



The Dean Close Foundation

Independent, Co-educational, Day and Boarding Schools, Nurseries and Administrative Support Functions

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (W012)

At the Dean Close Foundation our aim is for every individual to Flourish, and our core values, Love, Courage and Contribution, serve as the cornerstones of the organisation. The Foundation is committed to fostering an educational and workplace culture built on integrity, openness, and mutual respect, ensuring that everybody feels valued, supported and challenged. We believe that each pupil, parent, employee and volunteer have the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the community, develop their expertise, take thoughtful risks, and drive positive changes. By upholding and embodying these values, which spring from the Christian ethos of Dean Close, the Foundation creates an environment where everyone can thrive and succeed, and which makes a positive impact on the wider community.

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THE DEAN CLOSE FOUNDATION

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

- This policy has been authorised by the Board of Trustees of the Dean Close Foundation (“the Foundation”) for all of its schools, nurseries and anyone in an administrative or support function.
- This policy will be reviewed periodically by the People Department Team on behalf of the Board of Trustees.
- This policy is intended for guidance purposes only and does not form part of any contract of employment or agreement. It is designed to outline expectations and best practices, but it does not create any legally binding obligations on the Foundation or its employees. The Foundation reserves the right to amend, update, or withdraw this policy at its discretion as needed.

The Dean Close Foundation is an equal opportunities employer. This means it is our policy that there should be no discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any employee, former employee, job applicant, customer, service provider or member of the public because of any of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race (including, colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. These are known as ‘protected characteristics’ (Equality Act 2010). The Foundation will oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination in all areas of employment, such as, pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and disciplines, dismissal and redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

This policy provides equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.

We are fully committed to providing, so far as it is practicable, a good and harmonious working environment that offers equal treatment and opportunities for all our employees, and where every employee is treated with appropriate respect and dignity.

1. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across the Foundation and ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 which underpins the legal framework for this policy. It applies to all staff, pupils, parents, governors, volunteers and partners, protecting everyone from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of protected characteristics.

In issuing this policy we have four main objectives:

1. To ensure our workforce reflects the diversity of the communities we serve and to create an environment where every employee feels respected and able to perform at their best;
2. To encourage employees to take an active role in combating all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
3. To deter employees from participating in any such unlawful behaviour; and
4. To demonstrate to all employees and others who engage with us that they can rely upon our support in cases of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

While the Executive Team retains overall accountability for the successful operation of this policy, every employee across the Foundation has a role to play in supporting and upholding its implementation. All employees should also understand they, as well as the Foundation, 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 public.

In this respect they should ensure that they:

- Co-operate with any measure introduced to develop equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Refrain from taking discriminatory actions or decisions which are contrary to either the letter or the spirit of this policy;
- Do not treat, harass, abuse or intimidate other employees, former employees, job applicants, customers, service providers or members of the public in a manner contrary to the letter or the spirit of this policy;
- Do not instruct, induce or attempt to induce or pressurise other employees to act in breach of this policy;
- Advise the Foundation if they are aware of any discriminatory conduct, either against themselves or any third party, so that the Foundation can take steps to deal with it at an early stage.

2. Inclusive Behaviours and Culture

The Foundation expects professional, respectful behaviour at all times. Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment will not be tolerated of any kind. Everyone has their part to play in making the Foundation an inclusive environment for all to work and enjoy. The Foundation is committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good working relations for all.

- **Executive Team:**

- Hold overall accountability for the effectiveness of this policy;
- Set strategy and allocate resources;

- Review progress and risks.

- **The People Department:**

- Provide advice and training on equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Maintain policies and reflect and changes in best practice or legislation;
- Monitor EDI data;
- Oversee investigations;
- Support reasonable adjustments and inclusive practice.

- **Managers:**

- Lead by example;
- Make evidence-based and lawful decisions;
- Responsible for embedding inclusive practices in their teams;
- Address inappropriate behaviour promptly;
- Implement reasonable adjustments;
- Support flexible and inclusive working.

- **Employees:**

- Treat others with dignity and respect;
- Challenge (or report) inappropriate behaviour;
- Follow this policy and complete required training.

- **Workers/Contractors/Volunteers/NEONs:**

- Are expected to meet equivalent standards;
- Contractual arrangements may include EDI clauses and monitoring.

