

# Equal Opportunities Policy

Aligned with Ofsted, NCFE, SEND Code of Practice, Equality Act, and KCSIE



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## Table of Contents

|                                         |   |
|-----------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Introduction                         | 3 |
| 2. Policy Objectives                    | 3 |
| 3. Scope                                | 3 |
| 4. Protected Characteristics            | 3 |
| 5. Principles                           | 4 |
| 5.1 Non-Discrimination                  | 4 |
| 5.2 Equity and Inclusion                | 4 |
| 5.3 Safeguarding and Well-being         | 4 |
| 6. Responsibilities                     | 4 |
| 6.1 Staff and Managers                  | 4 |
| 6.2 Education Business Manager          | 4 |
| 7. Definitions of Discrimination        | 5 |
| 7.1 Direct Discrimination               | 5 |
| 7.2 Indirect Discrimination             | 5 |
| 7.3 Victimisation                       | 5 |
| 7.4 Harassment                          | 5 |
| 8. Supporting Learners with SEND        | 5 |
| 8.1 Identification and Support:         | 5 |
| 8.2 Inclusive Practices:                | 5 |
| 9. Recruitment and Employment Practices | 5 |
| 9.1 Fair Recruitment                    | 5 |
| 9.2 Career Development                  | 6 |
| 9.3 Adjustments for Disabilities        | 6 |
| 10. Addressing Discrimination           | 6 |
| 10.1 Reporting and Resolving Complaints | 6 |
| 10.2 Disciplinary Action                | 6 |
| 11. Monitoring and Review               | 6 |
| 12. Communication and Training          | 6 |

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Hatfield Wick Education (HWE) is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful and equitable environment where all individuals can thrive. This policy ensures compliance with the Equality Act 2010, SEND Code of Practice, KCSIE, Department for Education statutory guidance, and awarding organisation expectations.

This policy applies to all aspects of HWE's operations, including recruitment, employment, teaching, assessment, safeguarding, and learner support..

### **2. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

This policy aims to:

- 2.1 Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- 2.2 Promote equality of opportunity for all, particularly for those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.3 Foster an environment of respect, diversity, and inclusion.
- 2.4 Ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory frameworks, including Ofsted and NCFE requirements.
- 2.5 Embed equality considerations into safeguarding and curriculum delivery.

### **3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all staff, learners, contractors, and visitors at HWE. It applies to recruitment, employment practices, curriculum delivery, assessment decisions, safeguarding procedures, and all operational activities.

### **4. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

HWE recognises the following as protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race, colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins
- Religion or belief

- Sex
- Sexual orientation

## 5. PRINCIPLES

### Non-Discrimination

HWE ensures that decisions regarding recruitment, employment, and educational opportunities are based solely on merit and legitimate needs. Discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is strictly prohibited.

### Equity and Inclusion

Reasonable adjustments and support are provided to ensure that learners and staff with disabilities or SEND can fully participate in education and employment.

### Safeguarding and Well-being

Equality considerations form part of safeguarding practice. Vulnerable learners and those with protected characteristics will be supported to ensure they are not disproportionately impacted by policies or decisions..

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES

### Staff and Managers

- 6.1.1 All staff are responsible for upholding this policy, treating colleagues and learners with dignity and respect.
- 6.1.2 Challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- 6.1.3 Report concerns in line with safeguarding or grievance procedures.
- 6.1.4 Managers have additional responsibilities, including:
  - Leading by example in promoting equality and diversity.
  - Ensure fair implementation of policies.
  - Addressing complaints of discrimination or harassment promptly.

### Education Business Manager

The Education Business Manager is responsible for:

- 6.1.5 Overseeing compliance with equal opportunities legislation.
- 6.1.6 Providing training and guidance on diversity and inclusion.
- 6.1.7 Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of this policy.

## 7. DEFINITIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

### Direct Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

**Example:** Refusing a job applicant based on their disability.

### Indirect Discrimination

Applying policies or practices that disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics.

**Example:** Requiring ten years of experience for a role, which may disadvantage younger applicants.

### Victimisation

Treating someone unfairly because they have raised a complaint of discrimination.

### Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

## 8. SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITH SEND

### Identification and Support:

- HWE identifies learners with SEND and support in line with the SEND Code of Practice.
- The SEND Coordinator ensures tailored support is provided.

### Inclusive Practices:

- Curriculum and assessment methods will be adapted where required.
- Physical and digital learning environments are made accessible.
- Alternative formats will be provided where necessary.

Reasonable adjustments will be documented and reviewed.

## 9. RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

### Fair Recruitment

- Job advertisements are designed to attract diverse applicants and avoid discriminatory language.
- Selection criteria are based on objective, role-specific requirements.
- Safer recruitment principles will be followed.

### **Career Development**

- Training and promotion opportunities are accessible to all staff.
- Unjustified barriers to progression are identified and removed.

### **Adjustments for Disabilities**

- HWE makes reasonable adjustments for employees and candidates with disabilities.
- Examples include flexible working hours, adapted workstations, and assistive technologies.

## **10. ADDRESSING DISCRIMINATION**

### **Reporting and Resolving Complaints**

10.1.1 Complaints of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation can be raised through HWE's grievance procedure.

10.1.2 HWE ensures confidentiality and protection from retaliation for individuals who raise concerns in good faith.

All concerns will be investigated fairly and confidentially.

### **Disciplinary Action**

10.1.3 Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

10.1.4 Staff found guilty of discrimination may face legal consequences.

## **11. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

11.1 **Policy Review:** This policy is reviewed annually by the Education Business Manager and updated as needed to reflect legislative changes or feedback.

11.2 **Diversity Monitoring:** HWE monitors diversity metrics to identify and address underrepresentation.

## **12. COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING**

12.1 **Staff Training:** All staff receive training on equal opportunities and diversity during induction and at regular intervals.

12.2 **Learner Awareness:** HWE promotes awareness of this policy during learner induction and through accessible communication channels.

This policy reflects Hatfield Wick Education's commitment to fostering a culture of equality, respect, and inclusion for all.

