do so due to change of legislation.

Signed

Director, Mercia Primary Academy Trust