

GDST Policies
Equal Opportunities / Diversity
(Employment)
(12/11)

Policy Statement

The Council of the Trust is committed to equal opportunities in employment, training and development. The Council's policy aims to ensure that all employees are recruited, trained and promoted on the basis of ability, the requirements of the job and relevant and objective criteria.

The policy applies to the Trust's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed term contracts, to ex-employees, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants who work for the Trust ("**Workers**").

The Trust will not unlawfully discriminate against any Worker on the grounds of race, age, gender, marital or civil partner status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief (or lack thereof), disability, or pregnancy and maternity (together the 'protected characteristics'), part-time or fixed term status in any matters relating to employment, training and development. The Trust will also not discriminate against, or treat less favourably, any Worker because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

All Workers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat colleagues with dignity at all times and not to discriminate against or harass other Workers, whether junior or senior to them. The Trust has a separate "Dignity at Work" Policy which deals with this latter issue. The Trust will also take reasonable steps to prevent harassment of its staff by people who are not employees e.g. parents, suppliers & contractors.

This policy applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits and facilities and pay; to health and safety and to conduct at work, to grievance and disciplinary procedures and to the termination of employment, including redundancy.

(a) Recruitment and promotion

All posts are advertised, either internally or externally as appropriate. Vacancies for Heads and deputy Heads are always advertised nationally, save for in exceptional circumstances to be determined by the Chief Executive of the Trust in consultation with the Chairman.

All Heads and others with responsibility for recruitment are required to adhere to the guidance on fair recruitment procedures provided by the Trust and shall take steps to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches a wide labour market. Where appropriate, use may be made of lawful exemptions to recruit suitably-qualified people to cater for the special needs of particular groups.

Recruitment is done on the basis of matching skills, qualifications and experience with a person specification for the post in accordance with recommended best practice for ensuring equality of opportunity in employment.

(b) Employment of ex-offenders

Many posts involve substantial opportunity for unsupervised access to children and are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974. Applicants are therefore required to declare any criminal convictions, including those normally regarded as 'spent' under the Act. All candidates offered an appointment to an exempt post are required to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service before the appointment is confirmed, which will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions.

In the event that the Disclosure reveals a criminal record or other information of concern, this will be discussed with the candidate before a decision is made whether or not to confirm the offer of employment. In making this decision, the Trust will consider the nature of the offence and whether in the opinion of the Trust this makes the applicant unsuitable for the type of work to be undertaken or unacceptable to other employees, how long ago the offence was committed and the age of the prospective employee at that time, together with any other factors that may be relevant.

(c) Pay and conditions

The Council's pay policy, pay scales and other employee benefits and policies apply to all employees. Part-time employees benefit on a pro-rata basis from the same pay scales and benefits as full-time employees.

(d) Access to training and development

Training and development opportunities are open to all employees as appropriate, and all employees are entitled to discuss such opportunities in their annual appraisal. In schools, it is the Trust's policy that all newly qualified teachers are provided with an appropriate induction training programme in accordance with national guidelines. A Central Training and Staff Development Programme provides opportunities for all employees to apply for training grants, and to attend central training programmes as appropriate.

(e) Disability and access for people with disabilities

In this policy disability has the meaning set out in the Equality Act 2010, that is, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Trust encourages any employee who is disabled or becomes disabled in the course of their employment with the Trust, to tell their line manager or the HR Department about their condition. This will enable the Trust to support its employees as much as possible. The Trust also encourages employees to advise their line manager or the HR Department of any reasonable adjustments to their working conditions or the duties of their job which they consider necessary or which would assist them in the performance of their duties. The line manager or HR Department may wish to consult with the employee and their medical advisor(s) about possible reasonable adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of the job. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for the Trust to accommodate these suggested adjustments and the Trust will ensure that it provides the employee with information as to the basis of its decision not to make any adjustments.

The Trust will continue to monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other workers in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Where possible and proportionate the Trust will take steps to improve access for disabled workers and service users and the Trust has a published Accessibility Strategy. Some of the Trust's existing premises are subject to listed building and other planning restrictions or cannot readily be modified. However, each school has its own accessibility plan, which sets out a structured programme to increase access to its facilities over time.

(f) Monitoring of policy implementation

To ensure that this policy is operated effectively and to identify those sections of the local community which may be under-represented in employment the Trust monitors racial origins, gender, disability, and age of its workforce. The Trust also maintains records of this data in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of the data provide the basis for taking appropriate steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and to implement this policy.

(g) Breaches of the policy

If an employee believes that they have been disadvantaged on any of the unlawful grounds listed in this policy they are encouraged to raise the matter through the Trust's grievance procedure. If an employee believes they may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds listed at in this policy they are encouraged to raise the matter through the Trust's "Dignity at Work" policy. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy should be made through the appropriate procedures and may be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Workers who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations of a breach in this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

If, after investigation, an employee is proven to have harassed another Worker on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, disability, gender reassignment or age or otherwise act in breach of this policy, she or he will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The Trust will take appropriate action with regards to serious breaches of this Policy.

This policy applies equally to Trust Workers' relations with pupils, visitors, clients, customers and suppliers. If, after investigation, an employee is proven to have discriminated against or harassed a pupil, client or supplier the employee will also be subject to disciplinary action.

(h) Review

The Trust will regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving the objectives stated in the equal opportunities statement by monitoring the composition of job applicants.

The Trust is committed to providing relevant training for all employees on their responsibilities and duties under this policy.