



**WISHFORD EDUCATION
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

This policy applies to all Wishford Education settings

Last Review	Significant changes
July 2024	Name change to Wishford Education and additional of information about the duty to prevent sexual harassment at work.
January 2025	Names and review date removed to align with updated policy index

Wishford Education Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Wishford Education is an equal opportunities employer and always complies with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010). This policy includes staff at all settings, including schools, nurseries and camps.
2. In order to promote an environment within which the Group can call upon the widest possible range of knowledge, skills and experience, as well as ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation and codes of practice, Wishford Education is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We are committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which represents the population within our recruitment area in terms of race or colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, age, and disability (together known as "Protected Characteristics").
3. Wishford Education aims to employ a workforce that is representative of all sections of society and for our pupils, staff and parents or guardians to feel respected and able to give their best. Wishford Education is also committed to preventing unlawful discrimination against pupils, staff or indeed any of our stakeholders, including parents and guardians.
4. This policy's purpose is to:
 - a. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all staff
 - b. Prevent unlawful discrimination on the basis of any of the Equality Act (2010)'s protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender), gender reassignment and sexual orientation.
 - c. Prevent all other forms of unlawful discrimination. This might include: pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.
5. Wishford Education is committed to:
 - a. Encouraging and promoting equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
 - b. Creating a working environment free of bullying, all forms of harassment (including sexual), victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
 - c. All staff should understand they, as well as the group, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the general public.
 - d. Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, pupils, parents, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the group's activities.
 - e. Making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
 - f. Making decisions concerning staff based on merit and without discrimination.
 - g. Reviewing employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also updating them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
6. **Recruitment and Selection**

- a. The recruitment and selection processes are managed by the group's principles of non-discrimination and is designed to achieve the best match between, on the one hand, the individual's knowledge and skills, experience and character and, on the other hand, the requirements of the vacant post, recognising the need for flexibility to respond to changing conditions.
- b. The capability of the individual to perform in the position will be the major selection criterion, although the ability both to work with others and to be trained, coupled with individual potential will be considered.
- c. No employee or potential employee will be disadvantaged by any conditions of employment that cannot be justified as necessary on operational grounds.
- d. All applicants will be dealt with courteously and as expeditiously as possible following safer recruitment procedures.
- e. Carefully selected and validated skills and/or psychometric tests may be used as part of the selection process and will be administered by a trained tester.
- f. Appointments will be confirmed on receipt of satisfactory references and DBS checks (and in the absence of prohibition orders) and/or medical report and/or satisfactory completion of a probationary period.

7. Disability

- a. If staff are disabled or become disabled, they are encouraged to tell the group about their condition so that they can be supported appropriately and any reasonable adjustments made.
- b. A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for a position in the group.
- c. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made as are required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of their disability. For example, where written tests are used, alternative arrangements will be made for visually impaired applicants.
- d. If difficulties at work are experienced because of a disability, staff may wish to contact their Line Manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Line Manager may wish to consult with staff and their medical adviser about possible adjustments and staff may be required to consent to an occupational health report being produced about their ability to perform their duties. The group will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate any reasonable needs. If a particular adjustment would not be reasonable then the group will explain its reasons and try to find an alternative solution. Once an adjustment has been made its operation will be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assess its continuing effectiveness.
- e. The group will make such adjustments to work arrangements or group premises as are reasonable to enable a disabled staff member to carry out their duties. This will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign, flexible hours.

8. Dignity at Work

- a. Staff should not engage in any behaviour or conduct which may amount to harassment of another person at work and staff are expected to work with us towards these aims. Harassment of any kind is regarded as a disciplinary offence and in serious instances may lead to instant dismissal.
- b. Harassment may take the form of unwanted conduct which is related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which is perceived as affecting an employee's dignity at work. It may also take the form of unwanted conduct towards someone based on their appearance or other personal characteristics which is perceived as affecting their dignity at work. It is not only unwanted physical contact, assault or propositions; it includes suggestive remarks or gestures, pin-ups, graffiti, offensive comments, jokes and banter.

- c. Harassment may include bullying, intimidatory behaviour, persistent teasing or constant unfounded criticism of the performance of work tasks, unfair allocation of work and responsibilities, or exclusion from normal work place conversation. It may be directed towards one individual or a group. A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.
- d. Our Grievance Policy is available to any employee who believes that they may have been unfairly discriminated against. Employees will not be victimised in any way for making such a complaint in good faith. Complaints of this nature will be dealt with seriously, in confidence and as soon as possible.

9. Sexual Harassment

- a. Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. The law (Equality Act 2010) protects the following people against sexual harassment at work:
 - i. Employees and workers.
 - ii. Contractors and self-employed people hired to personally do the work.
 - iii. Job applicants.
- b. To be sexual harassment, the unwanted behaviour must have either:
 - i. Violated someone's dignity.
 - ii. Created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone
- c. It can be sexual harassment if the behaviour:
 - i. Has one of these effects even if it was not intended.
 - ii. Intended to have one of these effects even if it did not have that effect.
- d. The group takes additional steps to prevent sexual harassment at work. All employees have a responsibility to ensure that this does not occur at work.
- e. Employees are encouraged to report any concerns they have in a timely manner to their line manager or the setting's nominated point of contact who has been trained to deal with these issues, whether this is regarding themselves or a colleague. If the complaint is about the staff member's line manager, or the nominated point of contact then concerns should be raised via HR@wishford.co.uk and a member of the support office team will be assigned to investigate.
- f. Employees who have suffered sexual harassment at work will be given paid time off for any physical or mental health support.