3. Types of discrimination

Various actions, omissions or behaviours will amount to unlawful discrimination if they relate to someone's protected characteristic:

- **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic, e.g. rejecting a job applicant because of their race, or failing to give someone a promotion because of their gender.
- **Indirect discrimination:** applying a provision, criterion or practice which applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than

others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time may adversely impact an under-represented group. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

- **Harassment:** unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic (including sexual harassment), which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- **victimisation:** retaliating against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment, for example, refusing to give them a reference after they have left our employment.
- **disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.
- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments:** Not taking reasonable steps to avoid substantial disadvantage to a disabled person.
- **Associative and perceptive Discrimination:** Discrimination because of association with someone who has a protected characteristic, or because of a perception that a person has a protected characteristic.

4. Reasonable adjustments

Disability is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

If an employee believes they may be disabled within this meaning, please let your line manager know so that reasonable adjustments can be made and support provided to overcome any disadvantage encountered.

There may also be other wellbeing or inclusion issues, which could mean you may require some reasonable adjustments and support. For example, menopause. The Foundation is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for employees experiencing menopause or perimenopause. We recognise that symptoms can vary widely and may impact wellbeing, comfort, and performance at work. Therefore, in these circumstances we would encourage open, respectful conversations between employees and line managers, recognising that individual needs differ. Employees or line managers can liaise with the People Department to offer reasonable adjustments where appropriate, such as flexible working options, temperature control measures, additional rest breaks, or access to wellbeing resources. The People Department will also support line managers where necessary to increase awareness and confidence through training and guidance to ensure sensitive, consistent support.

The Foundation is committed to making reasonable adjustments for disabled for employees and will make reasonable adjustments wherever required to remove or reduce barriers related to disability. Employees who believe they may need an adjustment should speak to their line manager in the first instance or contact the People Department, who will guide them through the process, discuss appropriate options, and coordinate any assessments or support needed to implement adjustments promptly and sensitively.

The People Department will assess any requests promptly, consider medical and/or occupational health advice where appropriate. Any adjustments will be reviewed regularly with line managers and employees. Please contact the People Department Team for support and advice on this.

5. Part-time and fixed-term employees

The Foundation's policy is to treat part-time and fixed-term employees the same as full-time or permanent workers, and to afford them no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate). Employment status must never be a barrier to equal access, opportunity, or inclusion.

6. Family friendly practices

The Foundation is committed to creating an environment in which all employees have equitable access to support. We recognise that certain groups of employees can face disproportionate barriers to workplace inclusion, particularly around starting a family or balancing work and caring responsibilities.

To support greater fairness and improve employee experience, the Foundation provides clear, transparent, and inclusive access to information and support for new and expectant parents from day one of employment. This includes:

- Clear, day-one access to family-related policies including maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave, time off for dependants and bereaved partner's paternity leave.
- Simple, accessible information so all employees understand their rights and how to access support without unnecessary complexity.
- Consistent and fair application of policies across all roles and contract types.
- A supportive culture, enabling new and expectant parents to seek guidance early without concern about job security or progression.

By embedding these practices, the Foundation aims to remove barriers, promote equal opportunity, and ensure every employee, feels valued, supported, and able to flourish

7. Reporting concerns

Breaches of this policy are taken very seriously and will be dealt with using The Foundation Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations under the Amendment of Equality Act 2010.

If an employee believes they are being harassed, victimised or otherwise discriminated against, they should raise a grievance in accordance with the Foundation's Grievance Procedure to the People Department who will support and guide them through the process. It is important to note that this policy does not protect employees from ordinary incidents of working life, in particular

reasonable guidance or reprimand in the course of performance management or disciplinary procedures, or generally where their concerns arise from treatment which is not because of any protected characteristic.

The Foundation takes complaints seriously and seeks to deal with them promptly and confidentially, where possible. If a complaint is upheld, then the employee will be notified of this. The details of any action taken against the perpetrator as a result are usually confidential between that person and the Foundation.

The Foundation recognises that some complainants may prefer not to have their names used in the course of any formal process. The Foundation will seek to accommodate such requests as far as practicable, however, employees will appreciate that if the names are not disclosed, this may limit the ability to investigate the complaint with the alleged perpetrator, or by nature of the complaint, investigating an alleged situation, could identify an employee even when not disclosing their name. Similarly, it may be found difficult to investigate complaints made long after the events in question, and in this case, employees are encouraged to raise complaints at an early stage.

Every effort will be made to ensure that any employee who makes a complaint in good faith will not suffer any further detriment or be victimised because of making such a complaint. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and (so far as possible) confidentially. By contrast, making a malicious allegation will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

8. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation or emerging best practice. Employees are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved, by contacting the People Department Team (people@deanclose.org.uk).

9. Related policies

- The Code of Conduct Policy W080
- Bullying and Harassment Policy W083
- The Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy W073
- Grievance Policy W016
- The Disciplinary Policy W010
- Flexible working Policy W014
- Whistleblowing policy W035