

Waterford Academy Of Education

Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

Waterford Academy of Education is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to the introduction and development of employment policies, procedures and practices which do not discriminate on grounds such as gender, marital status, religious belief, sexual orientation, family status, age, disability, race, and membership of the traveller community.

The Legislation

This policy has been developed within the framework provided by the following:-

- The Employment Equality Acts, 1998 & 2004
- The Equal Status Act, 2000

The Employment Equality Act, 1998 which came into force on October, 1999 prohibits discrimination by employers on nine grounds: gender, marital status, religious belief, sexual orientation, family status, age, disability, race, and membership of the traveller community.

These relate to access to employment, conditions of employment, training or experience for, or in relation to, employment, promotion or re-grading or classification of posts.

It provides a statutory entitlement to equal pay for equal work (i.e., the same work/or similar work or work of equal value in terms of skill).

Responsibilities of the Academy as an employer

It is recognised that responsibility for ensuring the provision of equality of opportunity rests primarily with WAE, the Academy, as an employer.

The Executive Directors of the Academy are responsible for ensuring that all employment policies and practices of the Academy reflect both the provisions of the law and the Academy's policy in relation to equal opportunities.

1. Staff Selection

All employees will be selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their abilities and merits only, and according to the requirements of the job. All employees will have the opportunity to show ability and to progress WAE in the Academy.

No post will be classified by reference to any of the categories outlined in the Equality legislation.

2. Advertisements

All advertisements will carry the statement of the Academy's commitment to equal opportunities.

3. Application Forms

Application forms will require information deemed necessary for selection for the job.

No question suggesting discrimination against persons will be asked in advance of appointment.

4. Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be done by matching the details of applicants to the requirements of the job.

5. Interviewing

The Academy will not tolerate bias against candidates on the grounds of gender, marital status, religious belief, sexual orientation, family status, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community.

- Interviewers will not make assumptions based on these grounds about the suitability of candidates for any type of work.
- Interviewers/Boards will be given a copy of the Academy's policy, and attention will be drawn to it prior to interviews taking place.
- Interview questions will relate to the requirements of the job.
- The personal background of candidates will only be pursued insofar as it is deemed relevant to the candidate's fitness for the appointment. Where it is essential to assess if personal circumstances will affect performance,

- applicants will be asked only if they are aware of anything that might hinder their performance of the job.
- To avoid the possibility of bias all interviews will be conducted by more than one person and both sexes will be represented on the interview board.

6. Promotion

The Academy's promotion procedures will not discriminate on any of the following grounds gender, marital status, religious belief, sexual orientation, family status, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community.

- Where appropriate, management will ensure that staff are aware of career/promotional opportunities by posting them on officially designated notice boards; placing them in an official staff newsletter; on the Academy's website or circulating them on the e-mail system.
- All employees will have access to training and the range of job experience as appropriate which will equip them for consideration for promotion.
- Promotion will be determined solely from objective criteria and based on the person's performance and merits.
- Feedback will be given to unsuccessful applicants on request to assist them to improve their performance for the future.

7. Training

Training where appropriate to the needs of the Academy will be available to all relevant staff. This means that in addition to training immediately relevant to the current job all workers may avail of training to upgrade skills or enhance promotional prospects.

Stereotyping will be eliminated from all training materials, e.g. visual aids; manuals; etc.

8 . Combining work and family responsibilities

Insofar as possible in a small organization, the Academy will promote working arrangements which will facilitate, combining work and family responsibilities.

Equality, Discrimination and the WAE Student Community

The Academy undertakes to encourage students to have a non-discriminatory, non-stereotyped view of themselves, of society, and their roles within it.

Strategies to achieve this goal will include:

- encouraging a widening of students educational experiences,
- eradicating persistent stereotypes from text books, teaching materials and vocational guidance
- encouraging all students to participate as fully as possible in extra-curricular activities.

- the Academy undertaking to making every effort to eradicate incitement to hatred and violence towards any group in whatever form it takes.
- the Academy demonstrating its commitment to equal opportunities by using non-discriminatory/non-sexist language in all documents, e.g. terms such as “Ms”, “person” and “s/he” will be used in both internal and external documentation, and by portraying both sexes in a non-sexist way in pictures, posters, promotional material and magazines displayed or produced within the Academy.

Awareness

The Academy undertakes to develop awareness among all participants in the educational process of the need to promote dignity and respect for all staff and students. This will apply to management, staff and students.

Strategies to achieve this goal will include:

- encouraging the eradication of stereotyping and discrimination at all levels
- including awareness of respect and dignity in staff induction and development programmes
- including a section on respect and dignity in all Academy handbooks for staff and students.
- providing support for staff and students who are not respected at work or study.

Monitoring

The Academy undertakes to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the policy in practice at regular intervals.