Somerset Council

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#021

Wiveliscombe PRIMARY SCHOOL

Equal Opportunities Policy

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1. Principles

Wiveliscombe Primary School is committed to being a workplace where all job applicants and all employees are treated as individuals with dignity and respect and where positive challenge to violation of human rights, harassment, victimisation and discriminatory behaviour is part of daily working practice. The school encourages good communication between all employees in order to understand the underlying reasons for, and thereby avoid, potential conflicts.

2. Policies

2.1 School policies and procedures provide all job applicants and all employees with equal opportunity without harassment, victimisation and direct or indirect discrimination, because of legally protected characteristics (either by association or perception).

2.2 The school will prevent detriment arising from disability and comply with its duty to make reasonable adjustments for the benefit of applicants and employees who have declared a disability.

3. Workplace Practices

3.1 The school will not condone behaviour at work, near the workplace and at work-related social functions, which discriminates, harasses or victimises job applicants or individual employees because of legally protected characteristics. The legally protected characteristics are; age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This also applies where:

- an employee is treated less favourably because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic even if they do not have that protected characteristic; or
- an employee is treated less favourably because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic even if they themselves do not have that protected characteristic.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

4.1 All employees have a role to play in treating each other as individuals with respect and dignity at all times, taking responsibility for ensuring their own behaviour and actions comply with and support the Policy.

4.2 All employees and Managers must aim to avoid potential conflict by identifying problems at an early stage and attempting to deal with them by, for example, talking to the people involved in a non-confrontational way.

5. Equalities Learning

5.1 All Managers / Leaders / Governors have responsibility for ensuring that their employees understand this policy through induction, probation and further learning and are helped to put that learning into practice.

5.2 All Managers / Leaders / Governors will receive opportunities to learn about their duties and responsibilities through management induction, probation and further learning.

6. Unwanted Conduct

6.1 Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual constitutes harassment. Any employee who is found to have committed an act of harassment, victimisation or discrimination to the detriment of job applicants, other employees, volunteers, staff of suppliers, service users, or members of the public because of protected characteristics, will be subject to disciplinary action.

6.2 An employee who feels they have suffered a detriment as a result of harassment, victimisation or discrimination directed at them because of a protected characteristic, or who has witnessed behaviour directed at others that has led to such a detriment, will be supported in seeking a resolution.

6.3 Managers need to seek a resolution promptly and appropriately where they are made aware of behaviour or actions, which the school has designated as unacceptable; and ensure support is provided for all those involved.

6.4 The school has adopted a Dignity at Work Code of Practice. The Grievance Procedure provides a framework for dealing with complaints about bullying and harassment.

7. Third Parties

7.1 The school will take such steps as reasonably practicable to prevent harassment by a third party related to a protected characteristic, where the school knows, or ought reasonably to know, that an employee is at real risk of being harassed by a third party. The school will take seriously allegations from staff of deliberate discrimination by volunteers or staff employed by suppliers and will do all within its powers to ensure the allegations are investigated and appropriate action is taken.

8. Terms and Conditions of Employment

8.1 The school will comply with its legal duty to provide equal pay for work of equal value and provide benefits and facilities equally and proportionately to all employees.

8.2 The school will follow flexible employment policies, which recognise the skills and expertise of employees and the need to retain them.

8.3 The impact of employment policies and practices will be assessed to identify potential detriment to those with protected characteristics based on perceptions which are irrelevant, or on assumptions unjustifiable in terms of an individual's ability to do a job.

8.4 Managers / Leaders and Governors will aim to ensure informal working practices do not directly or indirectly disadvantage any employee from accessing career opportunities.

9. Recruitment, Selection and Promotion

9.1 The school aims to eliminate bias and discrimination in recruitment, selection and promotion practice.

9.2 When vacancies occur, Managers / Leaders / Governors are expected to consider the possibilities of job sharing, part-time working or other flexible working arrangements.

9.3 Managers / Leaders / Governors who are selecting candidates will undertake relevant and required recruitment and selection training.

9.4 The school will not ask job candidates about their health at an early stage in the recruitment process, unless such questions are necessary for:

- establishing whether a candidate is able to comply with a requirement to undergo an assessment for the job and whether reasonable adjustments are needed in respect of this assessment;
- establishing whether a candidate is able to carry out a function that is intrinsic to the work concerned.
- monitoring diversity;
- establishing any gaps in employment;
- taking Positive Action;
- establishing whether a candidate has a particular disability which is an occupational requirement.

10. Employee Development

10.1 Managers / Leaders / Governors are expected to take account of equality policy and practice when appraising employees and offering development opportunities in the workplace.

10.2 Managers / Leaders / Governors are expected to ensure opportunities for formal and informal professional development, in-service training and qualifications are open to all and selection is based on open and objective criteria.

11. Positive Action

11.1 Positive Action may include proactive advertising, job design, support networks, helplines, mentoring, coaching or training. The school will adopt Positive Action to encourage recruitment and improve access amongst those under-represented at all levels in its workforce if it reasonably thinks that:

people who share a protected characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to the characteristic or have needs that are different from the needs of those who do not share that characteristic; or participation in an activity by persons who share a protected characteristic is disproportionately low.

11.2 Proportionate steps may be taken to meet their needs or enable or encourage them to overcome or minimise the disadvantage or participate in the relevant activity.

12. Breaches of the Policy

Any employee found to have breached policy will be subject to disciplinary action.