Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Type of Policy:	☒ Network-wide ☐ Tailored by school	Approval:	Management Team
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POSITIONING WITHIN ARK OPERATIONAL MODEL

Component	Element
☐ Strategic Leadership & Planning ☐ Monitoring, Reporting & Data ☐ Governance & Accountabilities ☐ Teaching & Learning ☐ Curriculum & Assessment ☐ Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing ☐ Pathways & Enrichment ☐ Parents & Community ☐ Finance, IT & Estates ☒ Our People	Diversity and Inclusion ER and Wellbeing

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1. Introduction

At Ark we aim to build a diverse and inclusive organisation where everyone – staff and students – can do their best work and achieve their full potential. We want to reflect and represent diverse perspectives across our organisation because we know that doing so will make us stronger and more effective.

We are committed to be an organisation that is free from discrimination and prejudice.

The Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Policy aims to describe Ark's commitment to D&I, including specifying our ambitions, our approach as well as focus areas.

2. Working towards diversity and inclusion: our goals

Our Diversity and Inclusion strategy sets out four goals alongside six key objectives which have been identified to help us measure our progress. The goals are:

1. Culture - build an inclusive culture where everyone in our community (staff, students, families and governors) feel like they can belong.

2. Our People - hire, develop and retain diverse staff across the organisation.

3. Leadership - bring more diversity to senior leadership and governance positions.

4. Data - collect more qualitative and quantitative data to deepen our understanding of staff diversity and experiences.

The objectives are:

1. Improve the sense of belonging reported by staff and students in annual surveys.

2. Increase the diversity of Ark Teacher Training trainees, with a focus on ethnic minorities, religion, social class and male representation.

3. Hire diverse candidates as apprentices into a portion of vacant ops roles. It's important that we're attracting strong candidates from diverse backgrounds at all levels of the organisation.

4. Increase the number of senior leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds, including school leaders, regional directors, and the Ark management team.

5. Appoint staff, parent, and alumni governors to be more representative of our local communities.
6. Increase overall data disclosure from colleagues to help us to understand the diversity of our workforce and underrepresentation that might exist in the areas of disability, sexual orientation, class etc.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy is applicable to all employees whether temporary, part-time, or full time, and secondees, across Ark's schools, central and ventures team working in the UK. The policy applies to all processes relating to employment and training and to any dealings with children and parents or carers. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, termination, and post termination of employees.

3.2. All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour that transgresses the policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the organisation's disciplinary policy.

4. Definition

4.1. Diversity is the who and the what. It is the presence of variety and difference. More than demographics and visible characteristics, diversity is about differences in its fullest sense, encompassing where we are born and raised, our identities and history, our experiences, and the way we think and feel.

4.2. Inclusion is the how. It is the behaviours and actions that signal to each of us that we are welcome and valued regardless of our backgrounds and differences. When inclusion is present, we all have fair access to opportunities and resources.

4.3. Equity is the process of being fair to all people, according to their respective needs. This might mean treating people differently to account for historical and social disadvantages. Equity leads to equality.

4.4. Equality is the absence of discrimination. It is promoting fairness by treating everyone the same, while recognising that equal opportunity without equity can perpetuate unfair and unjust outcomes.

5. Legal Compliance

5.1. This policy ensures our compliance with the requirements of relevant UK legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

5.2. In line with Public Sector Equality Duty Ark has due regard for:
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

5.3. Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act (2006) - in order to comply with the provisions of this Act, we will ensure all staff are eligible to work in the United Kingdom. Successful candidates will be asked to produce original and specified document(s) before a confirmed offer of employment is provided.

5.4. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)– in order to safeguard and protect the welfare of the pupils in our care, we will ensure safer recruitment practices are followed. Please find details about safe recruitment in the Ark Safeguarding Policy.

5.5. Ark consciously considers equality factors in decisions of policy, assessing the impact of equality on new or existing policy.

5.6. Our diversity and inclusion policy commits us to ensuring there is no discrimination in the recruitment, retention, training, and development of staff on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. It will not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factor and will build a culture that values difference, openness, fairness, and transparency.

6. Types of discrimination – Principles

6.1. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally and unintentionally.

6.2. Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (details about protected characteristic in included in Appendix section).

6.3. Indirect discrimination occurs when someone is subjected to an unjustified provision, criterion which puts them in a particular disadvantage because of a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination a less obvious type of discrimination than direct discrimination and is usually unintentional.

