

**Equal Opportunities Policy**

PRISM Independent School recognises that all sections of society may experience prejudice and discrimination. This can be true in service delivery and employment. We are committed to equality of opportunity both in the provision of services and in our role as a major employer. We believe that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to the elimination of unfair and unlawful discrimination in all our policies, procedures and practices. We are working towards, and are committed to, the elimination of unfair and unlawful discriminatory practices. This policy and our Equality of Service Delivery Policy have been introduced as a means of demonstrating our commitment to providing our services fairly to all sections of the community. All employees have responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. They will be made fully aware of this policy and without exception must be adhere to its requirements.

This policy seeks to:

* Enhance and promote high quality services which are responsive to different communities and individual’s needs:
* Assist in creating a productive, safe and prejudice-free work environment which treats all employees fairly and with respect;
* Demonstrate and promote a commitment to equality issues to both the community and employees by challenging discrimination and valuing the diversity amongst communities and staff in the light of the benefits this brings to the PRISM Independent School’s work;
* Develop stronger internal and external communications on all aspects of PRISM Independent School business but specially equality issues and ensure that people’s views are listened to and responded to;
* Improve the motivation, performance, skills and morale of the workforce.

We acknowledge that equal opportunities are the responsibility of every employee, particularly those who have line management responsibility in the workplace.

We are committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to all young people and we will seek alternative methods of service delivery for disabled people and others where barriers may exist that make it difficult to use a service. Equal opportunities applies to all people. However, we recognise that the following groups in society may particularly experience prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage:

* People from ethnic minority groups;
* Women;
* Disabled people;
* Lesbians and gay men;
* People with an offending history.

We also acknowledge that there are other people who may experience discrimination on the grounds of their age, child care/caring responsibilities, HIV status, language, marital status, religion, membership or non-membership of a trade union, or any other unjustifiable reason.

Eliminating prejudice and discrimination in all PRISM Independent School business is dependent upon the personal commitment of everyone in the organisation. It is also dependent on mainstreaming equality throughout the organisation so that equality becomes a central part of the PRISM Independent School’s planning, policy making, service delivery, regulation and employment.

All employees will be made fully aware of this policy and without exception must adhere to its requirements. Any employees who feel that they have grounds for complaint in relation to bullying, discrimination, harassment, or victimisation has the right to pursue their complaint through the relevant internal policies and procedures.

We are determined to ensure that every job applicant, internal or external, applying for a vacant post will receive fair and equitable treatment. We seek to recruit only the best people for the job. Selection is based on merit alone using the PRISM Independent School’s staff recruitment policy.

We are committed to valuing and supporting out employees to realise their full potential and creating a diverse workforce that, broadly reflects the community in which we operate.

The policy conforms to the United Kingdom and European Union anti-discriminatory legislation and relevant Codes of Practice.

**STATEMENT ON AGE DISCRIMINATION**

PRISM Independent School acknowledges that the age profile of the United Kingdom, and therefore the local community, is changing. PRISM Independent School is committed to equality of opportunity both in service delivery and employment and we make a commitment to promoting age diversity by, valuing contributions of employees irrespective of age or youth; challenging the general acceptance of ‘ageism’ to eliminate age stereotyping.

 The Government recognises that discrimination on the grounds of age ‘is wasteful for Britain, for Business and for individuals alike.’ PRISM Independent School aims to ensure that employment opportunities, career progression, employee support systems and service delivery are equally accessible to all people regardless of their age. With a loss of key skills, business and cultural knowledge of the organisation.

Discrimination in employment can be detrimental to the aims and objectives of any business and the Council aims to address this issue by continuing to appoint the best person for the job.

We will ensure that our employment practice related to age diversity prohibit unfair discrimination in:

* Promotion or Career Progression;
* Recruitment and Selection;
* Redundancy;
* Retirement;
* Support Systems;
* Training and Development.

PRISM Independent School recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce in terms of age and how it can benefit the organisation in terms of:

* Retention of key employees, skills and experience
* Lower recruitment and training costs
* Increased motivation and productivity

**STATEMENT ON DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION**

PRISM Independent School is committed to equality of opportunity, both in the provision of services and in our role as an employer. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to, and will work towards, the elimination of unfair and unlawful discrimination against disabled people to ensure equal treatment in all our policies, procedures, practices and access to PRISM Independent School services.

PRISM Independent School will try to overcome barriers by providing any reasonable adjustments where appropriate to do so. We acknowledge that disabled people are not all the same and that each person may have different needs.

Harassment of disabled people is unlawful and will not be tolerated in any form in relation to service delivery of employment. Any reported incidents ill be fully addressed in accordance with the PRISM Independent School procedures.

