



Equality and Diversity Policy

For use by all Spring Partnership schools and
TSPT Central Office

	Name	Date
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Approved Directors v1.0	Ruth Punter, Chair of HR Committee	Feb 2019
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Approved	John Cliff, Chair of Trustees	Feb 2024

Aims

The Spring Partnership Trust (TSPT) is a charitable business spread over six geographical sites (a TSPT central office and individual school sites). It was established to improve standards in education including pupil's wellbeing and wider opportunities for personal development. It does this by:

- Recruiting and training highly skilled staff, dedicated to providing high quality education
- Working in partnership with the wider education system, parents and carers, so families are supported and valued, and local communities enriched
- Setting and monitoring aspirational targets for pupil's academic progress and attainment
- Providing an inclusive curriculum which enables all pupils to develop the skills, knowledge and self-confidence necessary for the next stage of their education.

In the course of doing so, we interact with a diverse range of people, including:

- Children and young people generally aged between 3 years and 11 years old
- Parents, families and carers or guardians of our pupils
- The wider public, such as local residents to our sites, potential parents and former pupils
- Our staff and visitors
- Colleagues in other Trusts, local authorities or professional bodies
- Contractors and suppliers

The schools within TSPT aim to meet their obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not
- Foster good relations between groups and individuals who share a protected characteristic and people who do not
- Ensure that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups

Our approach to equality is based on the following key principles:

- All pupils, staff, Trustees, Local Advisory Council members and volunteers feel deeply valued and entitled to thrive in the school or workplace, reaching their full potential
- We recognise, respect and value each other's differences and understand that diversity is our strength
- We actively foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging
- We observe and promote good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
- Through business systems and schools' curricula, we aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
- We will not hold back on supporting social justice and social mobility so our pupils are prepared for life in a cohesive, diverse society.

We want TSPT to be a fully inclusive organisation where all children and adults feel valued because their differences are seen as positive contributions to our community. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable everyone to play their part in the implementation of our EDI Strategic plan.

1. Legal Framework

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

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018. This policy has due regard to statutory and good practice guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act and schools'
 - DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
 - DfE (2018) 'Gender separation in mixed schools'
 - DfE (2018) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'
 - DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Children Looked After Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Through the way we deliver education we are required to:

- Make sure all our day-to-day practices, including our policies and procedures, result in inclusion so that no groups are inadvertently excluded or further disadvantaged.
- Continually re-examine the way we work on a day-to-day basis so that unconscious bias does not creep into our practices.
- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

Further information about the single public sector equality duty can be found at the address below:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty>

Trustees intend to fulfil their responsibilities under the Single Public Sector Equality Duty with regard to staff and pupils in TSPT.

There are some specific duties that we have to carry out and these are:

- (a) Publish information which demonstrates how we are achieving our Public Sector Equality Duty.
- (b) Prepare and publish specific and measurable equality objectives.

TSPT and its schools have to publish objectives at least once every four years and update information regarding progress made towards meeting those objectives at least annually. Local Advisory Councils can oversee the schools' objectives and published information/progress made. In preparing and reviewing the objectives, Trustees and Local Advisory Councils must consider 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities' as updated by the Government from time to time.

2. Scope

This policy encompasses the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board and Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Groups will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective operation of this policy.
- Ensuring compliance with discrimination law.
- 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.

Trust Leaders, Headteachers and other 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 regarding equal opportunities.
- Taking appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities, in line with flexible working regulations.
- 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 Human Resources Manager will be responsible for:

- The day-to-day operational responsibility of this policy (from recruitment adverts to onboarding candidates as well as ensuring fair access to training and fair process of all HR policies).
- Reviewing this policy regularly.
- Supporting 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 serious complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by their colleagues, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others during the Trust's work activities.

4. 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. 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.

5. Recruitment and Retention

The Trust is committed to preventing discrimination against job applicants based on any protected characteristics.

Where an applicant has a disability covered by the definition outlined within the Equality Act 2010 and can show that they meet the 'essential criteria' described in the person specification for the role being applied for, they will be guaranteed a priority interview for the job.

Regular reviews of recruitment procedures will ensure fair treatment based on individuals' merits and abilities. Job selection criteria will be consistently assessed for relevance and proportionality. Multiple individuals will participate in applicant shortlisting whenever possible.

Job advertisements will steer clear of stereotypes and language discouraging specific groups with protected characteristics from applying. The Trust will actively promote vacancies to a diverse labour market.

Health or disability inquiries will only occur post job offer, with limited exceptions approved by Human Resources. These exceptions include necessary questions about an applicant's ability to perform key job functions, fitness for assessments, positive action for recruiting disabled individuals, and equal opportunities monitoring, which won't influence decision-making.

To comply with UK law, the Trust will ensure all staff have the right to work in the country. Immigration status assumptions based on appearance or nationality will be avoided. Prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must present original documents like a passport to meet immigration legislation, with the list available from the UK Border Agency.

Monitoring applicants' ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and age during recruitment will help identify underrepresented or disadvantaged groups. Providing this information is voluntary, with no adverse impact on recruitment chances. The data, kept in an anonymized format, aids in addressing discrimination, enhancing equality, and promoting diversity within the organisation.

6. Staff training, promotion, and conditions of service

Regular staff appraisals, aligned with the Trust's Professional Growth Policy, will identify staff training needs and associated development opportunities. Ensuring all staff have appropriate access to training for organisational progression is a priority, and promotion decisions will be solely merit-based.

The Trust will employ best practices in data collection, utilising the gathered data to monitor and measure staff attraction, recruitment, retention, and progression. Continuous monitoring of workforce composition and promotions will be undertaken to guarantee equal opportunities at all organisational levels. Efforts will be made to identify and eliminate unjustified barriers, addressing the needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

Regular reviews of the Trust's conditions of service, benefits, and facilities are conducted to ensure they provide equal opportunities for everyone within the organisation.

7. Termination of employment

The 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 Policy.

8. Disability discrimination

The Trust encourages employees with disabilities or those who acquire a disability to communicate with the headteacher or their line manager to receive appropriate support.

Staff facing challenges at work due to their disability, whether physical or otherwise, can reach out to their line manager or Human Resources to discuss potential reasonable adjustments. In addressing these difficulties, their line manager or Human Resources may involve the staff member and a medical adviser in consultations about possible adjustments.

The Trust Facilities Manager will regularly assess the physical environment of the estate to identify features that may place physically disabled staff, job applicants, service users, or other stakeholders at a significant disadvantage compared to others. Where feasible, the Trust will take measures to enhance accessibility for disabled staff and service users.

9. 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 Regulations .

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.

10. 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 Employee 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 Human Resources.

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 our Disciplinary 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.

11. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the HR committee and Chief Executive. Monitoring is conducted through the Trust's programme of quality assurance and that undertaken by the individual school. Changes to this policy are communicated to relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2025.