The Howard Partnership Trust

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Date created: May 2015

Trustee Committee Responsible:
Standards & Performance

Senior Leader Contact:
Deputy CEO / THPT Director of HR

Review period: Annually

Last reviewed: May 2019

Next due for review: May 2020

Purpose:
The Howard Partnership Trust are fully committed to providing all students and employees with an equal opportunity to reach their full potential. As set out in the Equality Act (2010), this covers sex, race, disability, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation, students and employees who are pregnant and on maternity/paternity leave, or who are undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment. Our aim of “Bringing Out the Best” applies equally to all our students and employees. We are proud of, and value, the diverse backgrounds of everyone in our communities.

We believe, as a Trust providing comprehensive education, every child has the right to a challenging and stimulating education and, that every staff member is entitled to rewarding and fulfilling work.

We also believe that the curriculum itself should reflect the cultural diversity of our society as a whole, so that all students grow up with an awareness of the contribution made by other cultures to that society, even if they do not directly encounter them at their schools. The concept of Equality of Opportunity is one of our core values as a Trust. As an employer, we similarly strive to ensure we do not discriminate against employees and potential employees in all matters of recruitment, promotion, training, rewards and benefits.

Legal Background

The legal and local framework for this policy is the Equality Act (2010).

Aims and Values

The Howard Partnership Trust (THPT) is a welcoming organisation where everyone is valued highly and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered.

We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all students to maximise their potential regardless of
sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and gender reassignment. We endeavour to promote positive relationships with students, parents, carers, employees, Governors, Trustees and members of the wider community.

At THPT we aim to promote equality and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of Trust/school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement for adults and students alike. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.

The Equality Policy provides a framework for THPT to pursue our equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination (both direct and indirect), harassment and victimisation (see Appendix 1), and promote equality of opportunity, good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all our activities.

We will seek to ensure that no students, employees, parents, carers or any other person, through their contact with the individual schools or wider Trust, receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This includes the protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act (2010) – sex, race, age (in the case of adults), disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, students or employees who are pregnant, on maternity/paternity leave, and students and employees that are undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment.

As a Trust, we aim to:

- Provide a secure environment in which everyone can flourish and achieve;
- Provide a learning environment where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
- Prepare students for life in a diverse society in which they are able to see their place in the local, regional, national and international community;
- Include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- Provide positive non-stereotyping information about different groups of people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marriage or civil partnership, ability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity;
- Plan systematically to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity;
- Actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage;
- Make inclusion a thread which runs through all our activities.

To achieve these aims we will:

- Involve stakeholders in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures;
- Publish and share our policies and impact assessments with the whole community;
- Collect and analyse data to ensure all groups of students and staff are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage;
• Use all available information to set suitable learning challenges for all, respond to people’s diverse needs and overcome any potential barriers to learning or employment;
• Ensure that the wider school curriculum, CPD programmes and the Rewards & Benefits Framework make explicit and implicit provision to promote and celebrate diversity;
• Have high expectations of behaviour, through the use of Behaviour for Learning and the Staff Code of Conduct, which demonstrate respect to others.

THPT is committed to:

• Being proactive in promoting good relationships and equality of opportunity across all aspects of school life and the wider community;
• Encouraging, supporting and enabling all students and employees to reach their potential and make a positive contribution;
• Working in partnership with families, the local authority (LA) and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and tackle discrimination ensuring that our Single Equality Scheme is followed.

Responsibilities

Trustees are responsible for:

• Making sure that the Trust and our schools comply with current equality legislation, in particular the Equality Act (2010);
• Making sure the Equality and Diversity Policy and its procedures are followed.

The CEO and Heads and Service Leads are responsible for:

• Making sure the policy is readily available and that the Trustees, Governors, employees, students and their parents/carers know about it;
• Making sure the procedures are followed;
• Producing regular information for Trustees, Governors and employees about the policy and how it is working and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary;
• Making sure all employees know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out;
• Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination.
• Keeping equality and diversity issues on the Trust’s agenda and ensuring policies and procedures are developed with these issues in mind.

All THPT employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Specifically:

• Modeling good practice;
• Dealing with discriminatory incidents;
• Being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
• Promoting equality and avoiding discrimination against anyone;
• Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and taking training and learning opportunities;
• Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will be considered in line with relevant Trust policies.

The THPT HR Team are responsible for:

• Developing and modelling good practice in HR activity;
• Supporting line management and leadership in dealing with discriminatory incidents;
• Developing and delivering, as necessary, appropriate equality and diversity training for employees. Ensuring recruitment and selection processes minimise the opportunity for conscious and unconscious bias and support the recruitment of individuals who share the Trust values;
• Collecting and analysing data with a view to evaluating HR practice across the Trust in relation to discrimination.

