Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice Policy

Policy Group:	**Staffing & HR**
Policy Ref:	**SHR/20**
Responsible Reviewing Officer and Job Title:	**Head of HR**
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1. Introduction

a) Pickwick Academy Trust is committed to a policy of equal opportunities and non-discriminatory treatment for all members of its community. This commitment applies regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race (to include colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex or sexual , which are collectively recognised as Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010..

b) The Trust believes it is also the right of all human beings regardless of religion or lack of religion, belief, culture, class, race, gender, sexuality, disability, social economic background, or age to be treated with respect and total fairness. We actively support personal and cultural identities and in preparing its pupils for full and positive participation in society. These commitments represent fundamental values within our educational purpose.

c) The terms Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Justice(EDIJ) sit at the heart of this policy. 'Equality' although not explicitly named in the acronym, remains a central principle and.means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination.

d) Within our Trust, EDIJ including Equality means:

- Equity is about recognising that some groups are more advantaged than others, and putting measures in place to help eliminate these disadvantages, ensuring more equal opportunities for all.
- Diversity is about celebrating individual differences amongst our workforce, recognising a diverse workforce strengthens our culture and enhances our ability to educate our children well.
- Inclusion is about ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution.
- Justice is the active process of identifying and dismantling barriers that may historically have led to exclusion or unfairness. Within Pickwick Academy Trust, this means not just accepting the status quo but critically examining our policies, structures, and daily practices and approaches to rectify systemic unfairness to help ensure every individual has the support they need to thrive.
- Equality is about ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination.

We are committed to ensuring that all members of staff are valued, supported and respected. '

We aim to ensure an environment in which staff and pupils feel secure, appreciated and free from intimidation or discrimination and ensure that our workforce is valued and treated with dignity and respect, helping everyone in our Trust to reach their potential.

2. Purpose and Scope

We are strongly committed to promoting Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice (EDIJ), alongside Equality in all aspects of our work, preventing discrimination in both our employment and education provision by actively fostering an inclusive culture in which differences are celebrated.

a. Our aim is:

- create an inclusive environment, where everyone can contribute their best work and develop to their full potential
- To ensure that the curriculum is free from bias of access, delivery and content.
- To value and respect the protected characteristics and cultural heritage of others and to raise awareness of the ways in which discrimination can take place.
- To foster harmony through valuing diversity and inclusion, and the development of full potential regardless of race, creed, gender, age, social economic background, hours of work, trade union affiliation or disability through effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued to make sure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- To regularly review and challenge policies, practices and structures that may perpetuate historical disadvantage or exclusion
- To actively promote effective practice for countering all aspects of direct and indirect discrimination.
- To ensure fairness and inclusion in recruitment and selection procedures.
- To provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether permanent, temporary, part-time or full-time.
- To ensure fairness in providing access to training, professional development, mentoring and promotion opportunities.
- To promote fundamental values of democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance.
- To ensure our curriculum, resources and teaching practices actively challenge stereotypes and represent diverse perspectives
- To oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination, including recruitment, pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, leave for parents, and other employee related processes.
- To ensure that where appropriate, measures will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups
- To Empower staff to challenge, speak out and act against racism, homophobia, and other forms of inequality and discrimination
- To become and remain a Disability Confident Committed employer and work towards becoming more aware of our responsibilities to disabled workers and individuals with long-term health conditions.

b. All forms of discrimination by any person within the trust's responsibility will be treated seriously. Equality forms an integral part of every aspect of life within each school and across the trust.

c. We are committed to creating a welcoming community where diverse cultures are celebrated

d. We value the contribution of staff and pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL),recognising the benefits of bilingualism and multiculturalism.. Pickwick Academy Trust will ensure that all individuals with EAL are treated with respect and dignity and are positively valued by the team

3. Responsibilities and Accountabilities

a. All staff, volunteers, Governors and Trustees will:

- Abide by current rules of conduct (refer to Professional Expectations and Standards Policy and LGC Handbook) and model high standards of behaviour to pupils and colleagues.
- Eliminate any policy, practice or attitude which seeks to discriminate.
- Encourage positive action to enhance opportunities for all.
- Condemn and take steps to prevent all forms of abuse, harassment or intimidation.
- Be actively seen taking action to avoid any form of abuse, injustice, harassment or intimidation.
- Contribute to a pluralistic society and assist all pupils in preparing for the same.

