Gardener Schools Group

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

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Contents Page

Our Commitments	Page 3
About this policy	Page 3
Who does this policy apply to?	Page 4
Who is responsible for this policy?	Page 4
Diversity and inclusion training	Page 4
Discrimination	Page 4
Recruitment and Selection	Page 5
Training and Promotion	Page 5
Termination of Employment	Page 5
Disability	Page 5
Part-time and fixed term work	Page 6
Breaches of this policy	Page 6
Related policies	Page 6

Our Commitment

We are an equal opportunities employer and are committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment and creating a workplace culture in which diversity, equity and inclusion is valued and everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

To promote an environment within which we can call upon the widest possible range of knowledge, skill and experience, as well as ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation and codes of practice, we are committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which represents the population within our recruitment area in terms of race or colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, age, and disability (together known as "Protected Characteristics").

We will take reasonable steps to:

- Promote awareness and provide training to staff and managers on equity and in the workplace.
- Apply the principles of equity to all staff and all job applicants so that there is equality of opportunity. Our aim is that no individual is denied employment opportunities for reasons unrelated to ability.
- Ensure a diversity of candidates at all career stages beginning with recruitment, including the development and promotion of talent through to the appointment of senior leadership.
- Implement all internal policies and procedures on a fair and impartial basis.
- Create an inclusive working environment that is sensitive to the needs of staff of differing cultures, religions and beliefs.
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable employees with disabilities to function effectively and to their full potential.
- Ensure that work environments are free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying.

No employee or prospective employee will receive unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic, because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic or because they are associated with someone who has a Protected Characteristic, in particular but not only, in relation to:

- Recruitment and selection.
- Promotion, transfer and training opportunities.
- Benefits, terms and conditions of employment.
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures.
- Termination of employment including redundancies.
- Conduct at work.

Procedures are in place to ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to the admission and assessment of pupils.

The principles of non-discrimination and diversity, equity and inclusion also apply to the way in which you must treat visitors, pupils, parents, suppliers and former members of staff.

About this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion. Our aim is to encourage and support diversity, equity and inclusion and actively promote a culture that values difference and eliminates discrimination in our workplace. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay, benefits and conditions, flexible working and leave, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers.

Who is responsible for this policy?

The Directors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Headteacher. Questions about the policy or suggestions for change should be referred to the Headteacher or HR.

All line managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to diversity, equity and inclusion.

This policy is reviewed annually.

Diversity and inclusion training

Managers will be given appropriate training on recognising and avoiding discrimination, harassment, victimisation, unconscious bias and promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in the areas of recruitment, development and promotion.

We will provide you with regular training to ensure that everyone is aware of and understands the contents of this policy and the Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy. Following the training, you will be required to confirm that you have read, understand and will comply with this policy and the Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former staff, job applicants, parents, pupils, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. Direct discrimination can include associative discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably because of their association with an individual with a Protected Characteristic, and perception discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably because of the mistaken belief that they possess a Protected Characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination: 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. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment. This includes where someone mistakenly believes that the person victimised has done so.

- 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.

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination.

Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

Where appropriate, we may approve the use of lawful exemptions to recruit someone with a particular Protected Characteristic, for example, where the job can only be done by a woman. The advertisement should specify the exemption that applies.

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children.

All offers of appointment shall be conditional on satisfactory completion of the pre-employment checks, as set out within KCSIE.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our School, we monitor applicants' ethnic group, nationality, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment.

Training and Promotion

Training needs will be identified through regular appraisals which will be based entirely on an objective assessment of performance and will not be influenced by any Protected Characteristics that you may have. You will be given appropriate access to training to enable you to progress within the School and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit.

Termination of Employment

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

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and sanctions are applied without discrimination.

Disability

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for a position at the School. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made as are required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of their disability. For example, where written tests are used, alternative arrangements will be made for visually impaired applicants.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your Head of Department to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your Head of Department may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments and you may be asked to give your consent to a report being produced about your state of health and ability to perform your duties. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain

our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible. Once an adjustment has been made its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assess its continuing effectiveness.
We will make such adjustments to work arrangements or School premises as are reasonable to enable a disabled staff member to carry out their duties. This will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign and/or flexible hours.

Where, during the course of their employment, a disabled member of staff recognises their need for a reasonable adjustment to be made to work arrangements or School premises, they should discuss this requirement with the Bursar.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

Part-time and fixed term work

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

Breaches of this policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have been the subject of discrimination you can raise the matter informally in accordance with the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy, or formally through our Grievance Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about or report discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Related policies

This policy is supported by the following other policies and procedures:

- Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- Grievance Procedure.
- Disciplinary Procedure.
- Flexible Working Policy.
- Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave Policies.
- Parental Leave Policy.
- Time Off for Dependants Policy.
- Professional Code of Conduct Policy.
- Career Break Policy.