We will adhere to the appropriate requirements of the Building Regulations and will seek, whenever possible, to exceed the requirements and continue to attempt to achieve best practice in respect of building design and facilitating improved access.

**STATEMENT ON GENDER DISCRIMINATION**

PRISM Independent School acknowledges that, historically, women more than men may experience unfair discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace and society generally. We are committed to promoting quality for all female employees an members of thee public on our role as an employer and as a service.

We recognise and need to contribution of both women and men at all levels within PRISM Independent School to make us an effective service provider and employer. We will endeavour to make full use of the perspectives, knowledge, skills and experience of all people within the organisation, and where appropriate, support positive initiatives to ensure their personal and professional development.

Sexual harassment is unlawful PRISM Independent School will not tolerate it in any form in relation to service delivery or employment. Any reported incidents will be fully addressed in accordance with the PRISM Independent School procedures, and the relevant sex discrimination, equal opportunities legislation and European Codes and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action.

PRISM Independent School supports the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for the same or broadly similar work, for work rated as equivalent and for work of equal value. In order to achieve equal pay for employees doing equal work we operate a pay system which is transparent, based on objective criteria and free from sex bias.

We acknowledge that there is potential for prejudice and discrimination against transsexual people. Breach of the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999, is unlawful. We will provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who may have undergone, or about to undergo, gender reassignment. Like any other employee, we will not discriminate on the grounds of sex in pay and treatment in employment and vocational training.

**STATEMENT ON HIV/AIDS DISCRIMINATION**

PRISM Independent School acknowledges that people living with and affected by Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) and/or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) may experience prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage.

HIV and AIDS remains a challenge for those affected, employers and society generally. We acknowledge that people affected by HIV do not claim the right to any special treatment in the workplace. However, we are committed to ensuring the fair and equitable treatment of any person affected by the virus in a respectful and dignified manner.

We recognise and respect that confidentiality is essential to protect people who are living with HIV/AIDS. The management of information relating to a person’s know HIV status will be safeguarded under the same legal requirements of all personal and medical information, avoiding unnecessary and damaging disclosures.

The same confidential treatment will be provided to anyone affected by any other equally serious and potentially progressive blood-borne infections and/or medical condition.

Discrimination relating to HIV/AIDS can sometimes arise as the result of unfounded fears and prejudices relating to transmission. We will work towards creating an understanding and supportive environment by keeping our workforce informed about HIV and AIDS, ensuring continued health and safety for all.

This policy will assist to improve and develop relationships with our employees who may be affected by HIV/AIDS and provide confidence to the public that we can overcome any obstacles affecting the consistency of implementing effective equality practices.

Harassment of people affected by HIV/AIDS may be unlawful and will not be tolerated in any form in relation to service delivery or employment. Any reported incidents will be fully addressed in accordance with PRISM Independent School’s procedures and the relevant disability discrimination and equal opportunities legislation and where appropriate, may result in disciplinary action.

**STATEMENT ON RACE DISCRIMINATION**

PRISM Independent School recognises that people from black and other ethnic minority groups may experience racial discrimination that can have s powerful effect on their ability to gain equality of access to employment and a variety of services and facilities.

We have a duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to:

* Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
* Promote equality of opportunity; and
* Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

In addition to our duties we understand our responsibility to the local community and our workforce to ensure racism is tackled and eliminated both in service delivery and employment.

Our commitment is to ensure that irrespective of racial, ethnic or national origins, all people have the same rights of access to services and employment. All people will be treated with equality, dignity and respect when having any contact with PRISM Independent School. We acknowledge that our services must be tailored to meet the needs of ethnic minority groups to ensure that the services are fair and responsive to their needs.

The terms ‘black’ and ‘minority ethnic groups’ are used by PRISM Independent School to refer to those people who may experience racism, discrimination, prejudice or victimisation on the grounds of their colour, race, or national origin, and as a result experience inequality in their lives.

The setting of ‘quotas’ to recruit and retain people from ethnic minority groups in employment is unlawful. However, we emphasise our commitment, wherever possible, to reflecting the composition of the local community in our workforce. We also endeavour to introduce appropriate positive action measures to achieve this goal by making full use of the perspectives, knowledge, skills and experience of people from underrepresented groups to ensure their personal and professional development.

We seek to create and encourage an environment free from harassment. All employees can feel confident that any reports of such incidents will be fully addresses I accordance with the PRISM Independent School procedures and the relevant race relations and equal opportunities legislation and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action.

**STATEMENT ON DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

PRISM Independent School recognises that same-sex relationships are a common characteristic in all cultures and those lesbians, gay men and bisexuals may experience prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage.