b. The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Monitoring and reviewing this policy on a regular basis to ensure its effectiveness.
- Ensuring adequate resources are available to promote appropriate behaviour across the Trust and deal effectively with any issues raised.
- Ensuring resources are allocated to address identified barriers and historical disadvantages
- Investigating any complaints made against the CEO or a trustee.
- Receiving information in respect of workforce EDIJ, including in respect of any relevant action plans and KPI's.
- Acting as ultimate decision makers in relation to any complaint appeals by the CEO.

c. The Local Governance Committee (LGC) is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the pastoral framework regarding admission, induction, and class placement is adhered (see below)
- Clear procedures are in place to deal with reporting and recording racial or other discriminatory incidents.
- Ensuring adequate resources are available to promote appropriate behaviour across each school and deal effectively with any issues raised.

- Offering guidance to the Headteacher.
- Investigating complaints against the Headteacher of their school if from a parent or pupil in line with the trust Complaints Policy.
- Receiving requests in relation to any complaint appeals by a parent or pupil in line with the trust Complaints Policy

d. The CEO, Executive team and School Leaders are responsible for:

- Providing consistent and high-profile leadership on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice alongside Equality to identify and dismantle systemic barriers
- Communicating the policy to staff and volunteers and ensuring arrangements are in place for its promulgation. Supporting staff who have suffered racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobia or other forms of personal verbal or physical abuse or intimidation.
- Ensuring that anyone who has committed such offences will be appropriately dealt with. In the case of pupils, this may include exclusion from the Trust; for staff, disciplinary action under the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Policy and for governors/trustees, removal from their Boards.
- Strengthening home/school community liaison and ensuring that the general pastoral framework regarding admission, induction, and class placement takes full account of issues of race, language, culture, religion, gender and disability.
- Ensuring all members of staff have read and understood the provisions outlined in this policy.
- Ensuring all employees know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to ensure these are put into practice Following the requirements of the trust Complaints policy in respect of a complaint from Parents and Pupils, and the Bullying and Harrassment policy in respect of a complaint from another member of staff.
- Setting a good example to other members of the workforce by promoting a respectful attitude.
- Being alert to unacceptable behaviour amongst members of the workforce

e. Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their behaviour is in line with this policy and the Professional Behaviours, Expectations and Standards Policy.
- Undertaking training and gaining subsequent understanding in respect of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice alongside Equality .
- Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination
- Actively participating in the identification and challenge of practices that may perpetuate inequality

- Conducting themselves in a professional manner at all times.
- Respecting their colleagues, our pupils and the wider community in their language and actions
- Creating an inclusive environment which is free from inequality.
- Informing the Headteacher of any behaviour that they believe is unacceptable in the workplace where this relates to school-based staff, to the CFOO where this relates to central team staff, to the Directors of Education where this

relates to Headteachers, to the CEO when this relates to members of the Executive Team and to Trustees in relation to the CEO

- Strengthening home/school community liaison.

4. Definitions

All members of the workforce and pupils are encouraged to value differences, including dual language, as an asset and learning opportunity. Any prejudice will be challenged, wherever it occurs, to refinforce the understanding that difference is normal and valued.

a) Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

b) 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.

c) Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by a provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage unless it can be objectively justified. 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.

d) 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. The Trust is committed to proactively identifying where adjustments may be required and providing them wherever reasonable to ensure staff and pupils can participate fully.

e) 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.

f) 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.

g) Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. To be sexual harassment, the unwanted behaviour must have either:

   a. violated someone's dignity, whether it was intended or not

b. created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, whether it was intended or not

h) Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

i) The Trust also recognises that while gender identity and gender expression are not separate protected characteristics, trans and non-binary individuals are protected under the characteristic of gender reassignment. The Trust is committed to supporting trans, non-binary and gender-diverse members of our community in line with statutory rights.