Students are responsible for:

• Keeping equality and diversity issues on School Council agendas, through a shared input with employees on developing policies relating to this area. For example, the anti-bullying policy and specifically racist and homophobic bullying and developing school/class rules which challenge discriminatory behaviour.

SENCo teams are responsible for:

• Identifying and supporting disabled candidates and candidates with access arrangements during public exams (see Appendix 2).

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

• Keeping equality and diversity issues on the Parent Council agenda through a shared input with employees on developing policies relating to this area. For example, the anti-bullying policy and the Home-School Agreement.

Visitors and contractors are responsible for:

• Familiarising and following our equality and diversity policy as the need arises;
• Behaving in accordance with THPT Code of Conduct.

Responsibility for overseeing equality and diversity practices in the Trust and at each school lies jointly with a THPT Standards & Performance Committee and the Business & Finance Committee and named employees and Local Governance Boards. These responsibilities include:
• Coordinating and monitoring work on equality and diversity issues;
• Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents);
• Monitoring the progress and attainment of potentially vulnerable groups of students;
• Monitoring exclusions;
• Monitoring the application of the Rewards & Benefits Framework and the Pay Policy.

**Monitoring, Reviewing and Assessing Impact**

This Equality and Diversity Policy is supported by a Single Equality Scheme. The Scheme is linked to the Multi Academy Trust and schools’ plans including accessibility. Such plans will include targets promoting equality. Each THPT school will have its own bespoke accessibility plan that will be overseen by the LGB and provided to the relevant Trust committee for scrutiny and to ensure compliance.

The Equality and Diversity Policy will be reviewed yearly to ensure that it is effective in eliminating discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations between different groups and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

Any pattern of inequality found as a result of impact assessment will be used to inform future planning and decision-making.

**Breaches of the Policy**

All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures and reported to the individual schools’ Local Governance Boards and the Board of Trustees as required.
Appendix One

Unlawful Behaviour

The Equality Act (2010) defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour:

1. **Direct Discrimination** - this occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat, or would treat, other people.

2. **Indirect Discrimination** - this occurs when a ‘provision, criterion or practice’ is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic.

3. **Harassment** - this is ‘unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.’ This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour.

4. **Victimisation** - this occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done in connection with the Equality Act (‘a protected act’). A protected act includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Equality Act.
## Appendix Two

### The Equality Act 2010 and Conduct of Examinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Training invigilators</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The yearly training will make invigilators aware of the Equality Act 2010 and train them in disability issue</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Invigilators will be made aware of policies and procedures relating to emergency evacuation and medication, especially when they relate to a candidate with a disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Invigilators will be made aware of alternative means of communication, where appropriate, especially in the exam room when conveying information to disabled candidates</td>
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<th>B</th>
<th>Information for candidates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Information supplied to candidates with a disability, such as the JCQ Information for Candidates, are suitably sized and adapted</td>
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<th>C</th>
<th>Seating arrangements</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There will be chairs available outside the examination rooms, or a separate place to wait, to enable those with a disability or those candidates who experience extreme stress or anxiety, to sit and rest before they enter the examination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Where required, there will be sufficient space between desks and chairs to enable a candidate or invigilator to enter and leave the room without difficulty</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If the school is aware that a candidate may become unwell during the examination due to the nature of their disability, they will be seated close to the exits to make them feel more comfortable and to limit any disruption to others within the examination room.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Seating will be appropriate and comfortable for those who may have a disability which affects sitting and posture.</td>
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<th>Candidates requiring access arrangements</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Where a candidate has been granted the use of an Oral Language Modifier, a reader or scribe, the individuals who will be acting in this capacity will be introduced to the candidate before the examination takes place. This is particularly the case for those candidates with autism who will find it difficult to relate to someone who is a stranger. For identified students, this person will be someone known to them from the regular staff body.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Where a candidate has been granted supervised rest breaks, the rest areas will be suitably comfortable as well as maintaining the security of the examination. Supervised rest breaks will apply to those candidates who suffer from fatigue, hyperactivity, obsessive compulsive disorders or long term health conditions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Where a candidate has been granted the use of a prompter, it is important that the person appointed to act as a prompter is aware of disability etiquette, particularly when touching the candidate's desk as a means of a prompt, or tapping the candidate’s arm or shoulder. This will apply to those candidates with autism who may have difficulty with time.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>For on-screen tests, hardware and software will be adapted for those candidates with a sensory or multi-sensory impairment.</td>
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<th>E</th>
<th>Emergency evacuation procedures</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Invigilators and all other centre staff involved in conducting examinations will be aware of the emergency evacuation procedures in place for those candidates with a disability who may need assistance in leaving the building.</td>
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</table>
When evacuation and emergency procedures are being explained to candidates, attention should be given to those candidates with a disability, for whom these procedures may be different.

Source: Instructions for Conducting Examinations, JCQ, 2018