



Wessex Schools Training Partnership

**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY  
2021-22**

## **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1. Wessex Schools Training Partnership is committed to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality and diversity across all aspects of the partnership. We aim to ensure equality of opportunity for all trainee teachers and staff, in an environment in which all individuals are recognised as being of equal value and are able to make best use of their skills through equality of opportunity.
- 1.2. The SCITT values the diversity of the trainee teachers and staff within the partnership by recognising and celebrating differences and valuing everyone. The SCITT also acknowledges that embracing and valuing diversity is fundamental to securing equality of opportunity for all.
- 1.3. The SCITT will endeavour to ensure a continued diversity of placement settings to enhance the training programme and meet the needs of all schools within the locality and region
- 1.4. The SCITT's culture and ethos are underpinned by the desire to embrace and nurture all individuals regardless of age, race, culture, sexuality, gender or faith.

## **2. Scope and Principles**

- 2.1. Equality of opportunity and inclusivity are fundamental to the vision and values of the SCITT. The commitment to equality and diversity is implemented through appropriate policies, procedures and good practice which reflect the following key principles:
  - equality and social justice;
  - acknowledging and valuing diversity;
  - respect for others;
  - compliance with equality legislation;
  - elimination of all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination;
  - active challenge to stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes;
  - commitment to inclusive education and a working environment which enables and supports all students and staff to flourish and meet their potential;
  - commitment to the positive development of all staff and governors;
  - accountability for compliance with this policy by all members of the SCITT, school communities and all those engaged in SCITT or school activities;
- 2.2. The SCITT's commitment to equality is, in part, achieved through the eradication of discrimination. This policy encompasses the following protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010:

- age - a person of a particular age or belonging to a particular age group;
  - race - a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins;
  - disability - a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities;
  - sex - a man or a woman;
  - sexual orientation - whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes;
  - gender reassignment – a person who has undergone the process of transitioning from one gender to another;
  - marriage and civil partnership – regardless of between a man and a woman or a same-sex couple;
  - pregnancy and maternity - being pregnant or expecting a baby and the period up to 26 weeks after giving birth, including breastfeeding;
  - religion and belief - religious and philosophical beliefs, including lack of belief, which affect life choices or the way a person chooses to live.
- 2.3. All staff, trainee teachers and stakeholders have a duty to act in accordance with both the content and spirit of this policy and treat one another with respect and dignity at all times. The SCITT will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of any of the protected characteristics listed above and will treat all instances of such conduct extremely seriously. Conduct which does not comply with this policy may result in withdrawal from the partnership.
- 2.4. The SCITT will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the trainees' training environment in partner schools, and in connection with other stakeholders is in line with this policy
- 2.5. This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and it may be amended at any time following consultation with staff and recognised trade unions.

### **3. Objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy**

- 3.1 The objectives of this policy are to establish, promote and provide accountability in relation to the SCITT's commitment to:
- a) develop an ethos which respects and values all people;
  - b) actively advance equality of opportunity;
  - c) prepare trainee teachers for life in a diverse society, including diversity of partner schools;

- d) promote good relations amongst people within each school's community and the wider communities within which we work;
- e) eliminate all forms of unfair indirect and direct discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation or other oppressive behaviour;
- f) deliver equality and diversity through the SCITT's policies, procedures and practice;
- g) make reasonable adjustments and do our utmost, within available resources, to remove barriers which limit or discourage access to SCITT provision and activities;
- h) take positive action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups whose progress has been limited by protected characteristics, stereotyping and cultural expectations;
- i) monitor the implementation of equality and diversity within the SCITT;
- j) ensure that recruitment and selection procedures and practices within the SCITT are open and transparent and ensure that fair and equal selection criteria is applied.

#### **4. Communication of the Equality and Diversity Commitments and Policy**

- 4.1. The SCITT will take active steps to communicate this Equality and Diversity Policy to all trainee teachers, staff and stakeholders of the SCITT.

#### **5. Policies and Procedures**

- 5.1 All SCITT policies and procedures will be designed to promote equal opportunity and protection against discrimination for all employees, students and stakeholders. The impact of any policy changes on equality issues will be considered prior to implementation. In some instances of substantial changes to policies or procedures, a formal equality impact assessment will be required.

