

# Darwen Aldridge Community Academy



## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

The vision of the sponsor is that the Academy will have an inclusive ethos and will promote equality of opportunity throughout all of the work of Academy.

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## **1. Introduction**

This document summarises the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy's approach to equal opportunities. Its purpose is to make all employees and the community as a whole, aware of the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy's commitment to equality and diversity.

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy considers equality of opportunity to be of mainstream importance, taking its place equally within all corporate strategies, ideologies and principles.

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy wishes to promote equality of opportunity within the organisation for all existing and potential employees and for all those in our communities, regardless of gender, gender identity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age.

## **2. Policy Statement**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy is committed to promoting equality and diversity in employment and in service delivery.

We aim to be an organisation which values and respects all employees, job applicants, customers, visitors and residents living in our community. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and to live free from discrimination.

We will work to ensure that everyone in our community is able to access our services and information. We will consider people's different needs as we develop services and practices and aim to ensure that our approach is inclusive of everyone.

As employers we will work to promote a positive working life for all employees. We aim to create a workplace culture which is free from harassment and discrimination whereby people's differences are respected and valued, rather than just tolerated.

We aim to promote an environment whereby we challenge prejudices, stereotypes and negative assumptions about people and groups of people.

We recognise that we are better able to serve our community if the diversity in our community is reflected among our employees. We believe that our organisation is enriched by people's differences and we will work to ensure that this message is communicated.

### **3. Policy Aims**

To achieve the aims of this policy we will promote equality of opportunity in employment and in service delivery. The policy is set out to show how we will promote equality in each of these areas. Our overall aim is to ensure that people are treated fairly and with respect, that individual needs are recognised, and that we work to enable everyone to live without discrimination, harassment or prejudice.

### **4. Equality in Employment**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy is committed to introducing wide ranging policies and procedures to provide equality of opportunity for all existing and prospective employees.

We operate flexible working hours and job share to all posts where this is practicable. We offer leave entitlements to assist all employees with family, caring or other responsibilities.

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy is committed to ensuring fairness in its recruitment and selection procedures and ensures that all appointments are based on merit.

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy will promote equality of opportunity in employment by making sure all employees involved in recruitment are aware that:

- No internal or external job applicant can receive less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of gender, gender identity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age.
- They should not impose any conditions or requirements which unfairly affect applicants from one group more than applicants from another group.

- Any qualifications, conditions or requirements applied to a job must be relevant and justifiable for the post.
- Each individual is judged and assessed according to his or her capability of carrying out a given task.
- An interview must be offered to all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a post and reasonable adjustments must be made for disabled job applicants who require these for interview.

## 5. **Employment practices and procedures**

Examples of the practices and procedures the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy proposes to implement to make sure it operates a fair employment policy are listed in this section.

### **(a) Job Descriptions**

These are examined before recruitment to any post to minimise any possibility of direct or indirect discrimination. They are written clearly and concisely to make sure they do not directly or indirectly discriminate.

### **(b) Person Specifications**

These are prepared for all posts before the post can be advertised. Their aim is to identify the qualifications, experience, personal qualities and other attributes required to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post. The Human Resources staff will scrutinise these to make sure that the criteria being used are strictly essential and relevant to the post.

The person specification should not include any requirements that could be considered to be discriminatory. Any specification which could potentially be more difficult to fulfil for people belonging to one group as opposed to people belonging to another group, would be considered to be discriminatory.

Person specifications are updated each time a post becomes vacant to make sure that they continue to reflect the needs of the job and remain non-discriminatory.

### **(c) Advertising Vacancies**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy recognises a need for the principle of wide advertising to make sure it obtains as many applications as possible especially from disadvantaged or minority groups. Restricted advertising is only allowed to avoid redundancy, to help deployment or because of restructuring.

All our vacancies are advertised internally to give fair opportunity to all, and are placed on our website to encourage applications from a wide field.

We intend to apply for the Positive about Disabled People '2 ticks' symbol to encourage disabled people to apply to us for vacancies.

### **(d) Application Forms**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy's job application forms are designed to make sure that no information is collected which is not essential to the job in question.

All applicants are asked to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form as part of the recruitment process so that we can check that we are encouraging applications from all sectors of the community. Human Resources staff will monitor the progress of randomly selected posts. The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy recognises the difficulties which minority groups face when competing for positions and is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all applicants.

### **(e) Short-listing**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy has standardised the procedure for short listing and this should be adhered to at all times. The short list should be based on the information contained in the application form related to the job description and the person specification. The same criteria should be consistently applied to all candidates.

Personal details, such as age and the equal opportunities monitoring form are detached from all application forms prior to being given to the person short listing. This ensures that only essential information is used for short listing, reducing the risk of discrimination occurring.

Disabled applicants who meet the criteria for a post will be guaranteed an

interview.

#### **(f) Selection Tests**

Selection tests may be biased culturally or in some other way, and therefore if used, must be chosen carefully, and only with the agreement of the Human Resources Manager. The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy will only use tests that relate to job requirements and measure an individual's actual or potential ability to perform or to train for a particular job or career.

