

## Equality Policy

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**Verified:** Geoff Walls 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014

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## **Equality Policy**

The Thomas Deacon Academy is absolutely committed to eliminating discrimination and to the development of positive practices to promote dignity, equal opportunities, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice in all aspects of employment. Our aim is that our workforce and student body will be representative of all sections of society and that each employee and student feels respected and able to give of their best.

The purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all and it is based on a principle that no one is discriminated against on the basis of his or her actual or perceived race, ethnic or national origin, caste, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, age, or criminal convictions. All employees and students will be treated and valued equally.

It will be our practice to ensure that employees are fully aware of this policy and that employment and development opportunities are effectively communicated to all employees. All employees, whether full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent, will be treated with fairness and respect. Selection for employment, promotion or training will be on the basis of aptitude and ability, and all employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, including making reasonable adjustments where necessary.

We will continually monitor and review this policy to ensure compliance at all times.

### **Statement of Policy**

Thomas Deacon Academy recognises its social responsibility to create an environment that is positively promoting equal opportunities with regard to recruitment selection, promotion and training. Equality of opportunity will be given regardless of an individual's actual or perceived race, ethnic or national origin, caste, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, age, or criminal convictions.

Legislative action alone is not sufficient to implement an effective Equality Policy and Thomas Deacon Academy is committed to promoting positive attitudes and beliefs in all employees and students across the Academy in order to establish a working and learning environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

### **Review of Current Employment Practices**

It is a requirement of those responsible for making appointments and other decisions affecting promotion and development opportunities, to review existing employment practices and, where necessary, to take appropriate action to eliminate any actual or perceived unfairness.

### **Recruitment**

Thomas Deacon Academy will ensure that all job or training opportunities are circulated as widely as possible to all relevant audiences. Advertisements will be worded to ensure that no inference may be drawn of an intention to advantage or disadvantage a certain individual or group in respect of the published opportunity, in a manner that would be contrary to our policy statement and best practice.

Training and coaching, where appropriate, will be given to ensure compliance of any staff undertaking recruitment activity in line with the guidelines of this policy.

### **Selection - Appointment, Promotion, Transfer, Training**

The criteria on which selection discussions are based will be clearly relevant to the requirements of the job. A written job description and person specification detailing the requisite skills and experience, which the successful applicant should possess, will be prepared in respect of each selection opportunity.

It is the purpose of the selection process to evaluate objectively the suitability of each candidate relevant to the given requirements incorporated in the job description and/or person specification. Questions asked during the selection process will relate directly to the criteria established in the job description and/or person specification. Questions which refer to a candidate's ability to meet a genuine occupational requirement may also be asked.

Questions for all job interviews will follow a consistent pattern within a competency framework for each role, will have a standardised scoring mechanism and will demonstrate and form a base for consistency, fairness and objectivity when making any selection decision.

Questions relating to health or medical history will not form any part of the selection process. However, all successful candidates will be required to complete a medical history form after their appointment has been confirmed. This is to ensure that any reasonable adjustments and/or support can be made or put in place to enable staff to fully undertake the duties of their role.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **Line Managers**

Line Managers have the responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this policy and, with advice and guidance from the Human Resources Department, are required to:

- Co-ordinate the provision of guidance and training to employees on equality in employment
- Ensure that the implementation of systems for monitoring employment practices are consistent with the aims and intent of this policy
- Ensure equality of opportunity within recruitment, selection, promotion, salary assessment, training, workloads, responsibilities and working conditions

#### **Responsibility of Individual Employees**

Irrespective of their position within the organisation, all employees will have some measure of responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. It is the duty of all employees:

- To co-operate with any measures introduced by the Academy to support equality of opportunity
- To refrain from placing pressure on other employees to act in a discriminatory manner
- To refrain from harassing, bullying, abusing or intimidating other employees on the basis of their actual or perceived race, ethnic or national origin, caste, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, age, or criminal convictions

All employees have a responsibility for helping to ensure that no discrimination occurs within the working environment and that any alleged breaches of this policy are reported to their Line Manager and through to the CEO/Principal.

In addition, all staff within Thomas Deacon Academy are responsible for ensuring the equality of opportunity within the learning environment, particularly within the areas of admissions, discipline and pastoral arrangements, exclusions, timetabling/course options, resource allocation, curriculum implementation, careers advice, assessment and recording achievement.

### **Discrimination, Victimization and Harassment**

If an individual believes they have experienced discrimination or has been unfairly treated in connection with their employment, they will be encouraged to raise their grievance through the appropriate Grievance Procedure or via the Human Resources Department. Thomas Deacon Academy will ensure that any employee making a complaint about their own or others' treatment will be treated fairly and the complaint investigated confidentially.

Our policy is that any proven acts of discrimination, victimisation or harassment by employees will be deemed as a serious offence under the disciplinary procedure which may, as a result of thorough investigation having been undertaken, be regarded as gross misconduct justifying the termination of the employee's contract of employment.

### **Explanation of Terms**

Unlawful discrimination can take the following forms:

#### **Direct Discrimination**

This occurs when a person has been dealt with less favourably than others on grounds of their actual or perceived race, ethnic or national origin, caste, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, age, or criminal convictions.

#### **Indirect Discrimination**

This occurs when a provision, criterion or practice has been applied which, whether intentionally or not, adversely affects one group more than others and cannot be justified.

#### **Associative and Perceptive Discrimination**

This occurs when a person has been dealt with less favourably than others on grounds of the actual or perceived race, ethnic or national origin, caste, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, age, or criminal convictions of a second person with whom the first person is associated.

#### **Instructing/Causing Discrimination**

This occurs when a person is instructed or induced to discriminate against, harass or victimise another person, or attempt to do so, on the basis of another person's actual or perceived race, ethnic or national origin, caste, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, age, or criminal convictions.

### **Victimisation**

This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others because they have made a complaint or allegation of discrimination, or has acted as a witness or informant in connection with proceedings under any of the relevant acts, or has been involved in any other way in their enforcement.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse of power whether public or private with the intent to undermine a person or people.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a person's actual or perceived race, ethnic or national origin, caste, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, age, or criminal convictions, or those of a person to whom they are associated, with the purpose of violating that person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them.