We are committed to ensuring equal treatment for all our employees and members of the public whether heterosexual homosexual or bisexual. We seek to ensure that all our policies, procedures and practices on employment and service delivery are not based on the assumption that all employees and recipients of our services are heterosexual.

We will ensure that wherever it is possible, Conditions of Service offer the same benefits to people regardless of their sexual orientation and specifically that those in same-sex relationships receive the same benefits as are available to all other employees. This includes the provision of special leave, parental leave and time off for dependents.

We respect the right of any individual to choose whether or not they are open about their sexuality. We support the right of any employee, to do this without fear of discrimination, harassment or bullying and for them to be confident that they will receive fair and equal treatment.

Harassment of people on the grounds of their sexuality may be unlawful and will not be tolerated in any form whether in relation to service delivery or employment. Any reported incidents will be fully addressed in accordance with the Council’s procedures, our Equality of Service Delivery Policy, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Human Right Act 1998 and relevant equal opportunities legislation which, where appropriate, may result in disciplinary or legal action.

**STATEMENT ON EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH AN OFFENDING BACKGROUND**

PRISM Independent School recognises that people with an offending background can experience discrimination within the community. The organisation is determined to make all efforts to prevent this discrimination or other unfair treatment against any of its staff, potential staff or users of its services regardless of offending background (that does not create a risk to children and vulnerable adults).

People with an offending background are estimated to make up 20% of the working population with 1 in 3 men under the age of 30 having a criminal record. PRISM Independent School acknowledges that obtaining paid employment is an essential part of the rehabilitation process for offenders and for those who obtain paid employment the chances of re-offending are reduced by two-thirds. PRISM Independent School also recognises that current estimates suggest that it is at least eight times harder for a person with a criminal record to obtain employment than someone without.

There are important social and business arguments for employers facing up to the challenge of employing people with criminal records. PRISM Independent School aims to do this in a responsible, balanced way that maintains its duty of care to employees and customers and gives access to the widest pool of talent.

The overriding objective of PRISM Independent School in relation to employment is that PRISM Independent School is striving to be an equal opportunities employer and, as such, opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination. All prospective employee regardless of offending history, will be recruited, trained and developed on the basis of their ability and the requirements of the job (unless they are barred form undertaking the job due to the nature of the job or their criminal conviction).

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess applicants’ suitability for positions of trust, PRISM Independent School complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. The Council undertakes not be discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. The City Council is registered with the CRB to access Standard and Enhanced Disclosures on cautions, reprimands and final warnings, as well as convictions.

**RECRITMENT AND SELECTION**

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

All information requested from candidates concerning their criminal records will be treated as confidential and will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Criminal records will be taken into account for recruitment purposes only when the conviction is relevant. Unless the nature of the work demands it, applicants will not be asked to disclose convictions which are ‘spent’ under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Having an ‘unspent’ conviction will not necessarily bar an applicant from employment. This will depend on the circumstances and background of the offence(s).

As PRISM Independent School meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, all applicants who are offered employment in sensitive jobs will be subject to a criminal record check from the Criminal Records Bureau before the appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as convictions.

**DURING EMPLOYMENT**

Employees are required to disclose any convictions receive during their employment. Relevant factors which would need to be considered regarding the conviction and future employment are the role and responsibilities of the post holder, the nature of the conviction and the potential impact on PRISM Independent School.

**MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

The Managing Director of PRISM Independent School has specific responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. This will be undertaken in consultation with the appropriate negotiating bodies. This policy is monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually to ensure it is kept up to date and meets legislative and best practice requirements.

Key information on important aspects of service delivery and employment will be collated from monitoring recruitment and workforce statistics. User uptake will be analysed in conjunction with service specific action plans to obtain an understanding of how our policies and procedures work in creating equality of opportunity. Appropriate action will be taken to address any particular obstacles or difficulties that are identified.

**APPENDIX 1 KEY ISSUES IN ELIMINATING PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION**

**RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

All recruitment and selection processes must be conducted in accordance with PRISM Independent School Code of Practice on Recruitment and Selection. Any employee involved in a selection panel will undertake the appropriate training to their role. We are committed to securing a workforce that, where possible, is reflective of the local community. The aim is to sustain public confidence in all our recruitment and selection practices. However, to ensure we recruit the best person for the job, selection for any vacant post will be based on merit.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TRAINING**

We are committed to providing appropriate training programmes to make this policy an effective working document. We endeavour to offer relevant equality training to all staff and volunteers by providing access to awareness and understanding of equality issues. We will strive to develop mechanisms which show hoe equality can impact on good working relationships and thereby enhance our standards of service delivery and improve the business.

**EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

We seek to encourage all organisations with whom we have contact, be they partners, suppliers or contractors to be aware of our policy. Where appropriate we will expect such organisations to embrace this policy in order to help in the elimination of unfair practices.

**POSITIVE ACTION**

Positive action is described as a range of measures which may be adopted under the Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Our aim is not to positively discriminate, but to assist with and encourage opportunities for particular groups in areas where they are under-represented. Where appropriate, positive action initiatives will be developed for the employment, training and development of people form under-represented groups at all levels of the workforce, in order that they may achieve equality of opportunity for selection at the point of entry and further promotional opportunities.

**COMMUNICATION**

We believe good communication to be the key to developing equality of opportunity for all members of society. This can be especially difficult for those people whose first language is not English; are deaf and/or hearing impaired; are blind or have a visual impairment. We are committed to making appropriate facilities available and accessible to enable the public, and employees, to communicate effectively by providing information in a variety of formats. Where appropriate, we will ensure community consultation and participation for involvement in policy and service planning.

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

We acknowledge that some working arrangements may cause difficulty for certain sections of society. We provide flexible working practices and family friendly polices to encourage the retention of existing employees and to attract the best possible candidates in the recruitment process. Schemes currently available include part-time working, job sharing, maternity support leave, adoption leave, flexible working hours, disability leave and other special leave provisions.

**SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Social Inclusion has direct links with anti-poverty, disadvantage, discrimination and equality issues. There may be economic and social factors that increase the likelihood of individuals being affected by exclusion. Certain groups may experience disadvantage and discrimination because of their education, employment status, health or other factor.



**Equal Opportunities Policy**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT**

PRISM Independent School recognises that in society there is a widespread discrinination and oppression of individuals and groups on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, religion, various abilities, gender, HIV status, sexual orientation, responsibility og dependants, health, appearance or age.

This policy aims to ensure thaat no employee, committee member, client nor volunteer associated with PRISM Independent school discriminates against somebody else or is discriminated against on the above grounds.

**RECRUITMENT**

PRISM Independent School will strive by recruitment to ensure that the staffing reflects the community we serve.

An advert, job description and personnel specification will be drawn up for each vacancy specifying essential and desirable skills, attitudes and experiences.

The Executive Headteacher will for each vacancy appoint an appropriate selection group and members of this group will be involved in all stages of the recruitment.

Adverts will include the following statement PRISM Independent School is committed to equal opportunities.

All vacancies will be widely advertised (subject to budgets) in newspapers and through community and equal opportunities mailing lists and newsletters.

Every effort will be made to ensure a representative balance on the selection group.

All members of the selection group will be committed to equal opportunities practice as set out in this policy.

Application forms will not include questions which potentially discriminate against grounds specified in above.

At interview no questions will be posed which potentially discriminate against anyone on the grounds specified as above.

At interview all candidates will be asked exactly the same questions and members of the selection groups will not introduce nor use any personal knowledge of candidates acquired outside the selection process.

Candidates will be encouraged to ring or write for the reasons why they were unsuccessful at interview.

PRISM Independent School will take positive action in recruitment where this will promote equality of opportunity.

**COMMITTEES**

Positive efforts will be made to ensure that the membership of the management committee reflects the community we serve.

All committees will review at regular intervals the work for which they are responsible to ensure compliance with this equal opportunities policy.

**STAFF**

All staff are expected to co-operate in the implementation, monitoring and improvement of the policy.

All staff are expected to challenge language, actions, behaviours and attitudes which are oppressive or discriminatory on the grounds specified in 1.1.

All staff are expected to attend equal opportunities training.

**TRAINING**

PRISM Independent School will take positive action to ensure that all services and projects are accessible and relevant to all groups and individuals in community within agreed targeted age groups.

PRISM Independent School will strive towards the provision of equal opportunities training for all staff and committee members.

**SERVICE PROVISION**

PRISM Independent School will take positive action to ensure that all services and projects are accessible and relevant to all groups and individuals in the community within agreed targeted age groups.

PRISM Independent School will strive to promote equal access to services and project by taking practical steps such as ensuring access to disabled people and producing leaflets and posters in relevant languages.

PRISM Independent School will endeavour to redress any existing discriminatory imbalances in its service provision by prioritising projects and resources which support groups and individuals who are being discriminated against in society.

**GENERAL POINTS**

PRISM Independent School welcomes feedback and constructive criticism of its services by those groups who face discrimination in the community.

The Management committee is ultimately responsible for the implementation, monitoring and ongoing development of this policy. The committee will satisfy itself all staff and committee members are committed to this policy.

PRISM Independent School will work alongside other agencies that are also committed to an effective equal opportunities policy.