

*Our Vision is to produce outstanding teachers who will ensure their students, whatever their starting point, thrive in all aspects of education. Our trainee teachers will value developing the whole person equally to the achievement of academic success*

## Policy and Procedure

### Diversity and Equal Opportunity

**Adopted:** July 2015

**Review Date:** July 2017

**Reviewers:** RDv/SKn

#### BACKGROUND, AIMS AND VALUES

North Wiltshire SCITT functions as a provider of initial teacher training and as such, aims to produce teachers who will be highly effective as educators and role models, wherever they may work. We are committed to promoting and practicing equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and eliminating harassment and discrimination. We aim to be an inclusive organisation which welcomes and treats both staff and students fairly and equally regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnic origin or nationality. Our workforce should be representative of the communities we serve.

We are an institution that strives to understand, appreciate and value the differences in each individual; we aim to make people feel valued and supported so that they may achieve their full potential. We also want to create a positive ethos where issues of racism, stereotyping and discrimination can be discussed openly, with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing these issues and to encourage good relations between people of different groups. Therefore, firm action will be taken to redress inequality and eliminate all forms of discrimination.

#### POLICY

This policy aims to ensure that the provisions of all previous equalities legislation (now subsumed into the Equality Act 2010) are met in full, particularly the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000; the Disability Discrimination Acts (1995 and 2005); the Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 2006; the Age Discrimination Act 2006 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002.

The Equality Act 2010 replaces all existing anti-discrimination laws and includes a new public sector Equality Duty. The main aims of the 2010 Act are to provide protection of the Protected Characteristics from the following prohibited conduct:

- Direct discrimination;
- Indirect discrimination;
- Victimisation; and
- Harassment

The new single equality duty will come into force from April 2011 covering the following Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race

- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

## RACE

- Both institutional and individual racism “can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages ethnic minority people.”
- North Wiltshire SCITT recognises its general duty under the RRAA 2000 to promote race equality. We will have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting good race relations in all our actions.
- We will create a positive, inclusive environment based on mutual respect and tolerance.
- We are committed to challenging and preventing racism and discrimination.
- We are mindful to monitor the treatment and progress of all candidates in terms of their recruitment, selection, levels of achievement and assessment, guidance or counselling and will take action to address any perceived or real inequalities discovered.
- We will assess the impact of our policies, practices and procedures upon all our students and staff.
- We will provide training and support for staff to ensure both they and the students they deal with are able to establish a positive working and learning environment.

## DISABILITY

- The term “disability” covers a wide range of physical and mobility difficulties such as deafness, hard of hearing, blind or partially sighted, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems. It is recognised that some disabilities are permanent while others may be temporary.
- North Wiltshire SCITT understands its duty to ensure that entrants have met the Secretary of State’s requirements for physical and mental fitness to teach. As such, we follow the guidelines laid down in DfEE Circular 4/99 “Physical and mental fitness to Teach of Teachers and of Entrants to Initial Teacher Training” as well following guidance laid down in “Fitness to Teach” and “Able to Teach” publications.
- We will meet our statutory requirements under the DDA not to discriminate against persons with a disability either in the process of recruitment or whilst enrolled on the course.
- We are committed to taking positive action to welcome persons with disabilities who have met the Requirements, and to enable them to meet their full potential.
- Consideration will be given to all planned activities, resource allocation and procedures to ensure that we can enable disabled students’ full participation in all aspects of the academic, work-based and social activities of the course.
- We will give clear information and advice about the practical issues which may be encountered during the course or later employment and liaise with specialist agencies where appropriate.

## GENDER

- North Wiltshire SCITT will monitor gender balance on the subject courses it runs and will take the necessary action to improve any underrepresented areas to relevant levels.
- We will be sensitive to the needs of individuals in terms of course organisation, the support we offer and building in flexibility within the constraints of the course to enable an appropriate work / life balance.

## HARASSMENT

- Harassment is defined as unwanted behaviour (verbal or physical) that may be personally humiliating, offensive, abusive or intimidating. Harassment can occur in areas of race, ethnic origin, nationality, sex, sexuality, religious or political convictions, marriage or maternity status, age or

disabilities. It can also involve bullying linked to inequalities of status and position. North Wiltshire SCITT aim to foster a culture which is free from harassment by ensuring:

- Staff and students challenge all forms of harassment.
- Incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively
- Individuals have the confidence and support to bring complaints without fear of ridicule or reprisal.
- Individuals take personal responsibility to ensure that they act in an appropriate manner.

If any trainee feels that they have been the victim of abuse or harassment, they must complete the proforma below and give copies to the school-based tutor and centre-based staff. Grievance procedures are described in further detail in appendix H of the course handbook.

## WIDENING PARTICIPATION

- North Wiltshire SCITT will respond positively to the national widening participation initiatives by:
- Increasing our regional and national profile and using diverse images in all forms of media and publications.
- Maintain clear routes for under-represented groups in Higher Education and ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to support non-traditional students.

## MONITORING

In order to ensure equality of treatment and opportunity for all students and applicants to the course, and to measure the impact of this policy, North Wiltshire SCITT will collect and analyse data concerning:

- Application rates
- Selection rates
- Retention rates
- Achievement and progression rates
- access to learning resources
- disciplinary action
- complaints by students and staff

Where monitoring indicates that there are inequalities between different groups of people, North Wiltshire SCITT will undertake action aimed to reduce this. Such action would be appropriate to the circumstance, but may include further encouragement of applications from under-represented groups; the provision of services, resources and facilities to meet the special needs of a particular group; targeted school placements; individual support from trained members of staff.

## PUBLICATION

- North Wiltshire SCITT will state its commitment to equal opportunities for all in its public information leaflets and website.
- Staff and students will receive a copy of this policy.
- Partner head teachers and professional tutors will receive a copy of this policy.
- A summary of the results of the monitoring of this policy will be published in our annual report which is available to any interested party and sent to our accrediting institution, the University of Cumbria.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Director of the North Wiltshire SCITT has ultimate responsibility for the development, implementation and monitoring of the diversity and equal opportunities policy although the mechanisms may be devolved to the programme manager.
- Each member of North Wiltshire SCITT, whether teacher or trainee, has a responsibility to support the implementation of this policy, therefore, the programme manager will seek to ensure that all stakeholder groups are aware of its existence and the appropriate action needed to carry it out.
- The course administrator and programme manager will ensure that publicity materials present appropriate and positive messages about minority racial groups.
- The Executive Board are responsible for ensuring that all policies and the strategic plan of the SCITT includes a commitment to equal opportunities; they are aware of their responsibilities as an

employer and service provider in relation to race and disability legislation; they will receive and respond to monitoring information and sanction any appropriate actions; they will review the appropriacy and effectiveness of the policy in the light of comments received by the other stakeholder groups.

- The management group and subject group are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented and monitored within their own institutions, taking appropriate action on issues when necessary and will report back to the programme manager.
- In addition, the subject group will ensure that the application and selection procedures conform to this policy and will liaise with appropriate members of staff or outside agencies when necessary.
- The trainee group have a responsibility to uphold the ethos of the policy and to act in a supportive role of their colleagues at all times.
- If necessary, North Wiltshire SCITT will invoke its grievance and disciplinary procedures to ensure that the policy is not breached.