5. Appointments

a. The Trust is committed to taking steps to ensure equity amongst our workforce such as ensuring that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse range of potential candidates where possible . Where relevant, for particular groups that are identified as disadvantaged or underrepresented in our Trust, the Trust may take positive action to lawfully address under-representation where appropriate.

b. The Trust is committed to ensuring there are no unlawful barriers to accessing our employment opportunities, training, progression opportunities, benefits and facilities ensuring that all final decisions are made on merit and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

c. The Trust is committed to ensure that no job applicant, employee or volunteer is discriminated against either directly or indirectly. Those involved in making appointments will ensure that any recruitment procedures – advertisement, shortlisting, interviews, and selection decisions will not be influenced by perceived conscious or unconscious prejudices. In deciding whether to offer a place to an applicant, the trust will treat each application on its individual merits (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act). It will take a range of information supplied in the submitted application and from any interview attended into account when determining an applicant's suitability for a role. Interview questions will be related to the requirement of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature. All job applicants will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job. Shortlisting and interviewing will be carried out by more than one individual to further remove any indirect or subconscious prejudices.

d. Candidates, who fall under the Equality Act 2010, are offered the opportunity at the point of application to request the Trust put in place reasonable adjustments to ensure an equitable recruitment process. As such, we will consider and make reasonable adjustments for all those to whom this policy applies as appropriate,

in each particular case. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and seek an alternative solution

e. Promotion and advancement will be on merit and all decisions related to these will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.
For our current workforce, we support our colleagues with a disability or long-term health condition, through making reasonable adjustments to help enable them to thrive in their roles.

6. Behaviours and Training

a. All members of the workforce should treat each other and all pupils and parents and carers with respect. Disrespect for any individual will not be ignored or tolerated. All forms of discrimination by any person within the Trust's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable and may lead to disciplinary action. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal for employees and withdrawal from the trust for pupils.

b. Members of the Workforce will ensure that pupils (and other colleagues) feel safe and free to learn by following guidelines and regulations described in our Anti-Bullying Policy and Professional Behaviours, Expectations and Standards Policy.

c. Policies, displays, notices, meals and uniform requirements in the Trust will reflect the entire pupil and workforce population in terms of ethnicity, language, race, gender, sexuality and disability.

d. Members of the workforce at all levels will seek to develop strong positive links with the homes and communities from which pupils and colleagues come. The Trust values the fact that many pupils and adults in our community are bilingual and will encourage the teaching and use of community languages.

e. Training on EDIJ, equality and inclusive practice is mandatory for all staff at induction and is refreshed regularly. Leaders and those involved in recruitment receive additional, specialised EDIJ and unconscious bias training.. Through this training, the workforce will make every effort to understand the origins and nature of discrimination of all kinds and to recognise their own prejudices.

7. Complaints Procedure

a. The Trust is committed to provide an environment in which all pupils and members of the workforce feel safe enough to express and question views. All members of the workforce are expected to support and value each other. Any forms of harassment and bullying amongst members of the workforce will not be tolerated and should be reported immediately to the Head of School, Headteacher, Executive Headteacher, Director of Education, Chair of Governors, CFOO or CEO depending on staff role in accordance with the requirements of the Bullying and Harassment Policy. The systems and structures are in place to support workforce needs and to ensure that all new members of the workforce are inducted and able to be effective in their role.

b. If any person considers that they are suffering from unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation within the Trust because of belonging to any of the above protected characteristic groups, they may make a complaint.

c. If the complaint is from a pupil or parent/ carer it will be dealt with through the agreed procedures of the trust Complaints Policy

d. If the complaint is from another member of staff it will be dealt with under the agreed procedures of the Grievance and Resolution or Bullying and Harassment Policy as appropriate.

e. Any complaint will be investigated in accordance with the Trust Grievance and Resolution, Bullying and Harassment or Complaints policy, whichever is appropriate.

f. Breaches of these policies, will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct which could result in dismissal.

8. Monitoring

a. In order to ensure that this policy stays aligned with statutory obligations, remains effective and informs the Trust of any need for review of practice, the trust will ensure that:

- EDIJ data is obtained, analysed and reported in respect of the trust workforce, applicants and successful candidates
- Data is obtained and reported on the completion of workforce training on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice.
- Information is collected on the number and details of any complaints from applicants, members of the workforce or from other stakeholders such as pupils or parents/ carers.

9. Equal Opportunities

a. When writing and reviewing this policy the trust has completed an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment to ensure it complies with equality obligations outlined in anti-discrimination legislation. We believe the policy positively reflects the aims and ambitions of Pickwick Academy Trust and supports our ambition to provide an inclusive environment for all.

10. References, Acknowledgements and Associated Documents

a. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with other Pickwick Academy Trust policies in the same group of policies.

b. This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees.

c. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010.
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Public Sector Equality Duty

d. This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Data Protection Policy.
- Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Grievance and Resolution Policy.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Professional Behaviours, Expectations and Standards Policy
- Complaints Policy