

Bourne Education Trust Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy

Equal Opportunities Definition

Any reference to Bourne Education Trust, BET or the Trust within this policy incorporates all its constituent schools.

The Bourne Education Trust (BET) believes that everyone is entitled to equality of opportunity regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. High quality education depends upon:

- Equal opportunities
- Justice and dignity for all
- High expectations
- A wider choice in life
- An understanding of others.

The terms equality, inclusion and diversity are at the heart of this policy. 'Equality' means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination. 'Inclusion' means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution. 'Diversity' means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce. We will actively support diversity and inclusion and ensure that all our employees are valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in our business to reach their potential.

The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant, employee or worker is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Discriminatory views and behaviour are not acceptable. They damage the spirit of the Trust. We will challenge racist and sexist behaviour and counsel those involved. We will help both staff and students to understand how such views develop and how knowledge and understanding can help break down prejudice.

We will ensure that the policy is made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment. The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice. We will maintain a neutral working environment in which no employee or worker feels under threat or intimidated.

The role of the Trust, local governing body and headteacher

The Trust board has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy statement, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the Trust community are treated fairly and with

equality and seeks to ensure that people with protected characteristics are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our Trust and its constituent schools.

It is the headteacher's role to implement this equal opportunities policy within their school and he/she is supported by their local governing body in so doing. It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Trust's policy on equal opportunities that all staff apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where respect for other people is a regular theme, and in displays shown around the school. The headteacher will treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any discriminatory incidents with due seriousness.

Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions. Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

Job descriptions, where used, will be revised to ensure that they are in line with this policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications. We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.

We will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job. Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

Disabilities

This policy sets out the Trust's commitment to both potential and actual students and employees with a disability and those existing students and employees who might become disabled. It also provides a framework to ensure that the Trust schools offer a supportive environment for any student or employee with a disability. The Trust also recognises the need to provide such resources as may be necessary to support students in accessing the curriculum and the employment of people with disabilities, and undertakes to identify resources wherever possible.

The Trust recognises and intends to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate against a student or an employee with a disability and to make reasonable adjustments to seek to overcome any practical difficulties that may prevent an applicant with a disability from taking up a place at a Trust school or with Bourne Education Trust.

Objectives:

- To welcome, enable and empower students and both job applicants and employees with disabilities;
- To be flexibly responsive to the personal requirements of students and employees with disabilities in order to support them in their work at their school so that they may be fully integrated members of the school's community;
- To ensure that, as an employer, the Trust's obligations under the Equality Act are fully met, and that a disabled job applicant or employee does not experience discrimination in either the process of recruitment or whilst employed by the Trust.

The Senior Leadership Team at individual Trust schools will be the point of contact to provide advice and guidance to students, job applicants, recruitment panels, managers and staff on the implementation of this policy.

The Trust will take steps to raise the awareness of disability amongst its staff, specifically:

- To ensure that those involved in recruitment and selection processes are aware of the policy and procedures;
- To ensure that the leaders and colleagues of any employee with a disability understand any specific requirements or adjustments that may be necessary and respond to them in a positive way (subject to the agreement of the disabled employee in relation to the release of any information); and
- To ensure that any employee with a disability is able to seek assistance, if necessary, to support or enable them to continue in employment and reach their full potential.

The Trust will encourage the involvement of people with disabilities, from within the Trust and outside agencies, in reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

In order to maintain best practice in the application of this policy, liaison will be maintained with the specialist advisory bodies and groups concerned with disability, including the local Disability Services Team and our personnel consultants.

In order to extend the highest level of support possible to people with disabilities, the Trust will seek to consult with all sources of advice and help and make best use of any resources that are available, including an application under the Access to Work Scheme where appropriate.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the board to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The board does this by:

- Monitoring the progress of pupils of minority groups and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils;
- Monitoring the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post at a Trust school is discriminated against;

- Requiring the CEO to report to the board on an annual basis on the effectiveness of this policy;
- Taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents, staff or pupils;
- Monitoring the school behaviour and exclusions policies, so those pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

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