6.4. Discrimination includes harassment which is " is any form of unwanted physical (includes sexual), verbal or non-verbal conduct, speech or behaviour which makes someone feel distressed, humiliated or threatened and that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them." A single incident can amount to harassment.

6.5. Discrimination also includes victimisation which occurs when a person is subjected to a detriment because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

7. Accountability

7.1. The Board of Trustees are responsible for championing equality, diversity and inclusion and ensuring that the policy is consistent with the fundamental principles and that resources, support and leadership is provided to ensure this policy can be meaningfully implemented.

7.2. The Management Team are responsible for championing this policy on behalf of the Board of Trustees and ensuring compliance with policy and the effective development, monitoring of equality and diversity objectives and related action.

7.3. The Director of People is the Policy owner and is responsible for ensuring that this policy is fit for purpose and up to date.

7.4. The Diversity and Inclusion Manager is the policy lead and responsible for the development, monitoring and updating of this policy. The People Business Partner team is responsible for supporting the communication and implementation of this policy in Central team and schools.

7.5. Line-managers, Regional Directors, Principals and the Leadership team/Heads of Departments are responsible for implementing this policy and role modelling inclusive behaviour and providing support to their staff and volunteers.

7.6. Our employees are responsible for championing equality, diversity, and inclusion, understanding how the policy relates to their role, and reporting cases of discrimination, harassment, and unfair treatment.

8. How to raise a complaint

8.1. If anyone feels they have a grievance or complaint under the Policy they may, in the first instance and if they wish and feel comfortable to do so, make the issue known to person responsible for the behaviour and request that it should cease. Individuals may also, as an alternative, seek the direction and guidance of their line-manager, Principal, in school HR department in attempting to resolve matters in an informal manner. Individuals should make any concerns known to a principal, manager, director or a member of HR as soon as possible.

8.2. Where it does not prove possible to reconcile issues informally, or a person does not want the matter dealt with informally, employees should make a complaint using Ark's Grievance Policy or the Whistleblowing policy.

8.3. Members of a trade union are encouraged to contact their union if they have any concerns/queries or wish to discuss this further.

9. Training

9.1. If you are involved with making decisions about a person's employment, you must attend appropriate equality, diversity, and inclusion training.

9.2. All employees must attend equality, diversity, and inclusion training as part of their onboarding programme.

10. Employee Assistance Programme

10.1. If any employee feels that they have been victimised, harassed, bullied and discriminated against they may also wish to use the Employee Assistance Programme, a confidential helpline for information and support. The service operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. No information on any calls will be fed back to the company unless there is a serious risk of harm to an employee or any other person.

10.2. To use the service employees should contact:

- Freephone: 0800243458
- Email: assistance@workplaceoptions.com

Up-to-date information is available on ArkNet.

11. Additional Support

11.1. Employees may contact their trade union representative for further advice and support regarding discrimination, harassment, or victimisation

11.2. In addition, further information for advice and support can be found:

Equality Advisory and Support Services
Website: www.equalityadvisoryservice.com
Freephone Telephone: 0808 800 0082
Textphone: 0808 800 0084

Citizens Advice Bureau
Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

12. Audit, Measurement & Reporting

12.1. Ark will regularly audit policies and procedures for implications on diversity and inclusion.

12.2. Ark will capture workforce and pupil metrics from existing databases and internal surveys to review diversity and inclusion "As is" against internal benchmarks and other organisations. It will assess progress in achieving diversity objectives set out on ArkNet's diversity and inclusion hub and share this information externally on Ark's website or elsewhere as is deemed appropriate.

12.3. Diversity-related data, commitments, actions and targets within the corporate and People Strategy will be monitored and reported regularly to Management team and published in Diversity and Inclusion page in intranet.

Related documents

- Grievance Policy (Ark Central)
- Ark Grievance Policy (Network-wide)
- Ark Whistleblowing Policy and Process

Appendix 1: Equality Act (2010) definitions of protected characteristics

Age

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).

Disability

A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to-day activities.

Gender Reassignment

A person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person´s sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage and civil partnership means someone who is legally married or in a civil partnership. Civil partnership is between partners of the same sex.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion

Religion has the meaning usually given to it, but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (such as Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex

A man or a woman.

Sexual orientation

A person's sexual orientation towards people of the same sex (lesbians and gay men), towards people of the opposite sex (heterosexual) or towards people of the same sex and the opposite sex (bisexual).