#### **6. Disability Discrimination**

- 6.1. The SCITT supports the ethos of the social model of disability which attempts to remove barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people. The SCITT encourages all trainee teachers, or stakeholders to alert a relevant member of staff if they are disabled or become disabled in order that the SCITT can support them as appropriate.
- 6.2. If trainee teachers experience difficulties in their school placement because of their disability, they should speak to the school's WSTP Representative and Partnership Director, to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. It may be necessary for staff to consult with the HR Team, the individual, and their medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. In the case of an employee, the SCITT may also seek advice and guidance from an occupational health advisor. The SCITT will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate the individual's needs. If the SCITT consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, the reasons will be explained and the SCITT will try to find an alternative solution where possible.

- 6.3. The SCITT will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled trainee teachers, or stakeholders at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff, trainee teachers or stakeholders. Where reasonable, the SCITT will take steps to improve access for disabled individuals.

## **7. Responsibilities and Accountabilities**

- 7.1 It is important to remember that each individual is responsible for their acts, carried out both within and outside the work place. Any person instructing, inducing or encouraging others by inaction or action to behave in a manner which is inconsistent with this policy will themselves be in breach of this policy.

### **7.2 The SCITT Management Board**

The SCITT Management Board are responsible for:

- ensuring the SCITT fulfils the legal responsibilities of the organisation in relation to equality;
- ensuring the SCITT policies adopted by the Board are designed to support equality and diversity;
- ensuring the academies within the SCITT adhere to the equality and diversity policy and other associated policies and procedures.

### **7.3 Trainees and Staff working within the Partnership**

Trainees and staff working within the Partnership should ensure they promote and monitor compliance with the relevant equality and diversity policies and procedures. This is achieved by setting an appropriate standard of behaviour, led by example and ensuring that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the SCITT's aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities;

- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out;
- following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- promoting equality and diversity through their own actions and their work within the SCITT and avoiding unfair discrimination;
- ensuring students' knowledge and experience of diverse religious and cultural ceremonies, practices and traditions is shared in a positive way where possible;
- actively responding to any incidents of unfair discrimination which relate to protected characteristics perpetrated by students, other employees or stakeholders;
- keeping up-to-date with equality requirements and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training.

## **8. Training**

- 8.1. The SCITT will ensure provision for spiritual, moral, social, cultural and professional development takes account of the diverse staffing groups in the SCITT and is managed in a way which secures equal opportunities for all.
- 8.2. All trainees and staff involved in the SCITT will be given equal, fair and appropriate access to training to enable them to progress.
- 8.3. The SCITT will ensure that for those trainees on a salaried route the employee terms and conditions of service are determined and applied in a fair and consistent manner.
- 8.4. The SCITT will also ensure that any facilities, benefits and practical support offered to employees, such as the employee wellbeing package, are developed, promoted and delivered in a manner which secures accessibility for all staff in a fair and consistent manner. Furthermore, the SCITT will seek to identify and remove any access barriers where possible.
- 8.5. The SCITT will ensure that expectations in relation to trainee conduct and capability are determined and measured in a consistent manner. Any disciplinary and termination of training procedures and associated sanctions will be applied on the facts of the case and without discrimination.
- 8.6. Questions in relation to the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Partnership Director or HR Team to request training or further information.
- 8.7. SCITT staff will be given appropriate training in relation to equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice where applicable to role.

## **9. Breaches of this Policy**

- 9.1. If a trainee believes that they may have been treated in a way that is inconsistent with this policy, they are encouraged to raise the matter with the Partnership Director who will take appropriate action with placement school.
- 9.2. If a trainee believes the treatment of a colleague, student or stakeholder by another member of staff constitutes a breach of this policy or placement school policy they should raise this directly with the Partnership Director to take appropriate action with placement school.
- 9.3. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be taken seriously and will be investigated in accordance with the relevant policy and procedure. Staff and trainees who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with by the Partnership Director.

- 9.4. Any trainee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination, bullying or harassment will be withdrawn from the programme.