#### **(g) Selection Criteria**

Research has proved that people can suffer disadvantage and discrimination in an interview when unrelated and irrelevant questions are asked. To make sure there is no discrimination, the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy expects all those involved in interviews to observe the following selection practices:

- Not to ask questions at interview about a candidate's personal life including for example marital status, children, family arrangements, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. Interview questions must only be related to ability to carry out the duties of the post. Residential status will not be queried at interview but any appointee will be expected to provide proof of the right to work in this country in accordance with current legislation.
- To make selection decisions only on the basis of the requirements of the job set out in the job description and the person specification.
- Not to ask candidates irrelevant questions which could be seen as directly or indirectly discriminatory, such as asking someone from a minority ethnic background questions to test their understanding of the customs of the United Kingdom.

#### **(h) Interviewing**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy will seek to provide a comprehensive interviewing skills course for potential interviewers. It is our objective to make sure only trained interviewers take part in the selection process.

When needed, reasonable adjustments will be made to help disabled people to participate fully in interviews. This could involve providing facilities to meet

their needs or providing a full refund of expenses, including transport costs for accessible transport.

**(i) Promotion**

Any post which, on becoming vacant, represents a promotion opportunity for existing staff will be filled only after the post has been advertised internally.

**(j) Monitoring**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy has introduced a system of employment monitoring covering all job applicants. All applicants are requested to provide information on their ethnic origin, gender, disability marital status and age in order that we can monitor the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

We believe monitoring is essential so that we can:

- Assess progress towards equality of opportunity, identify areas of concern and develop programmes of action where needed.
- Aim (in the future) to check the extent to which progress has been made in achieving equality targets and relevant national performance indicators.

**(k) Job Sharing**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy encourages managers to consider the suitability of posts for job sharing when they become vacant. This can be of particular benefit to people with childcare and other caring responsibilities and to disabled people. All vacancies are considered eligible for job share unless it can be shown that this would not be justified for a specific post.

**(l) Technical Equipment and Adaptations**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy will make reasonable adjustments to enable a successful disabled job applicant to carry out fully the duties of the post. This can include providing appropriate technical equipment and adaptations. Financial assistance towards the cost of technical equipment and adaptations is often available from the Jobcentre plus Access to Work scheme.

## **6. Equality in service delivery**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy will promote equality of opportunity in service delivery to ensure that everyone living in the area is able to access our services and understand that the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy will not tolerate discrimination or harassment.

We will review our services regularly to make sure that they meet the needs of all members of the community.

Any customer or service user who feels they have been treated unfairly by a Darwen Aldridge Community Academy employee because of their gender, gender identity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age can make an official complaint. Their complaint will be thoroughly investigated as set down in the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy's complaints procedure.

## **7. Responsibility as an employer – general approach**

To make sure we are able to fulfil the aims of this policy, the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy has made the following commitments:

- To provide the necessary resources, wherever practicable, to plan, implement and monitor equality policies and strategies.
- To promote equality of opportunity for all people.
- To consult regularly with trades unions on the content and implementation of the policy.
- To make sure that the policy is known to all employees.
- To provide suitable training and guidance to elected members and staff to make sure they understand their duties under the law and under the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- To regularly review existing policies and procedures and to change them where they are found to be actually or potentially discriminatory.
- To monitor the existing workforce and job applicants by ethnic origin, gender, marital status, age and disability to evaluate the progress of the policy.

- To ensure that all information relevant to the policy is open for public scrutiny.
- To take action in accordance with the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy's Disciplinary Procedures and/or the Harassment and Bullying at Work Policy against any employee who is found to have breached the Equal Opportunities Policy or any future Codes of Practice that will be implemented.

## **8. Responsibilities of employees**

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy as an employer accepts that it has a major responsibility for ensuring equality of opportunity. At the same time it expects its employees to also recognise their responsibilities.

We place the following responsibilities on individual employees:

- To not unlawfully discriminate, or induce or attempt to induce others to unlawfully discriminate
- To adhere to the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy's Equal opportunities Policy and refrain from using discriminatory language or displaying discriminatory behaviour at work.
- To report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices to an appropriate senior manager within the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy.
- To refrain from harassing, abusing or intimidating colleagues on the grounds of gender, gender identity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age. Where this is found to occur, employees may be liable to disciplinary action.
- To work with the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy in promoting equality of opportunity at work.
- To not victimise individuals because they have made complaints or provided information on harassment or discrimination on the grounds of gender, gender identity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age.
- To seek guidance from The Principal or the Human Resources Manager

where they are in any doubt as to the legality of procedures or actions. The need to seek guidance also applies where an employee is instructed by an immediate supervisor to take action which the employee believes may be discriminatory.

## **9. Conclusion**

This policy will be overseen by the Human Resources Manager and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

If you need to discuss any problem arising from alleged or suspected harassment or discrimination, or wish for more detailed information about equality and diversity or how the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy's Equal Opportunities Policy should be implemented, please contact the Human resources Manager.

**This policy has been written taking into account the following legislative framework:**

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended)
- Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended 2005)
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended 1983)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Government in Wales Act 1996 (section 120)

- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (as amended 2002)
- Welsh Language Act (1993)
- Civil Partnership Act 2004

**And also:**

- The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy's Integrated Equalities and Inclusion Policy

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