



# **Keystone Academy Trust**

## **Equal Opportunities & Dignity at Work Policy**

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## **1. Policy statement**

The Keystone Academy Trust (KAT) is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. KAT 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.

KAT 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). This policy is in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat students, parents, governors, third party organisations and former staff members.

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.

The policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

## **2. Who is covered by the policy?**

The policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including members of the senior leadership team, teachers, teaching assistants, learning mentors, support staff, trainees, home workers, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, interns, moderators, casual workers and agency staff (collectively referred to as **staff** in this policy).

## **3. Who is responsible for this policy?**

KAT Board of Trustees (the Board) 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 Moderation Manager.

All members of the senior leadership team within the Academy and those that lead the moderation contract 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 Moderation Manager has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training.

## **4. Scope and purpose of the policy**

The policy applies to all aspects of the 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. Appropriate steps will be taken to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities. Refer to the Academy's Flexible Working Policy.

## **5. 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 set out above. 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 would 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.

## **6. Recruitment and selection**

KAT aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above. The 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. Short listing of applicants will be done by more than one person.

Job advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. Steps are taken to ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which will only be used if:

- o Questions are necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- o Questions are necessary to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- o Positive action is required to recruit disabled persons.
- o Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process) is necessary.

Applicants will not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants will not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment.

The Trust is required by law to ensure that all staff are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status will not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, will be expected to produce original documents (for example: passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in the organisation, monitoring 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 applicant's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is removed from applications before short listing, and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps to take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

## **7. Staff training, promotion and conditions of service**

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.

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.

Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that there are equal opportunities for all.

## **8. Termination of employment**

KAT will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

KAT will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

## **9. Disability discrimination**

Disabled persons are encouraged to identify their condition so that they can be supported appropriately.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and a medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. KAT will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If KAT consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable KAT will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

KAT 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, KAT will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

## **10. Zero hours, fixed-term employees and agency workers**

KAT monitor our 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. Where relevant, monitoring their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

## **11. Part-time work**

KAT 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. KAT will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the Flexible Working Policy.

## **12. Breaches of this policy**

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through the Grievance Procedure. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter with your line manager and/or a member of the HR team.

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.

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. KAT take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

## **13. Monitoring and review of the policy**

This policy is reviewed by the Headteacher/Head of School and Moderation Manager in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

KAT will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives. As part of this process KAT monitor the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of our staff.

Staff members are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Headteacher or Moderation Manager as appropriate.