

Equal Opportunities Policy

Q3 Academies Trust
Equal Opportunities Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Operating within a Christian Ethos, the Academy seeks to encompass all aspects of its management and day to day operation within that Ethos, in particular seeking what is good, what is right and what is true. As such the Q3 Academy is committed in its pursuit of academic excellence to equality of opportunity and to a pro-active and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture, and values diversity.

The Academy is therefore committed to a policy and practice which requires that, for students, admission to the Academy will be determined on the basis laid down in the agreement with the DfE/ Local Authority. For staff, entry into employment with the Academy and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and by the application of criteria which are related to the duties and conditions of each particular post and the needs of the Academy.

The Academy recognises that it is essential to provide equal opportunities to all persons without discrimination and provides guidance and encouragement to employees and students at all levels to act fairly and prevent discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, part-time and fixed term contract status, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependants, age (below the national retirement age), trade union or political activities, religious beliefs, spent offences, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable.

As such the Academy will take active steps to promote good practice adhering to The Equality Act 2010. In particular it will:

- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, and all other grounds set out in the statement on equal opportunities.
- Subject its policies to continuous assessment in order to examine how they affect all under-represented groups, especially ethnic minority students and staff, women, and disabled students and staff, and to identify whether its policies help to achieve equality of opportunity for all these groups, or whether they have an adverse impact.
- Monitor the recruitment and progress of all students and staff, paying particular attention to the recruitment and progress of ethnic minority students and staff, women, and disabled students and staff.
- Promote an inclusive culture, good practice in teaching, learning, and assessment, and good management practice, through the development of codes of best practice, policies, and training.
- Take positive action wherever possible to support this policy and its aims.
- Publish this policy widely amongst staff and students, together with policy assessments and results of monitoring

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Q3 Academy is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim 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.
- 2.2 We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**protected characteristics**).
- 2.3 The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat one another, students, visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members.
- 2.4 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.

3. WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY?

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency staff (collectively referred to as **staff** in this policy).

4. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY?

- 4.1 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. Day-to-day operational responsibility, including regular review of this policy, has been delegated to the Human Resources Manager.
- 4.2 All 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 equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. The HR Manager has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training.
- 4.3 If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the HR Manager to request training or further information.

5. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- 5.1 This policy applies to all aspects of our 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.
- 5.2 We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

6. FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 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.

7. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 7.1 We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate. Shortlisting of applicants should be done by more than one person wherever possible.
- 7.2 Job advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying.
- 7.3 Applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with Human Resources approval. For example:
 - (a) Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
 - (b) Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
 - (c) Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
 - (d) Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).
 - (e) Applicants should not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants should not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment without the approval of Human Resources (who should first consider whether such matters are relevant and may lawfully be taken into account).
- 7.4 We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the HR Manager or the UK Border Agency.

- 7.5 To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, we monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, 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. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting, and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

8. STAFF TRAINING, PROMOTION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

- 8.1 Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.
- 8.2 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 special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.
- 8.3 Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

9. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- 9.1 We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
- 9.2 We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

10. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

- 10.1 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.
- 10.2 If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact the Human Resources Department to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The Human Resources Department may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. 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.
- 10.3 We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

11. FIXED-TERM EMPLOYEES

We monitor our use of fixed-term employees, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent

employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

12. PART-TIME WORK

We 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. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately.

13. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

- 13.1 If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Harassment and Bullying Policy. If you are uncertain which applies or need advice on how to proceed you should speak to the Human Resources Department.
- 13.2 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 Procedure.
- 13.3 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 dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

14. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

- 14.1 This policy is reviewed every 12 months by the Governing Body/Human Resources Department.
- 14.2 We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives.
- 14.3 Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Human Resources Department.

15. GRIEVANCES AND VICTIMISATION

- 15.1 The Academy emphasises that discrimination is unacceptable conduct which is likely to lead to disciplinary action under its Disciplinary Procedure.
- 15.2 If any person admitted as a student or appointed as an employee considers that he or she is suffering from unequal treatment on any of the above grounds in his or her admission, appointment, or progression through the Academy, he or she may make a complaint in writing, which will be dealt with through the agreed procedures for complaints or grievances or the procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment, as appropriate.

16. OBLIGATIONS ON STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

- 16.1 Students and Employees of the Academy must be aware of their responsibilities as well as the Academy's commitment to equal opportunities. The obligations include:

- (a) Co-operation with measures introduced to ensure there is equality of opportunity and non-discrimination in employment and education provision matters.
- (b) Ensuring that all employees with the responsibility for service delivery arrangements, selection decisions in recruitment, promotion or training, do not discriminate, failing which appropriate action will be taken against the employee.
- (c) Not persuading or seeking to persuade others in the Academy to practice unlawful discrimination.
- (d) Drawing the attention of management to suspected discriminatory acts or practices.
- (e) Offering protection from victimization to employees or students who have made complaints or provided information about instances of discrimination and harassment.

The Governing Body will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.