



Equality Objectives

Document Detail	
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Introduction

Hope Learning Community is committed to advancing equality, eliminating discrimination, and fostering good relations for all staff and pupils. This policy sets out our equality objectives, which focus on the protected characteristic of disability and our duties under the Equality Act 2010. Whilst the Trust recognises all protected characteristics, our current objectives prioritise disability due to Trust-level analysis identifying the greatest need in this area. We will continue to monitor wider equality data annually and adjust objectives as appropriate. Hope Learning Community commit to creating a truly accepting and supportive environment for all stakeholders and those who encounter our schools.

Equality Objectives

In line with the Equality Act 2010 we will set Equality Objective every four years with an annual review in place to monitor progress (see monitoring and evaluation). Our objectives have been developed following trust analysis and are designed to create meaningful, measurable improvements in how we support staff and pupils with protected characteristics.

Equality Objective 1: Embed a Robust Reasonable Adjustments Framework Across the Trust

What we will do

We will implement a comprehensive, trust-wide system for identifying, agreeing, documenting and reviewing reasonable adjustments for staff and pupils with disabilities. This will include:

- Expanding existing resources and ensuring schools use the Reasonable Adjustments Pack (including form, OH referral checklist, meeting agenda, welfare pack, risk assessment, RTW plan, and review schedule)
- Developing and implementing a "need-to-know" health information protocol with template scripts to ensure appropriate sharing of disability information
- Expanding pre-employment health declaration forms to allow early recognition and support for disabilities, with early occupational health triage where disability is disclosed pre-offer or pre-start
- Agreeing adjustments in meetings and issuing notes within 2 working days maximum, ensuring employees do not return to work without adequate reasonable adjustments in place
- Implementing structured return-to-work meeting frameworks for absences over 2 weeks or due to significant health issues, with agendas issued in advance and live documentation of agreements

Why this matters

Trust analysis has identified gaps in how we handle disability information, reasonable adjustments, and return-to-work processes. These gaps can undermine the effectiveness of adjustments and create distress for employees. Early clarity about role requirements and adjustments, combined with robust documentation, will prevent future issues and ensure all staff with disabilities receive consistent, professional support. Equality Objectives

This objective addresses the protected characteristic of disability and our duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination by ensuring consistent, fair processes for all staff with disabilities
- Advance equality of opportunity by removing barriers that prevent staff with disabilities from performing their roles effectively
- Foster good relations by building trust through transparent, respectful handling of sensitive information Equality Objectives

Success criteria

By July 2028:

- 100% of reasonable adjustment cases have a complete pack on file within 5 working days of meeting
- 100% of managers trained on 'need-to-know' protocol (appropriate sharing of health information); zero upheld complaints regarding over-disclosure in 12 months
- 100% early occupational health assessments completed where disability disclosed pre-employment; reduction of return-to-work/adjustment grievances to zero
- 100% of return-to-work meetings have agenda and signed notes; participant satisfaction $\geq 80\%$
- Adjustments agreed in-meeting and notes issued within 2 working days in 100% of cases
- Staff survey shows 90%+ confidence that reasonable adjustments will be handled professionally and promptly
- Zero formal grievances related to reasonable adjustments or disability discrimination Equality Objectives

Timescale

- 15 March 2026: Issue need-to-know health information protocol
- 31 March 2026: Reasonable Adjustments Pack ready; mandatory use from 1 April 2026
- 1 May 2026: Apply early OH process to all new hires where disability disclosed
- Immediate: Implement structured RTW meeting framework
- July 2027: Mid-point review and refinement
- July 2028: Full evaluation against success criteria
- Ongoing to 2030: Continuous monitoring and improvement Equality Objectives

Responsible person

- Trust HR (design guidance, templates and packs)
- Headteachers/School HR (local implementation, compliance and filing)
- Line Managers (conducting meetings and implementing adjustments) Equality Objectives

How we will measure progress

- Quarterly audits of reasonable adjustments documentation
- Staff surveys on experience of adjustments process
- Tracking of grievance and complaint data
- Manager training completion rates
- OH referral quality and timeliness metrics

- Return-to-work meeting participant feedback
 - Case file reviews each half-term Equality Objectives
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Equality Objective 2: Create a Culture of Dignity, Respect and Psychological Safety for Staff with Disabilities

What we will do

We will transform the trust's workplace culture to ensure all staff feel valued, respected and psychologically safe. This will include:

- Making EDI and Dignity at Work training mandatory at induction and refreshed annually for all staff, with unconscious bias and psychological safety modules added for SLT and line managers
- Conducting a comprehensive review of the organisation's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI), Dignity at Work, and Grievance policies to ensure they are clear, accessible, and easy to understand
- Delivering termly staff briefings (alternating in-person briefings with staff newsletters) reinforcing clear expectations on acceptable language and conduct, with visible team norms and focused reminders on empathy, professionalism, and sensitive handling of personal or medical matters
- Providing skills training for managers and school HR covering empathy, boundary-setting, and conflict de-escalation for difficult conversations
- Implementing a single named case coordinator ("one-front-door") for sensitive cases, with all communications funnelled and summarised weekly to reduce mixed messages
- Developing Trust wide opportunities for collaboration focusing on EDI

Why this matters

Trust analysis has identified that optional EDI training has had limited uptake, and that insensitive comments or language in workplace settings can undermine employee dignity. Staff need explicit, shared language to ensure conversations always remain respectful and empathetic. Additionally, managers require enhanced skills to handle complex conversations effectively, and clearer communication channels will reduce misunderstandings and perceived lack of empathy.

This objective addresses the protected characteristic of disability and our duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination and harassment by establishing zero-tolerance for insensitive comments and creating clear behavioural expectations
- Advance equality of opportunity by ensuring staff with disabilities feel psychologically safe to disclose needs and request support
- Foster good relations by building empathy, understanding and respectful communication across all staff Equality Objectives

Success criteria

By July 2028:

- ≥ 95% completion of mandatory EDI and Dignity at Work training
- Increased employee confidence in knowing how and when to raise concerns; improved understanding of processes and expected outcomes; policies consistently applied and referenced by managers
- Fewer informal complaints recorded in incident logs; staff report improved psychological safety and a more respectful team culture
- Reduced escalation to formal grievance
- Case surveys show increased clarity; fewer contradictory email trails
- Staff survey shows 90%+ agreement that "I feel respected and valued at work" and "I feel comfortable discussing health or disability needs with my manager"
- Zero upheld dignity at work or harassment complaints related to disability
- 100% of managers complete difficult conversations training Equality Objectives

Timescale

- February 2026: Begin policy review, with revised policies circulated to staff once approved
- 1 March 2026: Implement one-front-door HR contacting for sensitive cases
- 25 March 2026: Design and approve new mandatory training policy
- April 2026: Pilot difficult conversations training
- Summer 2026: Roll out difficult conversations training trust-wide
- 31 July 2026: Complete first cycle of mandatory EDI and Dignity at Work training
- Ongoing: Termly briefings and annual training refreshers
- July 2027: Mid-point culture survey and review
- July 2028: Full evaluation against success criteria Equality Objectives

Responsible person

- Trust HR/CFOO (design/mandate training and policy review)
- Headteachers (compliance and briefings)
- SLT (briefings) and School HR (newsletters)
- Line Managers (ongoing reinforcement)
- Trust HR (design and roll out skills training) Equality Objectives

How we will measure progress

- Training completion tracking
- Staff culture and psychological safety surveys (baseline and annual)
- Informal complaint and incident logs
- Grievance data analysis
- Policy awareness audits
- Manager feedback on training effectiveness
- Case coordinator feedback on communication clarity
- Exit interview data on reasons for leaving Equality Objectives

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually, with a mid-point review in July 2027 and full evaluation in July 2028. Progress against our equality objectives will be reported to trustees and published on our website in line with our Public Sector Equality Duty obligations.